

## EPA Release Small System Guidance

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed guides for small systems about the Long Term 2 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment (LT2) and the Stage 2 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rules (DBPR).

*Complying with the Long Term 2 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule: Small Entity Compliance Guide* is intended for small public water systems and contains a general introduction and background for the LT2 rule, describes the specific requirements of the rule, and provides information on how to comply with those requirements. Download the guide from the EPA Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water site at: [www.epa.gov/OGWDW/disinfection/lt2/pdfs/guide\\_lt2\\_stepguide\\_smallentitycomplianceguide.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/OGWDW/disinfection/lt2/pdfs/guide_lt2_stepguide_smallentitycomplianceguide.pdf).

*Complying with the Stage 2 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule: Small Entity Compliance Guide* contains a general introduction and background for the Stage 2 DBPR, describes the requirements of the rule that apply to systems serving fewer than 10,000 people, and provides step-by-step guidance on how small systems can comply with Stage 2 DBPR requirements. Examples of actions systems might take to comply with the rule are given throughout the guide. Download this guide at: [www.epa.gov/OGWDW/disinfection/stage2/pdfs/guide\\_st2\\_stepguide\\_smallentitycomplianceguide.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/OGWDW/disinfection/stage2/pdfs/guide_st2_stepguide_smallentitycomplianceguide.pdf).

Both manuals are also available from EPA's Water Resource Center. Write to 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington DC 20460, call (202) 566-1729, or e-mail [center.water-resource@epa.gov](mailto:center.water-resource@epa.gov).

## Poll Finds Water, Wastewater a Key Challenge

In November 2006, *Public Works* magazine conducted a poll to determine budget trends and infrastructure challenges for communities across the country.

Generally, budgets for both operations and maintenance, and capital improvements were expected to increase in 2007. But, the results show, size matters. "The bigger the better—at least where funding is concerned," writes Stephanie Johnson in the January 2007 issue of the magazine. "The larger your community, the more likely your budget for both daily operations and major improvements increased from 2006 to 2007."

*Public Works* divided the nation into five regions and examined challenges in each. The combined category "water, wastewater, and stormwater" was the top concern in three of the five regions (southwest, midwest, and southeast).

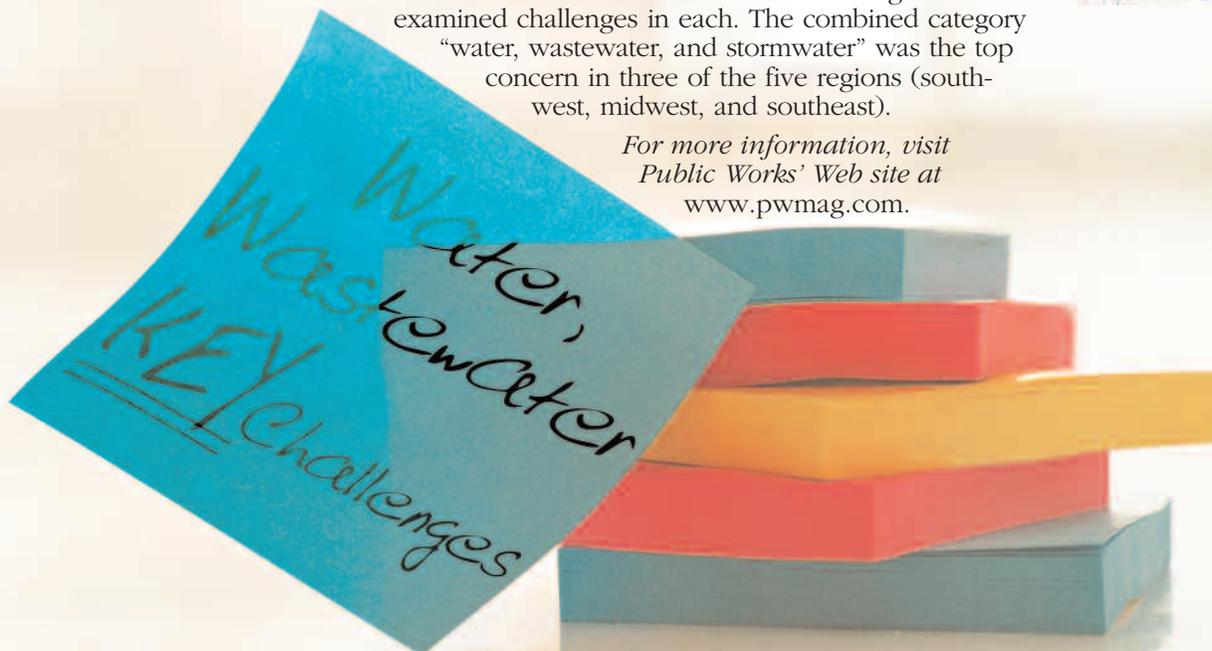
For more information, visit *Public Works'* Web site at [www.pwmag.com](http://www.pwmag.com).



## Water Operators Wanted

Demand for water and wastewater treatment plant and system operators is expected to increase nine to 17 percent between now and 2014, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics projections. The current median income for these workers is approximately \$35,000 annually.

Learn more about employment on the Bureau of Labor Statistics Web site at [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov).



# Water Wars Heat Up

The ongoing drought in the U.S. West—eight straight years in some areas—has exacerbated the already contentious issue of water rights in the region. As the worst dry spell since the 1930s continues, states are bickering with each other and federal agencies, bills are being introduced in state legislatures and Congress, and lawsuits are going as far as the U.S. Supreme Court.

