President’s Pen

Welcome to the 1st edition of the Tennessee Onsite Wastewater Association (TOWA) newsletter in cooperation with the Tennessee Association of Utility Districts (TAUD). This newsletter is our link to reaching out and informing those in the profession of future events, new technologies and points of interest. I would like to thank Bill Dobbins, Executive Director of TAUD for his time and input and Tonia Pass, Member Services, for helping make this newsletter a reality. I am very excited about our relationship with TAUD and look forward to many years of publishing TOWA newsletters in cooperation with TAUD.

It has been a very busy year for TOWA. Since we have not had a newsletter in some time, I will attempt to touch on several key events taking place in Tennessee. First and foremost is the Center for Decentralized Wastewater Management at the University of Tennessee’s Agricultural Experiment Station in Spring Hill, Tennessee. Dr. John Buchanan is the Director of the facility and under his guidance; it will have tremendous potential as a premiere onsite wastewater-training center in the region. The benefits of this center for professionals in the wastewater industry are enormous. I hope you will take a moment to familiarize yourself with more of the details of the Center: its inception, current status and goals are all described elsewhere in this newsletter.

Several members have donated their time to visit training facilities in states across the nation. Many good ideas have been brought back and can be incorporated here. In addition to the training facilities, a consortium of academicians and professionals in the wastewater industry, have been meeting to develop training modules for use in academia and for practitioners. These modules cover all the bases in the wastewater industry from soils to technology to engineering. The goal is to make the modules comprehensive in nature and applicable in all states.

This year will be equally exciting beginning with the TOWA conference on February 17 and 18, 2003 in Spring Hill, Tennessee. Part of the conference will be at the training center. This will be a great opportunity to see the facility and ask questions. Please highlight these days on your calendar since this is the only announcement of the conference you will be receiving. Registration and conference information are included in this newsletter.

In addition to the state conference, the National Onsite Wastewater Association (NOWRA) has selected Tennessee for their next national conference site. This will take place in November in middle Tennessee. We feel honored to be chosen to host this event and will be busy ensuring its success.

I would like to thank all of the board members for their time and guidance in helping me fulfill the duties as President of TOWA. Many of you know that I am a soil scientist by trade. I was a little reticent in accepting the position because I produce soil maps with interpretations for subsurface septic only, and rarely did I step out of that box. It has been a great learning experience for me.
to discuss issues with members in other professions related to the wastewater industry and to see the inception of the training facility. TOWA is here to serve all professionals in the industry and I hope you will consider membership.

I will leave my position as president in the very capable hands of Brian Corwin. Brian is an Engineering Design Reviewer with the Williamson County Department of Sewage Disposal and has been a member of TOWA for many years. He has a great interest in the wastewater industry and will be an exceptional asset as President of TOWA.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the conference in February.

John Gibi
TOWA President

2002 TOWA Board of Directors

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<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>President-Elect</th>
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<td>John Gibi</td>
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<td>W.M. McClain Co., Inc.</td>
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<td>Larry Vaden</td>
<td>Dr. Steve Monteith</td>
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<td>Music City Septic/Grease Pumping</td>
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Dr. Roland Mote
Director Representing Academia
University of Tennessee-Knoxville

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Onsite Wastewater Association

Formed in 1997, The Tennessee Onsite Wastewater Association (TOWA) is a professional organization open to those working to advance and promote the onsite wastewater industry in Tennessee.

TOWA serves all members of the industry, including installers, manufacturers, field practitioners, suppliers, engineers, soil scientists, distributors, research professionals, educators, consultants and governmental regulatory personnel.

We want you to be part of this Association!

Each year, TOWA sponsors an Annual Conference to bring onsite professionals in Tennessee together to discuss issues relevant to the onsite industry in our state. Combining classroom presentations with an Exhibit Hall gives onsite professionals a chance to see and hear about the latest in onsite technologies and products.

What We Do…
- Establish uniform performance standards for design, installation, & servicing of onsite systems;
- Promote the need for regular service & maintenance of onsite systems;
- Communicate information among members as well as to other organizations, agencies & individuals concerned with onsite sewage disposal;
- Collect & disseminate statistics, studies & other facts affecting the onsite industry;
- Educate the general public concerning the value of recycling wastewater, & the need for properly maintained onsite sewage disposal systems;
- Assist in the development of sound ecological practices; and
- Expand the public’s awareness of the important economic contributions of onsite systems in Tennessee.

