

Effective Utility Management: Promoting Excellence in Water/Wastewater Utility Management

NACWA 2008 Winter Conference

How We Got Here

- July, 2005– EPA hosts meeting of leading utilities to discuss future of utility management
- List of *Attributes of Sustainably Managed Utilities* developed at the meeting by utilities
- Follow up discussions with leading Associations and formal agreement to collaborate through *Statement of Intent* in May, 2006
- Utility Steering Committee then established to guide the effort

Utility Steering Committee—The Key to It All

- Committee selected from a wide spectrum of utilities and private service providers
- Included large, medium, and small utilities
- Committee charged with making recommendations to Collaborating Organizations (EPA + 6 Associations)
- Met twice in person and had several calls
- Two focus groups with other utilities, etc. held in Las Vegas and Chicago

What Was the Result?

- Committee made a series of key recommendations:
 1. Water Sector should adopt 10 *Attributes of Effectively Managed Utilities and 5 Keys to Management Success*
 2. Collaborating Organizations should identify a set of “*cohesive set of targeted, generally applicable, individual water sector utility measures*”
 3. Finally, a “resource toolbox” identifying management resources available to utilities, based on the Attributes should be developed

All of these should be key elements of a sector-wide strategy to encourage effective utility management and “identify, encourage, and recognize excellence in water and wastewater utility management”

10 Attributes of Effectively Managed Utilities—The Foundation

- Product Quality
- Customer Satisfaction
- Employee and Leadership Development
- Operational Optimization
- Financial Viability
- Infrastructure Stability
- Operational Resiliency
- Community Sustainability
- Water Resource Adequacy
- Stakeholder Understanding and Support

Keys to Management Success—The Framework

- Leadership
- Strategic Business Planning
- Organizational Approaches
- Measurement
- Continual Improvement Management Framework (Plan-Do-Check-Act)

Why is EPA So Interested?

- The world is changing—traditional approaches focused solely on compliance are not enough—continual improvement mindset is needed
- Collaboration is the key—challenges are too large and stakes too high to operate any differently
- Sustainability of operations and infrastructure is the ultimate goal!
- EPA support and recognition can add a lot

Where Do We Go From Here?

- Collaborating organizations now working on three key implementation actions:
 - *Primer* to help utilities assess and get started
 - *Targeted performance measures* based the *Attributes*
 - *On-Line Resource Toolbox*

All three are expected to be available in spring, 2008

What's the Long-Term Vision?

- Attributes, Keys to Management Success, and Performance Measures are accepted as the norm, not the exception
- Utilities, regulators, and others united around a common management framework for defining effective management and excellence
- Utility excellence recognized and rewarded by communities, regulators, and others
- Water and wastewater operations and infrastructure are sustainable in the future

For More Information

- www.epa.gov/waterinfrastructure
- Also on websites from WEF, AWWA, APWA, NACWA, AMWA, and NAWC

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