
From: Shekter, Jean (DEQ)
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2015 8:08 AM
To: Benzie, Richard (DEQ)
Subject: RE: FOS Update

I appreciate the update. Thank you.

From: Benzie, Richard (DEQ)
Sent: Monday, January 12, 2015 7:44 PM
To: Bolf, Michael (DEQ); Dehtiar, Luke (DEQ); Esparsa, Brian (DEQ); Klein, Jeremy (DEQ); Sarkipato, Ernest (DEQ); Walstrom, Kimberly (DEQ); Howell, Sherri (DEQ); Peterman, Tammy (DEQ); Antil, Jeffrey (DEQ); Brennan, Patrick (DEQ); Doyle, Mark (DEQ); Drake, Jerry (DEQ); DuMont, Ralph (DEQ); Rennaker, Joanne (DEQ); Chooi, Wood (DEQ); Einhardt, Nancy (DEQ); Lachance, Amy (DEQ); Ostrander, Debbie (DEQ); Reyes, Katelyn (DEQ); Wozniak, Gary (DEQ); Busch, Stephen (DEQ); Joseph, Mark (DEQ); Prysby, Mike (DEQ); Rennaker, Joanne (DEQ); Rosenthal, Adam (DEQ); Skinker, Bethel (DEQ); Brookens, Todd (DEQ); Gotham, Daryl (DEQ); Howell, Sherri (DEQ); Kaiser, Rebecca (DEQ); London, Bob (DEQ); Peterman, Tammy (DEQ); Reinke, Joseph (DEQ); Bridges, Jeriesha (DEQ); Donaldson, Kristina (DEQ); Islam, Abuzoha (DEQ); Johnson, Stephanie (DEQ); Lopez, Amber (DEQ); Stieb, Melody (DEQ); Beauchamp, Karen (DEQ); Bushong, Kathleen (DEQ); Clark, John (DEQ); Pascoe, Doug (DEQ); Swenor, Scott (DEQ); Thomas, Chuck (DEQ); Wolfe, Rob (DEQ); Berndt, Jason (DEQ); Brun Del Re, Paul (DEQ); Comage, Renee (DEQ); Cook, Pat (DEQ); Fisher, Brant (DEQ); Koenigsnecht, John (DEQ); Kukuk, Wayne (DEQ); McDermott, Kristine (DEQ); Philip, Kris (DEQ); Schmidt, Scott (DEQ); Shekter, Jean (DEQ); Bloemker, Jon (DEQ); Conradson, Scott (DEQ); Howell, Sherri (DEQ); Peterman, Tammy (DEQ); Robinson, Krista (DEQ); Slater, Brad (DEQ); Thurston, Brian (DEQ); Graham, Lois (DEQ); Deyoung, David (DEQ)
Cc: Shekter Smith, Liane (DEQ)
Subject: RE: FOS Update

Greetings,

Well it's been four weeks since my last update, but like a lot of you, I was out for two of those weeks over the holidays. I spent one of them in the U.P., where the snow-covered evergreens on bright sunny days (yes there were several) and the outdoor Christmas tree on the neighbors deck that lit up every night provided beautiful winter scenes, almost like postcards. But the air temperatures in the morning (-19, -14, etc.) were ridiculous. I told my Dad I would already be packing for somewhere warm if I lived there all winter.

Since my last update, we have been working on a number of issues and projects. I have finally begun to update the Internal Controls Evaluation (ICE) forms for the Community PWSS Program that I mentioned in my previous message. They are due by the end of this week, so I'm on my usual schedule. I'm hoping I don't have to change much from 2012. After I complete that obligation, I hope to finish putting together a hiring package for the vacant CDWU Chief position.

I have also been working with some of the SRF staff (Isabel Hartman, Eric Pohan, and David Worthington) on developing an agenda for training the less experienced district engineers on the review of DWRF Project Plans. The 6 or so engineers that have been hired in the last few years were sent an appointment for this training session last month, as their participation is expected. Others are welcome if they wish to refresh their knowledge, or despite their length of service, have not had a lot of experience with DWRF program responsibilities. I'm sorry for the late notice, but I just didn't get a chance to publicize this opportunity until last week, and it slipped my mind until I was on my way home last Friday night.