Some recent battles in the water wars include:

- Montana and Wyoming are wrangling over the Bighorn, Tongue, and Powder rivers.
- Nebraska and Kansas are squabbling over irrigation water from the Republican River.
- South Dakota has asked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to stop drawing down reservoirs because of the impact of recreational fishing while in Iowa, barge companies want more water released so that river traffic can continue.
- In Idaho, the governor wants to build more dams and expand existing ones to retain Snake River water and help replenish the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer.
- The booming Las Vegas metropolitan area recent won approval for a controversial \$2 billion pipeline project that will transport rural groundwater to southern Nevada. Because treated wastewater will then be discharged to Lake Mead, the plan allows the state to potentially receive a greater share of Colorado River water, currently shared by seven states. The increased share plan is being reviewed by the U.S. Department of Interior.

Despite several large snows in the Rocky Mountains this winter, overall precipitation is below normal, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor in a March 2007 report. Therefore, water flows this spring and summer are not likely to improve. The water wars, it seems, are far from over.

*For more information about drought in the U.S., visit the Drought Monitor Web site at <http://drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html>.*

## USDA Funds \$180 Million for Rural Infrastructure

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Under Secretary Thomas C. Dorr announced \$180 million for water and wastewater loans and grants at an April 23, 2007, press conference. This investment, celebrated in conjunction with the 37th anniversary of Earth Day, will benefit 61 rural communities in 29 states.

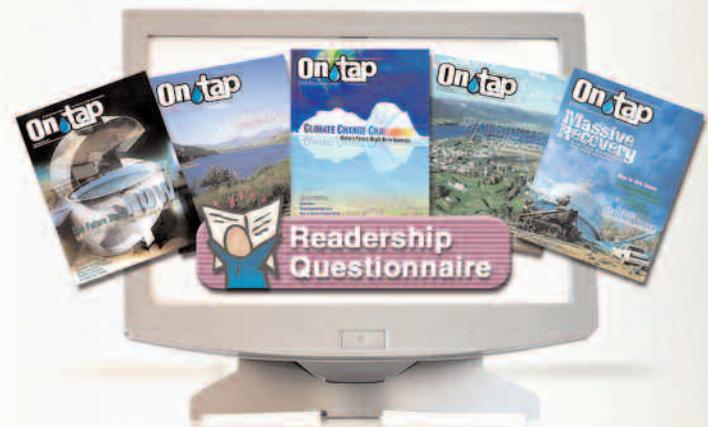
“These projects will build and improve rural water and sewage systems, and rural communities will benefit through cleaner water, recreation, and wildlife resources,” Dorr said. “USDA is working with commu-

nities across America to provide investment financing and an improved quality of life for local residents.”

Earth Day is observed annually on April 22 to inspire awareness of and appreciation for the environment. According to Dorr, “the USDA funding will help communities upgrade sewage systems to better manage storm runoff, expand and upgrade water treatment plants, extend water service to new residents, and build a renewable energy generation facility.”

*To learn more about USDA water and wastewater loans and grants, visit the USDA Rural Development Utilities Service Web site at [www.rurdev.usda.gov/rus](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rus) or contact your state Rural Development office. For the phone number of your state Rural Development office, contact the National Environmental Services Center at (800) 624-8301 or (304) 293-4191. The list is also available on the Rural Development Web site at [www.rurdev.usda.gov/recd\\_map.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/recd_map.html).*





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Image courtesy of Jet Population Laboratory

## Satellites Track Water Supply

For the last three years, the National Aeronautics and Space Agency (NASA) has been using satellites to study parts of the world that are experiencing water shortages. The Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment (GRACE) consists of a pair of satellites, orbiting 130 miles apart and measuring everything from rivers to aquifers to water contained in snow.

Initial data from the GRACE mission show that, over the past three years, the Congo River level is losing approximately 21.6 millimeters (mm) of water per year, while the Zamebezi and Nile Rivers are losing 16.3 mm and 9.3 mm, respectively. NASA reports that the drop in the Congo's water level represents two years worth of drinking water for people who depend on this water source.

In the U.S., the satellites have documented ground-water depletion in California's Central Valley.

To learn more about the GRACE, visit the mission's Web site at <http://www.csr.utexas.edu/grace/>

## RDUS Loans Rates Unchanged

Interest rates for Rural Development Utilities Service (RDUS) water and wastewater loans have been announced. The market and intermediate rates are up slightly, while the poverty rate is unchanged.

RDUS interest rates are issued quarterly at three different levels: the poverty line rate, the intermediate rate, and the market rate. The rate applied to a particular project depends on community income and the type of project being funded.

To qualify for the *poverty line rate*, two criteria must be met. First, the loan must primarily be used for facilities required to meet health and sanitary standards. Second, the median household income of the area being served must be below 80 percent of the state's non-metropolitan median income or fall below the federal poverty level. As of April 1, 2007, the federal poverty level was \$20,650 for a family of four.

To qualify for the *intermediate rate*, the service area's median household income cannot exceed 100 percent of the state's non-metropolitan median income.

The *market rate* is applied to projects that don't qualify for either the poverty or intermediate rates. The market rate is based on the average of the Bond Buyer index.

The rates, which apply to all loans issued from April 1 through June 30, 2007, are:

▷ **poverty line: 4.5 percent**  
(unchanged from the previous quarter);

▷ **intermediate: 4.25 percent**  
(unchanged from the previous quarter); and

▷ **market: 4.125 percent**  
(unchanged from the previous quarter).

For this quarter, all loans will be obligated at the lower (4.125) rate. RDUS loans are administered through state Rural Development offices, which can provide specific information concerning RDUS loan requirements and applications procedures.

For the phone number of your state Rural Development office, contact the National Environmental Services Center at (800) 624-8301 or (304) 293-4191. The list is also available on the Rural Development Web site at [www.rurdev.usda.gov/recd\\_map.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/recd_map.html).