Join Today and Be a Part of This Active and Growing Onsite Association

How Can You Join TOWA?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Membership Fees</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>Certified Installers, Licensed Septic Tank Pumpers, Engineers, Soil Scientists, &amp; Consultants</td>
<td>$50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academicians, Regulators, &amp; Research Professionals</td>
<td>$35</td>
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<td>Associate &amp; Non-voting Members</td>
<td>$35</td>
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Total: _______

Company: ____________________________________________
Name: __________________________ Title: ____________
Address: __________________________________________
City: ______________ St: _____ Zip: _____________
Phone: (____)______-_______ Fax: (____)_____-_________

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TOWA
Working together through the Onsite Wastewater Industry to protect our natural resources in Tennessee
Monday, February 17, 2003
1:00 p.m.:
After an opening session, Monday’s program will feature a field trip to the site of the new Tennessee Center For Decentralized Wastewater Management training facility located at the University of Tennessee’s Agricultural Experiment Station in Spring Hill. There will be a tour of the site and discussions of the progress to date and the vision of the future. There will also be a soils presentation and a technology demonstration to demonstrate the types of programs the new facility will provide. It will be a great chance to provide suggestions and get involved in the creation of this great facility!

Tuesday, February 18, 2003
8:00 a.m.:
Tuesday’s program will begin with a continental breakfast & a networking session with the Exhibitors, followed by a series of educational sessions throughout the day. The program will conclude with a TOWA business meeting. There will be lots of opportunities to network with manufacturers and presenters both days!

Preliminary conference program includes such topics as:
- State on-site wastewater training center
- Soil evaluation
- Innovative conventional system installation techniques
- Septic tank additives
- Class V injection well regulations
- NOWRA’s model performance code initiative
- Design considerations for dog kennel systems
- Small Flows Clearinghouse services
- Regulatory issues regarding design flow projections
- Vendor presentations

Exhibitors:
If you are interested in exhibiting at the conference please contact Jim McClain at 615-226-9601 for details.

EXHIBIT HALL FEATURED BOTH DAYS!

Accommodations:
A block of rooms have been reserved for TOWA at the Springhill Inn & Suites (formerly the Holiday Inn Express in Spring Hill). The Springhill Inn & Suites is located less than ½-mile from the UAW Union Hall. Room rates are $65 per night for either two double beds or one king size bed. Complimentary continental breakfast is included. Call 931-486-1234 for reservations.

Directions:
To the UAW Union Hall and the Springhill Inn & Suites in Spring Hill, TN (from Nashville):
- From I-65 South, take Exit 53 (Highway 396 - Saturn Parkway - Spring Hill/Columbia);
- Go approximately 4.5 miles to 3rd exit (Highway 31 - Spring Hill/Columbia);
- This exit will immediately split;
- Take Spring Hill North exit to Highway 31N;
- Go approximately 0.3 miles on Highway 31N to 1st traffic light;
- Turn left on Stephen P. Yokich Parkway (you will see a Food Lion store and a McDonald’s on this corner);
- UAW Union Hall is on the left directly behind Food Lion;
- Entrance to banquet hall is to the left of flags;
  (the phone number of the UAW Union Hall is 931-486-0125)
- To reach the Springhill Inn & Suites, go an additional 0.3 miles (approximately) on Highway 31N to Kedron Road (this will be the 2nd traffic light on Highway 31);
• Turn left at traffic light to second drive on right.

