

EXCELLENCE IN OPERATION AWARD

Water District receives state recognition

By Deborah McDermott

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Posted Feb. 23, 2016 at 3:47 PM



The staff and trustees of the York Water District includes, back row left to right, Webster Ropke, Ryan Lynch, Joe Bracy, Gary Stevens, Dana Woodworth, Noah Emery, David Deperrio, Larry Graham, Mike Moulton, Tony Yorke, Harrison Lucas, Tom Chase, Carla Robinson; front row left to right, Shelley Kimball, Karen Hale, Patter Carter, Joe Dignam, Todd Hill, Andy Belliveau, Don Neumann. Trustees not in the photo are Karen Arsenault, Frank Witham and Rick Boston. Courtesy photo

YORK – The York Water District was the only water utility in the state of Maine to be awarded the 2016 “Excellence in Operations” award by the Maine Water Utilities Association.

Superintendent Don Neumann said it’s the first time the district was given the award, and the nomination was anonymous.

“It’s something to be proud of,” he said. “Our employees really work hard and take our work very seriously. It’s a team effort.”

The award is given annually to only one public water system in Maine and recognizes outstanding performance in public and environmental health compliance; system

maintenance, infrastructure and equipment; water quality; employee training and employee and public education; and water quality research.

Neumann said he thinks several efforts by the YWD contributed to its selection this year:

- * Watershed management of its 2,090 acres. "Other utilities are working to model their watershed patrolling program after ours," he said.

- * The aeration system installed last year, which prevents harmful algae blooms from forming on Chases Pond

- * Work to upgrade aging infrastructure. According to Neumann, in 1992, 46 percent of the water in the system was not generating revenue, primarily because of leaks in the system or because lines were being "bled" 24 hours a day, "meaning they just ran to waste to keep the water clean." Today, nonrevenue water is less than 20 percent, he said, and water loss due to unknown leaks is less than 5 percent. Only one "bleeder" line remains and that will be abandoned this year.

Neumann said the district Board of Trustees deserve a lot of credit.

"They have worked to allow YWD to make the improvements necessary while keeping our ratepayers in mind so that we work efficiently," he said.

He said all of the workers deserve the award equally.

"There's a lot of work done behind the scenes for clean tap water," he said.

Seacoast Media Group link: <http://www.seacoastonline.com/news/20160223/water-district-receives-state-recognition>