

PROBLEM-SOLVING WORKSHOP IN EASTERN ONTARIO

Thirty-three attendees actively participated in a Problem Solving: Activated Sludge Workshop that took place in Brockville on September 20, 2006. The workshop was organized by the WEAO's Professional Wastewater Operators group (PWO) and was facilitated by Vincent Nazareth and Dr. Valera Saknenko, of Anderson Operations Inc. Among the participants were wastewater treatment plant operators, district supervisors, consultants and an environmental coordinator. The Problem Solving Workshop was last presented in Eastern Ontario in 1998, which helps to explain the overwhelming response.

The primary objective of the workshop is to provide the participants with a framework for solving problems at wastewater treatment plants. This was accomplished using a combination of conventional instruction techniques and "hands-on" training, while stressing the importance of a team approach.

The workshop included three case studies, an overview of problem solving and management skills, and a process overview. Students were taught a four-stage approach to problem solving – problem recognition, investigation, problem correction and prevention. Working through the case studies, participants, teamed up in groups, and utilized the problem solving techniques taught in the course. Although the workshop was not designed to teach wastewater treatment process, an overview of topics relevant to the case studies was provided, including activated sludge process, control and instrumentation. Participants are eligible to receive 0.65 C.E.U.s for attending this session.

These Problem Solving Workshops have proved to be quite popular. Ninety percent of participants indicated that the workshop was informative and over sixty percent said they would recommend it to their colleagues. Overall, nearly 75% of those who responded rated the course good to excellent. Thank you to those who participated in the Workshop, and thank you for your valuable comments that are essential for continuous improvement of the Workshop. Melodie Hobbs of the City of Brockville deserves special appreciation for organizing the venue and coordinating with area participants.

Alternative technical focus themes include preliminary and primary treatment, extended aeration, and final settling and disinfection.

The PWO plans on presenting the Workshop in April 2007, in conjunction with the WEAO Annual Conference.

For more information about the workshop, contact John Thompson at john.thompson@region.durham.on.ca or Valera Saknenko at vsaknenko@rvanderson.com. ♦

*By Vincent Nazareth and Valera Saknenko
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Right: Dr. Val Saknenko addressing process issues at the workshop

Below: Workshop participants

