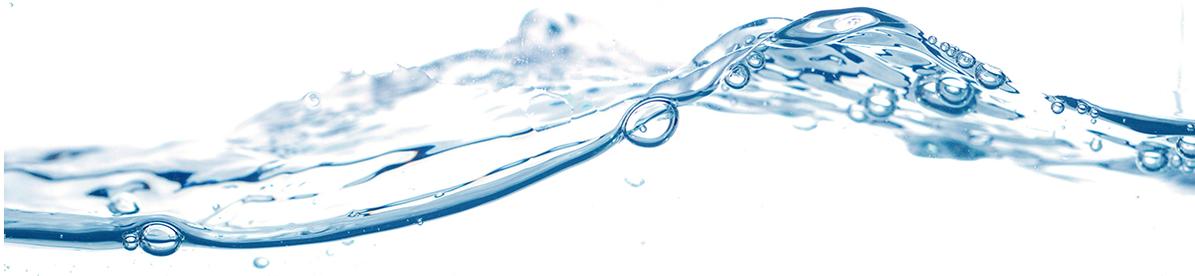




Special Report



A Message From the CEO

These are trying times for our nation and for the people who work at our public water and wastewater utilities. Without a doubt, Americans rely on safe and clean water being provided to their homes. Water utilities provide an essential service every day of the year; now, that service is necessary for people isolated in their homes to survive the COVID-19 pandemic.

Small and rural systems generally have less staff and will be impacted the worst if their workforce becomes infected. The National Rural Water Association and each of our State Affiliates have instituted emergency measures to ensure the safety of staff, enabling them to continue providing assistance to water and wastewater utilities, and retaining the ability to respond onsite to emergencies. Be assured your State Rural Water Association is there for you.

At NRWA, we are in constant communication with USDA's Rural Utilities Service, the Environmental Protection Agency and members of Congress. Our D.C. staff is working hard, advocating on your behalf as resources are considered and developed to assist and inform our nation's utilities of the latest information and progress of the virus.

We encourage our utility members to reach out to neighboring systems and develop informal mutual aid networks in case critical utility staff are unable to perform their duties. At this point we do not know what the impact of this new virus

will be and hardships it will cause. We all must be prepared to assure continuity of services, no matter the scenario. It is in the best interest of each utility, the public and our nation.

We must all be prepared, be informed and take all precautions necessary to protect our workforce and our families. There is everything to gain and nothing to lose by taking these precautions. Our industry motto is: Quality on Tap—Our Commitment, Our Profession. Our collective commitment should be to stay healthy and remain available to provide essential water services during the coming days, weeks and possibly months of this national health emergency.

My commitment to you is that your State Rural Water Associations are there for you with resources, assistance and emergency response capabilities. Working together, being proactive and taking all necessary precautions for health protection will be the winning combination to overcome this virus. I have total confidence America's water professionals will act as unsung heroes—just as they have throughout my 35 years working with Rural Water.

Thank you for all you do,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sam Wade". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "S" that loops back under the rest of the name.

Sam Wade

CEO, National Rural Water Association