

Event recap: AWWOA 44th Annual Operators Seminar



AWWOA Executive Director, Dan Rites giving members an update on the Association at the AGM on Wednesday afternoon.

Surrounded by the beautiful Rocky Mountains, the 44th Annual Operators Seminar was held in Banff, Alberta from March 11-15, 2019 by the [AWWOA](#).

The [Alberta Water & Wastewater Operators Association](#) is a member-run source for expert information and training based in Edmonton, Alberta that provides the essentials in education, networking, promotion and the ongoing support that operators need to proudly supply Alberta communities with safe drinking water and a protected environment.

The Seminar gives water and wastewater operators an opportunity to learn about new trends and technologies within the industry while also staying informed about current practices within the province of Alberta. The

event also provides a variety of opportunities for operators to not only engage with each other, but also supervisors, contractors, government officials, consultants and many other industry professionals.

Over 500 delegates and 140 suppliers participated in the Seminar. Monday and Tuesday featured Pre-Seminar Workshops at the Banff Rocky Mountain Resort and Trade Show at the Banff Park Lodge. The official Seminar kick-off took place on Wednesday morning and featured presentations from Alberta Environment & Parks and the Water School. Technical sessions ran Wednesday afternoon and Thursday. Kim Sturgess of WaterSMART concluded the week with a Friday morning panel session discussing the Water for Life strategy.

Social Events

Networking events were also held including:

- Young Professionals Night sponsored by [Algae Control Canada](#) and [Western Canada Water](#),
- Casino Night sponsored by [Wolseley](#),
- and Thursday-night banquet featuring comedian Kevin Stobo.



Seminar delegates enjoying the Thursday-night banquet.

Workshops and Technical Sessions

Some memorable workshops and technical sessions included:

- *Intersections between Biology and Wastewater Treatment Processes* presented by Kevin “the Bugman” Ripp, Aquafix Inc.

- *Water Resiliency from an Operator's Perspective – Slave Lake Raw Water Intake and Pumphouse, a 9-year project* presented by Jack Sarty, Town of Slave Lake and Melanie Richomnd, Associated Engineering
- *Training the New Guy; Worst Job Ever?* Presented by Glen Ketchum, EPCOR

Awards

Each year at the Seminar, awards are presented to deserving operators including the Gerald Samuel Operator of the Year Award which is given to an operator who is a “member of good standing” and has demonstrated exemplary service to the water and/or wastewater operations field over an extended period of time.

- Gerald Samuel Operator of the Year Award: Curtis Kerr, Town of Cardston
- Ron Bayne Service Award: Bert J. Miller, City of Red Deer
- Steve Blonsky Honorary Life Membership: Ralph Havinga and Don MacKinnon
- NAIT Achievement Award: David McMillan – Calgary Program, Daniel Hkansah – Edmonton Program



Curtis Kerr, 2018 Gerald Samuel Operator of the Year Award from AWWOA Chair Ed Spohr

In addition to the 44th Annual Operators Seminar, the AWWOA is hosting a Golf Tournament in Pigeon Lake, AB on June 8, 2019 and the 2nd Annual Water Week Conference in Edmonton, AB from November 13-15, 2019.