



THE CERTIFIER

THE Newsletter for Environmental Certification Authorities

VALIDATION & EXAMINATION COMMITTEES: STRENGTHENING ABC

Representing the heart and soul of ABC, Validation and Examination (V&E) Committees play an integral role in a process centering on continuous improvement through ensuring accuracy of exam questions, and maintaining “psychometrically” sound exams. As in any industry, while water and wastewater continues to evolve, so must ABC exams.

While exam review and validation is necessary and constant, there also is the need to ensure review processes evolve to meet or exceed industry practices. Over the last decade, the field of psychometrics (the proper design of exams) has advanced and carried with it the need for the Association to understand these changes and continually strive to improve its processes. In this light, ABC commissioned a comprehensive third party psychometric audit to improve an

already strong examination process and continue offering members the highest quality service possible.

The audit determined that ABC’s industry-leading testing program could be strengthened by creating new and more efficient methods of operating. In response to the audit, in late April ABC’s Board of Directors voted to partner with Professional Testing Incorporated (PTI). PTI will be working with staff and V&E committee members to fortify the foundations of the V&E process and assist ABC in creating standard operating procedures to conform to the highest credentialing standards.

In partnership with PTI, ABC is develop-

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Exam Development Series

In future editions of *The Certifier*, ABC will feature articles on best practices for examination development.

ABC Team Focused on Member Services

Three new faces joining ABC’s team in 2010 have centered their efforts on meeting the needs of ABC’s members. The Association welcomes William Morrison, Finance Director; Kandace Heitland, Testing and Certification Coordinator; and Megan Longnecker, Project Manager to ABC staff. They are featured on page two.

“Our team is excited to have Will, Kandace and Megan on board to join our team of professionals in serving as resources for our member certification programs,” said Paul Bishop, ABC CEO. “They each bring fresh perspectives, strong skill sets and new ideas to their respective roles.”

In early spring, ABC received the resigna-

tions of Judy Ritland, Ron Covert and Michael Somerville and wished them well in their future endeavors. While transitioning to a new staff model, Bishop says his team has concentrated on continuing to meet the needs of members and increasing professional staff development.

“At a recent workshop, we took a hands-on approach to identify what skills each of us brings to the table,” shared Bishop.

“Exercises centered on helping us work together to strengthen our member services, and focus our efforts on how each staff member contributes to raising the bar in our service to ABC.”

WHAT'S INSIDE

This edition of *The Certifier* holds the latest in certification news and events, including:

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Meet the Team: New Staff Join ABC in 2010



Megan Longnecker, Project Manager (mlongnecker@abccert.org)

Project Manager Megan Longnecker says working with ABC's international network of members and volunteers is rewarding. "I enjoy serving the Association and helping to make a positive impact on public health and our environment." Megan graduated from Iowa State University with a degree in History and Business and her previous work experience includes event coordination, research, planning and management of organizational projects - skills she uses daily in her role at ABC. "As project manager, I have an opportunity to be involved with a variety of areas including testing, certification, and membership, and work with other staff to impact many of ABC's member services."



William Morrison, Finance Director (wmorrison@abccert.org)

William Morrison, a graduate of St. Olaf in Economics and Finance, shares that in his role as Finance Director he hopes to streamline workflow processes affecting the Association. "I would like to make certain that ABC is using 'best practices' in all of its financial endeavors, ensuring an efficient operation day in and day out." His other goals include continuing to ensure the smooth financial operation of ABC, adding value to members and clients. "Considering the members and volunteers have taken on the responsibility of ensuring that our most important natural resource is managed properly, I see working with them as a privilege and an honor."



Kandace Heitland, Testing & Certification Coordinator (kheitland@abccert.org)

Kandace Heitland, a graduate of Iowa State University in Dairy Science and Psychology, says early on she was impressed with ABC and its mission. "Everyone was wonderful to meet during the interview process, and they have given me a warm welcome to the team." In her role as Testing & Certification Coordinator, Kandace works with ABC clients on scoring inquiries, and provides support for ABC's Certification Program. Her previous work experience includes serving as an office manager in two different industries. "I'm grateful for an opportunity to work in the water and wastewater industry. Environmental certification professionals serve on the front line of protecting public health."

