

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

Wastewater Operator Achievement Award Nominees

Nick Dale, Town of Fairfield

Nick 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 Chuck), MRWS staff and City of Choteau public works staff, Nick hit the ground running. Nick's time has been spent trouble-shooting the existing lagoon operations, monitoring the UV disinfection process, update and organize system records, and assisted with completion of the \$3.8M wastewater lagoon project this past summer. In addition to his daily operational duties, Nick also assisted with bringing the public water system operations up and running 100% and completed vital public works equipment maintenance. Nick successfully obtained his Wastewater Operator Certification license in the Spring of 2018 and is currently studying for the water operator exam. Nick's work performance has been a huge asset to improve the Town's utility services and is immensely appreciated by the Fairfield community.

Drue Newfield, City of Havre

Taking the helm as Superintendent for the City of Havre Wastewater Plant in 2016, **Drue Newfield** found a challenging adventure in operational changes from an Activated Sludge Process to addressing nutrient limits with the new Biological Nutrient Removal Process. With specific attention to Phosphorus removal, Drue researched and through trial and error experiments worked to incorporate a local brewery's waste (fermented organics) instead of using alum in this process. This innovative solution has not only reduced costs for the system, but also set up a collaborative connection with the local business, community and City in improving water quality.

Drue continues to lead his staff in learning and trying new things to produce the best effluent from the system. He is always willing to give a tour and help everyone understand the new system. Serving as a steering committee member with the Montana Environmental Training Center, Drue supports certified operators and works to extend his knowledge of the opportunities and importance that this field provides.

James (Rusty) South, Vaughn Cascade County Water and Sewer

Since joining the District in 2019, **Rusty South** has been performing his job at an exemplary level. He recently obtained his water operator certification and is currently studying for the wastewater operator exam. Rusty demonstrates an extraordinary commitment to his community with many positive interactions with customers. His attention to detail with organizing the system's records, coordination with customers and service repairs, and improving operational equipment and maintenance service are examples of his initiative and commitment to being part of protecting a valuable resource along with providing clean and safe drinking water for his community. His peers note that his continuing growth of knowledge of the job, as well as his creative solutions have helped to reduce costs for the District.