

National Water Research Institute

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University of Florida Student Receives 2010-2011 Linsky Fellowship for Outstanding Water Research

NWRI is pleased to announce that Julie C. Padowski, a doctoral student studying water resources sustainability in the Soil and Water Science Department at the University of Florida, has been selected as the second recipient of the NWRI Ronald B. Linsky Graduate Fellowship for Outstanding Water Research.

The Linsky Fellowship is awarded to an exceptional student in water science or engineering whose research is original, innovative, and expected to advance the state-of-the-art. Julie was selected because of her multi-disciplinary research project on water resources management, which will combine hydrological and managerial analysis approaches to evaluate water vulnerability in urban areas of the U.S. Her advisor is Dr. James Jawitz.

According to Julie, "Many urban areas rely on shared resources to meet needs, and as climate change and population growth place more pressure on local resources, it becomes increasingly important for water managers to understand the limitations of their water supplies from both a local and regional context."

She has three research objectives:

- Quantify and evaluate the current state of water availability and vulnerability in U.S. urban centers with populations over 100,000.
- Identify current utility management responses to threats of water vulnerability.
- Examine how vulnerability affects urban centers in terms of management and costs.

The ultimate goal of her research is to determine the most effective strategies used by urban water managers to improve the resiliency of water supplies and reduce vulnerability. Part of the fellowship funding will be used specifically to help Julie conduct a survey of urban utility managers across the U.S.

Funding for the NWRI Ronald B. Linsky Graduate Fellowship is provided by Mrs. Patricia Linsky, the Joan Irvine Smith & Athalie R. Clarke Foundation, and endowment donors. Please see www.nwri-usa.org/LinskyFellowship.htm (under "Donors") for the list of endowment donors. NWRI is grateful for their support.

More information about the Linsky fellowship is available at www.nwri-usa.org/LinskyFellowship.htm.

Managed Aquifer Recharge Symposium: Abstract Submission Deadline Is September 15

The deadline to submit an abstract for an oral or poster presentation at the 2011 Managed Aquifer Recharge Symposium is **Wednesday, September 15, 2010**.

The purpose of this symposium is to discuss and exchange information about managed aquifer recharge issues. The focus will be on technical and policy issues regarding augmenting aquifers through **recharge basins** with surface waters, including river water, recycled water, and storm water.

The symposium will be held on January 25-26, 2011, in Irvine, CA. It is being organized by the Water Research Foundation (WaterRF), Orange County Water District (OCWD), and NWRI.

Abstract 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.

Student posters are also welcome.

More information about the abstract submittal process (including the downloadable "Abstract Submittal Form") is available at www.regonline.com/rechargesymposium.

Consumer Confidence Report Case Study Features Brand Building Techniques to Increase Community Trust and Support

The Utility Branding Network has released a case study on a consumer confidence report (CCR) that features branding practices used to increase public support and enhance the utility's brand.

In developing their CCR, the City of Rifle Utility Department in Rifle, Colorado, followed many of the practices featured in the Utility Branding Network's CCR checklist (which includes 12 suggestions for making the CCR more meaningful, interesting, and effective in building trust with customers).

Highlights from the Rifle Utility Department's CCR include:

- Key water quality branding points were provided at the beginning of the CCR.
- A summary was included that highlighted findings and important issues.
- The "Transforming Raw Water into Drinking Water" section clearly described the treatment and testing used to make raw water fit for drinking (establishing the utility, its ethics, and its investment as the "source of quality" for the community's drinking water supply).

- Plans for investing in a new treatment facility and enhanced water quality were outlined.
- Meaningful headlines were employed to highlight required information (which reduces confusion and water quality concerns).
- In addition to an EPA contact, a local utility contact was provided for supporting community members who have concerns about lead in their water.

The net result is that the CCR is clear, not overly technical, puts required information in a meaningful context, builds the utility brand, and creates water quality confidence.

Both the Rifle Utility Department's CCR and the Utility Branding Network's CCR checklist are available to download at 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 NWRRI 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 or Jeff Mosher at jmosher@nwri-usa.org.

Utility Branding Tool Provides Guidance on Developing Systematic Approach to Rate Setting and Investment

A branding process tool was developed by the Utility Branding Network to help water and wastewater utilities ensure that rates fully fund all operational and capital investment needs. The tool addresses the following:

No Industry System for Utility Rate Setting – No systematic process exists for clarifying the value that utilities provide and ensuring that policymakers feel confident in supporting needed rate increases. Rates are typically determined by what policymakers perceive as “politically palatable,” which rarely coincides with community investment needs and can lead to water shortages, increased environmental risks, and infrastructure failures.

Why a Branding Process? – Branding deals with value, trust, and price. For consumer products, the branding process addresses the perceptions of 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 branding tool provides a step-by-step process for building the utility brand and ensuring that rates support community investment needs, including:

- Clarifying the value that the utility provides to the community.
- Integrating the brand into utility planning and the strategic plan.
- Making communications more meaningful and effective.
- Using the brand and investment plans to build community relations.
- Implementing practices that help policymakers feel confident in supporting needed rate increases.

The branding tool can be downloaded at www.utilitybranding.net (under “News”).

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