Member Survey: Social Security Number Use on Certification Applications

A recent survey discussing the use of social security numbers on certification applications sparked interest and provided split results among the ABC program members who weighed in on the topic.

Of the 62 respondents, 28 member certification programs said applicants in

their state are required to list their social security numbers on certification applications, whereas nearly 55% said this information is not required.

State law requires many programs collect this information from any individual who is licensed or certified by the state for professional/occupational purposes. In Missouri for example, it is state law that social security numbers are provided on all license, permit or certificate applications.

Some states require that the social security number is provided for a variety of tax collection reasons, while other states do not collect the number for this purpose and instead cre-

To view results from past surveys, login to the member area and select "Survey Results" found under **Communications**. 

ate a special identification number.

In Canada, federal legislation prohibits the use of Social Insurance Numbers for any use other than tax/social insurance purposes.

(Member Survey continued on page 4)

Does your program require social security numbers on certification applications?

No 54.8%
Yes 45.2%

Recognition Program Honors Certified Operators

“We believe they really are exactly what we say: a professional,” said Sylvia Rottman, General Manager of Operator Certification Program Office in Colorado, in regards to a new Certified Water Professional (CWP) program in Colorado.

In order to recognize the training and dedication needed for certification, the Water and Wastewater Operator Facility Board (WWOFCB) approved the use of CWP in January 2009 and in May, certified operators were notified of their new title.

Not only are they encouraged to use the CWP acronym in business communication, but certificates also include the term “Certified Water Professional” and operators are presented with a pin of recognition. The WWOFCB decided to recognize Colorado operators to provide more visibility and acknowledgment in a profession dedicated to protecting public health.

“Over the past several years, our operators have risen to the occasion, so you know they are professionals who care about the industry,” said Rottman, who noted many Colorado operators assisted with relief efforts after Hurricane Katrina.

Colorado operators agree recognizing professionalism of the field is critical to the industry’s future. “The Certified Water Professional program is very important - there is no doubt about that,” said Dave Hoagland, the maintenance supervisor at Castle Rock Water Utilities in Castle Rock, Colorado. Certified operators have technical knowledge in the field that relates directly to the quality of service. “It’s a way of assuring the public that suppliers are both competent and caring.”

Rottman says she hopes other states and entities will consider establishing this type of program and notes she would be happy to share information on its development.

“Certified operators have to study, they have to test, and prove they’re a professional. It is our hope more communities will recognize the professionalism of the field through programs such as these.”



ABC Awards Nomination Deadline Approaching

ABC’s Awards Committee is seeking nominations to recognize the efforts of ABC members, volunteer board and committee members, and others who advance environmental certification. Deadline to submit awards nominations is **June 30, 2010**. These awards are:

- **Harris F. Seidel Lifetime Achievement Award**
- **Certification Program Award**
- **Robert C. McAnespie Outstanding Certification Officer Award**
- **Jess Jones Excellence in Service Award**

Nominations may be made by the Association’s members, by members of the Association Board of Directors, by training and/or

Submitting a Nomination

Nominations shall be in writing and shall describe the nominee’s contributions that warrant consideration for the award.

For additional information and a nomination form, visit: **Awards Nominations**.

*Nominations must be received by the ABC office by **June 30, 2010** to be considered for the awards.*

certification committees of AWWA and WEF and their local sections or associations, or by similar organizations actively involved in training and/or certification.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND APPROVED FOR REGULATORY MEMBERSHIP

The Prince Edward Island Department of Environment, Energy and Forestry has been approved for regulatory program membership by ABC’s Board of Directors. The program administers certification in the areas of Wastewater Treatment, Wastewater Collection, Water Treatment, Water Distribution, Small Water Systems Very Small Water Systems, and Industrial (using municipal service).