If you would like to attend this training, the meeting is next Thursday, January 22nd, at 9:30 in the Hale-Brake Conference Room, Atrium level. Our plan is to spend the morning providing a brief review of the DWRF program, then explain what is expected in a final Project Plan, outline the roles and responsibilities of Project Managers and District Engineers, cover some of the problem areas we have experienced, review the typical timeline to complete a project plan, etc. In the afternoon, I plan to review the scoring system. I see this

training as very informal with a lot of time for questions and answers. If you were not invited but would like to attend, please get supervisory approval and let me know so we have enough materials available for attendees. Right now, I am expecting Jeriesha Bridges, Ernie Sarkipato, Katelyn Reyes, Stephanie Johnson, Joe Reinke, Pat Brennan and maybe Amy Lachance. But more are welcome.

I also spent quite a bit of time last week dealing with the violation of the drinking water standard for disinfection byproducts in Flint, but not as much time as the Lansing District staff of Mike Prysby, Adam Rosenthal, and Steve Busch. Flint residents were already on edge over the recurring total coliform MCL violations last summer that occurred shortly after the city switched from purchasing Detroit water to relying upon the Flint River. And they remembered the low or no pressure problems created last winter by the extreme cold and unusual depth of frost penetration that caused more water mains than usual to burst. So when the city issued the public notification for exceeding the TTHM standard, the telephones began to ring. Fortunately, the Lansing District had forewarned management, which had forewarned the executive office. As a result, advance notification was also provided to legislators that cover the Flint area. Nonetheless, Mike and I along with Sarah Howes (assistant to the legislative liaison) found ourselves in a hastily arranged meeting in the House of Representatives office building last Tuesday afternoon to explain the problem and answer questions to the Flint area representatives.

This exceedance has several possible contributing factors, not the least of which is the much higher organic loading of the Flint River compared to Lake Huron. But it was also caused in part by Flint's historic storage tank operating practices where they maintained high levels with narrow operating ranges resulting in high residence times and little tank turnover. They may have operated in that manner to provide the most volume possible in case the DWSD pipeline burst. However, doing so after converting to the river resulted in greater TTHM formation. It is also possible that the city was not optimizing their ozonation system to reduce the TTHM precursors. Changes made in their operation before the city exceeded the MCL but after significantly elevated quarterly results were available last summer reduced the TTHM levels significantly in the latest round of monitoring. But it will take multiple rounds of monitoring to return the running annual average to compliance. Mike, Steve and Adam have continued to deal with this issue throughout the last week, and I know Mike is now preparing a Log Letter on this issue for the Director or Governor to sign. Today we learned that the city is planning an evening meeting next week to improve their communication with customers and hopefully, restore some customer confidence. The Lansing District will be participating in this event.

Some of the other activities FOS staff here in Lansing and/or I worked on since my last message include:

1. Dealing with a state audit of the DWRF program, particularly the set aside uses;
2. Getting the operator examination grades for the fall exams completed and disseminated;
3. Addressing several operator certification issues resulting from unsuccessful attempts by operators to obtain the proper license;
4. Continuing efforts to ensure drinking water is an integral part of a proposed statewide, water strategy;
5. Discussions with EPA on possible funding of a source water protection seminar in Michigan to enhance cross program integration;
6. Dealing with cross connection control issues and a legislative bill to establish an inspection frequency for residential irrigation systems (more on that to come when the deadline for Governor action passes);
7. Once again explaining to other agencies the drinking water program's history and position with respect to 1,4-Dioxane contamination and a possible standard or Health Advisory Level; and
8. A successful open house and heartfelt goodbye for Diane Reck;

We have our monthly managers meeting this Thursday. Be sure to let your supervisor know if you have any issues they should raise. I hope to discuss and then start scheduling district visits after that meeting.

Finally, as I often did for the staff in the Community Drinking Water Unit, I wanted to thank you all for the great job you have been doing in working to ensure Michigan residents and visitors have safe drinking water. In appreciation of your efforts, feel free to stay home next Monday.

Richard