

*41st Annual Conference – 2020 Vision:
Remember the Past. Experience the Present. Focus on the Future.*

Water Operator Achievement Award Nominees

Kaleen Anderson, Stockett Water and Sewer District

Kaleen Anderson received her water and wastewater operator license in 2014 and began working part-time for the District along with her husband in their utility operations. Due to demographic changes in the community which left the system without a functioning board for 18 months, Kaleen put her stewardship skills to work and insured all sampling was completed and submitted for testing and reporting, coordinated repairs and maintenance with a local contractor, insured payments for debt service were made in a timely manner, and expenses for the month were paid.

Kaleen was further instrumental in setting up a successful public meeting with County Commissioner Jim Larson to solicit volunteers from the community to serve on the Board of Directors. As a result of that meeting, the county appointed five people to the Board in May 2019. Kaleen continues to provide guidance to the new Board in reviewing the financial and operational information, which has helped the Board set priorities for the system to regain financial and operational sustainability and maintain a successful operation for the District for the future.

Chuck Dale, Town of Fairfield

Chuck Dale joined the Town of Fairfield 1 ½ years ago amidst a crazy time for the public water system. Working with the assistance of a volunteer former employee, a newly hired employee (his brother Nick), MRWS staff and City of Choteau public works staff, Chuck has worked diligently to bring the PWS wells, chlorination system and telemetry system up and running 100%. In addition to all the regular daily operational duties, Chuck also assisted with vital public works equipment maintenance and keeping up with snow removal during a record winter snowfall season. This past summer, Chuck has been assisting with the final completion of the Town's \$3.8 M wastewater lagoon project. Chuck successfully obtained his Water Operator Certification license in the Spring of 2018 and is studying for the Wastewater Operator Exam. Chuck's work performance has been a huge asset to improve the Town's utility services and is immensely appreciated by the Fairfield community.

Mike Nieskens, Dry Prairie Rural Water

Mike Nieskens has worked as a water treatment and distribution operator for more than 20 years in various locations throughout Montana, the last eight years as the Foreman and Lead Operator for Dry Prairie Rural Water in the Glasgow office. Mike and his staff of three operators, manage 225 miles of pipeline and water delivery to two towns and over 500 rural customers. Mike is very conscientious, dedicated employee who is known as a leader in all facets of water treatment and distribution. Mike was able to adjust seamlessly to the transition from chlorine disinfection to chloramine disinfection for the rural system. There is no issue that Mike will not work diligently to resolve while continuing to provide a high quality of service to his customers. Mike is well liked and respected by staff, customers and other operators from the consecutive systems within Dry Prairie Rural Water. He is truly passionate about his role as a water operator.