“ABC membership benefits us in several ways,” said Morley Foy, Approvals and Compliance Engineer and program contact.

“One example is by providing the province with a great exam service in a timely fashion,” he shared. “As well, we find strong value in being able to share ideas with other programs. Having these types of linkages for communication between certifying authorities is critical for the evolving world of certification.”

Strategic Planning Committee Meeting - June 18, 2010; Chicago, Illinois

Board of Directors Meeting - June 19, 2010; Chicago, Illinois

ACE10 Annual Conference & Exposition - June 20-24, 2010; Chicago, Illinois

Board of Directors Awards Nominations Deadline - June 30, 2010

ABC Office Closed: Observance of Independence Day - July 5, 2010

Annual Conference Call for Presentations Deadline - July 16, 2010

ABC Office Closed: Labor Day - September 6, 2010

For the most current information, visit [ABC's Online Calendar >>](#)

Remaining Best Practices Surveys Released

In 2009, ABC's Certification Committee began development of ABC Best Practice Guidelines for Certification Programs and are asking programs to continue participation in surveys aimed at recording regulatory and voluntary certification program common best practices. The remaining surveys are being distributed in summer 2010.

Laurie Sharp, Certification Committee Chair and Certification Council Director, emphasizes the importance of survey participation. "We've all spent the last decade getting our programs started and bringing them up to EPA standards. Most of us have the minimum requirements set up," she said. "With the

information collected, we're striving to better our programs, not just meet minimum requirements."

The surveys were initially developed by the Canadian provinces to define Canadian Certification Best Practices and the committee is evaluating and altering the surveys to broaden its audience and include the entire ABC regulatory and voluntary program membership, as well as non-member certification programs.

Once completed in 2011, the best practices guidelines will be available to the public.

(Strengthening ABC continued from cover)

ing a targeted testing development plan to be presented to the Board of Directors on June 19, 2010. The focus will be to strengthen core programs and the V&E process, as well as to utilize subject matter experts in the most efficient manner possible to maximize both time and resources of ABC's valued volunteers.

Remaining a dynamic, member-focused association is the driving force behind continual improvement of ABC's testing services. Thanks to the dedication and service of countless committee members volunteering their time and sharing their expertise, ABC's testing service has a strong foundation on which to build a lasting legacy for its membership.

ABC Past President Retires

Cheryl Bergener, Program Manager, Washington Waterworks Operator Certification Program, will be retiring June 25. ABC wishes Cheryl well in her retirement and extends gratitude and appreciation for her many years of service to the environmental industry and as a past ABC President and Board member.

Anyone needing information regarding Washington's program can contact Richard Sarver (360) 236-3093; Richard.Sarver@doh.wa.gov or Judy Carter (360) 236-3139; Judy.Carter@doh.wa.gov.

(Member Survey continued from page 2)

Wastewater operators in Nebraska are not required to submit a social security number. However, the Department is required to obtain a completed 'US Citizenship Attestation' for any license, certification, or permit issued to an individual, so there is no social security number requirement,

but applicants are required to have the attestation on file for initial certification and certificate renewals.

To download the complete list of program responses, login to the member area of ABC's website.

ABC's 24th Annual Conference, Honoring Certification Professionals who are Making a Difference, Extends Call for Presentations Deadline

ABC's Annual Conference, one of the most comprehensive environmental certification conferences for water and wastewater certification professionals, invites your organization to submit a presentation proposal for the Association's 24th event, *Making a Difference*, to be held Jan. 25-28, 2011 in Phoenix-Scottsdale, Ariz.

Deadline to submit applications has been extended to July 16, 2010.

Specific presentation areas of interest include, but are not limited to:

- **Certification Issues**
- **Distance Education**
- **Compliance and Enforcement**
- **Technical Assistance and Training**
- **Professional Development**
- **Ethics**
- **Other**

To submit an application, visit the [Annual Conference webpage](#).

On the Web

