

# National Water Research Institute

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## ***In This Issue***

- New Branding Tool Available to Assist Utilities in Developing a Systematic Approach to Rate Setting and Investment
- Early Registration Deadline Approaching for Oakland Asset Management Workshop
- Call for Abstracts for Managed Aquifer Recharge Symposium
- Recently Published NWRI Reports Available for Download

## **New Branding Tool Available to Assist Utilities in Developing a Systematic Approach to Rate Setting and Investment**

The Utility Branding Network has released a new branding process tool designed to help water and wastewater utilities ensure that rates fully fund all operational and capital investment needs. The tool addresses the following concepts and steps:

**No Industry System for Utility Rate Setting** – Unfortunately, there is no systematic process for clarifying the value that utilities provide and ensuring the policymakers feel confident in supporting needed rate increases. Without a well-defined approach, rates are typically determined by what policymakers perceive as politically palatable. Politically-palatable rates rarely coincide with community investment needs, and can lead to water shortages, increased environmental risks, and infrastructure failures.

**Why a Branding Process?** – Branding is an important concept and tool because brands are powerful and deal with value, trust, and price. For consumer products, the branding process addresses the perceptions of individual consumers, who ultimately set product pricing by what they are willing to pay. For utilities, branding programs must address the perceptions, needs, and confidence of policymakers.

**Five-Step Approach to Brand Building** – The new branding tool provides a step-by-step process for building the utility brand and ensuring that rates support the investment needs of the community. The tool covers the following:

- Clarifying the value that the utility provides to the community (a clear definition of the brand).
- Integrating the brand into utility planning processes and the strategic plan.
- Making communications more meaningful and effective.
- Using the brand and investment plans to build community relationships.
- Implementing specific practices that help policymakers feel confident in supporting needed rate increases.

The new branding tool is available at [www.utilitybranding.net](http://www.utilitybranding.net) (under “News”).

*The Utility Branding Network is committed to ensuring that water and wastewater agencies are trusted and that the rate-setting process fully funds utility operating costs and needed capital investments. The Network is managed by NWRI on behalf of water and wastewater agencies. If you are not yet a member of the Network, or would like more information, please contact John Ruetten at [john@utilitybranding.net](mailto:john@utilitybranding.net) or Jeff Mosher at [jmosher@nwri-usa.org](mailto:jmosher@nwri-usa.org).*

## Early Registration Deadline Approaching for Oakland Asset Management Workshop

Take advantage of early registration for the asset management training workshop being held by NWRI in partnership with the U.S. EPA and East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) on June 30-July 1, 2010, at EBMUD's facilities in Oakland, California.

The fee for early registration (by **June 23, 2010**) is \$275. After June 23, the registration fee will be \$300.

The purpose of the 2-day workshop, as designed by the U.S. EPA, is to provide "hands on" training on how to use advanced asset management techniques to improve and sustain the long-term performance of water or wastewater utilities. The workshop will include real-world storylines, participant exercises, case-based mentoring, and step-by-step demonstration.

Instruction will be provided by **Steve Allbee**, who has been with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for 28 years. As Project Director of the Gap Analysis, he is the principal author of The Clean Water and Drinking Water Infrastructure Gap Analysis, which is a comprehensive national-level assessment that is often cited as a primary source document in articulating the challenges ahead for America's water and wastewater systems.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Division of Drinking Water and Environmental Management Operation Certification Unit will provide up to fourteen (14) Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for workshop participants.

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Clean Water Program will provide one (1) educational unit for workshop participants.

To register, or for more information (including the workshop brochure), please visit [www.regonline.com/AssetMgt-Oakland](http://www.regonline.com/AssetMgt-Oakland).

## Call for Abstracts for Managed Aquifer Recharge Symposium

Abstracts for the Managed Aquifer Recharge Symposium are due by **September 15, 2010**.

The 2-day Managed Aquifer Symposium will be held January 25-26, 2010, in Irvine, CA. Sponsors include the Water Research Foundation (WaterRF), Orange County Water District (OCWD), and NWRI.

The purpose of the symposium is to provide a forum for detailed discussions about managed aquifer recharge issues and to exchange information. It will focus on technical and policy issues regarding augmenting aquifers with surface waters, including river water, recycled water, and storm water through recharge basins.

Practitioners, researchers, consultants, water agency staff, and others involved in basin recharge activities are invited to submit an abstract for an oral or poster presentation. Student posters are also welcome.

Abstracts must be one-page in length (no more than 500 words) and single-spaced. Topic areas include:

- Recharge Basin Performance.
- Recharge Basin Operations.

- Modeling of Recharge Basin Performance.
- Basin Optimization.
- Facility Planning and Engineering.
- Innovative Recharge Ideas.
- Research.
- Operational Experience.

Further information regarding the abstract submittal process (including the downloadable "Abstract Submittal Form") is available at [www.nwri-usa.org/RechargeSymposium.htm](http://www.nwri-usa.org/RechargeSymposium.htm).

## Recently Published NWRI Reports Available for Download

The following NWRI publications are now available for download:

- NWRI Final Project Report on "Source, Fate, and Transport of Endocrine Disruptors, Pharmaceuticals, and Personal Care Products in Drinking Water Sources in California" (May 2010). This report and other CEC-related publications can be downloaded at <http://www.nwri-usa.org/CECs.htm>.
- NWRI White Paper on "Regulatory Aspects of Direct Potable Reuse in California" (April 2010). This White Paper and other NWRI reports can be downloaded at [www.nwri-usa.org/epublications.htm](http://www.nwri-usa.org/epublications.htm).

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