



Jennifer Saunders photo

York Water District employees Larry Graham, Tony York, Joe Bracy and T.J. Chase pose with Bracy's creation, the "Bracy Nut Extractor," which has won multiple awards for solving workers' problems in the field. Graham, York and Chase assisted Bracy in improvements to the creation, which is used to extract frozen service box nuts for Water District employees.

Gadget wins national kudos

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YORK — When it comes to work in the field, the job for York Water District employees has become a lot more efficient, thanks to one of their own.

Joe Bracy, a local resident and York Water District employee, recently received two awards for his creation, dubbed by the York Water District as the "Bracy Nut Extractor" or BNE.

This week, Bracy and York Water District Superintendent Don Neumann were invited to attend a special conference and award ceremony in Florida.

"Joe came up with an idea a while ago to build a tool that would make it easier to open up service boxes," Neumann said.

Water District invention solves field frustrations

Service boxes are water shut-off valves located out and about town, and in the winter, they can become frozen and difficult to contend with, Bracy said.

"In my spare time, I was looking for an easier way," he said.

The result is a tool that has been hailed by both the Maine Water Utilities Convention's "Rigs and Gigs" and the American Water Works Association's "Gimmicks and Gadgets" contests.

"They were looking for some original ideas that help operators do their jobs easier," Neumann said. "... Joe on his own built a prototype. I had Joe and some of our crew work on this idea and

make some slight modifications. We named the tool the BNE — or Bracy Nut Extractor."

In the weeks that followed, the York Water District was notified that Bracy's tool took top prize in the Rigs and Gigs contest.

"We could not believe it but Joe's tool came in first place," Neumann said.

And, with the \$100 check he received for his award, Bracy showed his appreciation for his fellow York Water District employees by treating them to lunch.

As part of the Gimmicks and Gadgets contest, the BNE was sent to an independent volunteer committee. Gimmicks and

Gadgets entries are judged on the basis of originality, simplicity, use and application to the water industry, Neumann said.

"They claim lightning doesn't strike twice in the same spot," he said. "Well, believe it or not, the BNE came in first place again."

Before departing Saturday for Tampa, Fla., to retrieve Bracy's \$500 award, Neumann, Bracy and other members of the York Water District crew showed off the BNE.

Neumann said Bracy's idea, and the efforts of his fellow crew members Larry Graham, Tony York and T.J. Chase to improve on the BNE, is an example of the good work and good ideas of the York Water District team.

Bracy, however, remained humble about his creation.

"It just makes our work more efficient in the field," he said.