**Conference Fees:**

*Special conference fees apply to all new members!* If you are not already a TOWA member, then conference registration includes a one-year TOWA membership, which also gains you membership in NOWRA (the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association). For current TOWA members, conference registration also takes care of your next year’s dues, so you’ll have membership through February, 2004. **NOW THAT’S A BARGAIN!**

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<th>Fee Schedule</th>
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<tr>
<td>Membership renewal only (current member)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conference registration &amp; membership renewal (current member)</td>
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<td>Conference registration &amp; membership dues (new or past member)</td>
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**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CONFERENCE PLEASE CALL BRIAN CORWIN AT 615-790-5751**

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**TOWA 2003 ANNUAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM**

Name:

Company Name:

Address

City:_________________________ State:__________ Zip Code:________________________

Phone:_________________________ Fax:________________________

E-mail:_______________________ Amount enclosed: __________

** CHECKS SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE TO “TOWA” **

Please send registration form, along with payment, to: TOWA, % Jim McClain, 2626 Hart Street, Nashville, TN 37207-4032

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**Editorial**

The Soil Scientists’ Association of Tennessee was at a crossroad one year ago. After convening at the TOWA conference, a motion to dissolve the Association was voted on and did not pass. Since that pivotal vote there has been much greater interest in the Association and its future.

One issue that has taken center stage is using SSAT as the vehicle to institute a professional change for Private Soil Consultants. Two options were voted on. The first was establishing a Certification Board, which required a fair amount of money to support a lobbyist and time. The second was licensing through the Tennessee Department of Health and Environment. The majority of support was behind the second option. A rough draft of changes in the soils program statute was voted on by the members and passed. It is my understanding that this will have to be written in a codified format and sponsored by a legislator.

There is still much debate as to the direction and lead the Association should take in this. Many members do not practice privately and should not be excluded from the Association. Some also believe fervently that the Association is still on the wrong path.

I believe the Association should remain open to all Soil Science professionals. The Association should not be myopic to certain interests; it should be cognizant enough to realize that soils science covers many professions, and should support all interests if it is to survive.

Most private soil consultants would like to see their profession elevated to a higher standard in meeting some of the requirements of Land Surveyors and Engineers. One important requirement is continuing education. I am very pro education and would like to see training as the next step in our quest to improve our profession. Licensing is a move in that direction and the Association could take a giant step in supporting continuing education. The Center for Decentralized Wastewater Management training facility in Spring Hill could be the perfect solution.

John Gibi
Soil Consultant
SSAT Member
The Center for Decentralized Wastewater Management

Funding has been received to create the Center for Decentralized Wastewater Management in Tennessee. This center will provide folks with the opportunity to learn about the fundamentals of design, installation and maintenance of onsite wastewater treatment systems. This training center came to be because various members of TOWA met and drafted a proposal for grant monies from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provided by the Clean Water Act. In Tennessee, this funding is provided through Tennessee Department of Agriculture. The University of Tennessee’s Institute of Agriculture will serve as the administrator of the grant and provide the faculty, laboratory and land resources needed to complete the mission of this center.

This grant is cost shared by non-federal dollars. In order to secure the cost-share funding, a partnership has been formed between The University of Tennessee, the Tennessee Onsite Wastewater Association, Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation’s Division of Ground Water Protection (TDEC). TOWA’s portion of the cost share is $166,000 worth of in-kind services. These in-kind services will be provided in the form of donated onsite wastewater treatment equipment, by providing the supplies needed to install displays of various treatment technologies, and by providing the equipment and supplies needed to carry out the Center’s research effort.

The Center for Decentralized Wastewater Management will have two components - the training center and a research program. The training center will create and deliver educational programming to installers, contractors, designers, regulators, and homeowners. Most of the training will be delivered from a central location near Spring Hill, Tennessee. The University of Tennessee’s Institute of Agriculture will provide the use of a conference facility at the Middle Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station. This site will include a series of permanently installed wastewater treatment systems displays that will be built above ground. These displays will serve as a training laboratory. Participants will be able to view the correct installation, the proper maintenance, and the operation of both conventional and alternative onsite treatment technologies. A series of portable displays will also be developed so that this educational effort can be delivered anywhere in the State.

The soil is a powerful means of renovating domestic wastewater, and the research effort will focus on how to design treatment technologies that can take full advantage of this natural resource. System failures are not limited to the surfacing of black water. A system has also failed when poorly renovated water is allowed back into the hydrologic cycle. New information must be created on how to better judge soils for their ability to receive and finish renovating the effluent from various treatment technologies. The Center’s initial funding will support two graduate students who will study the soil resource and study the engineering of treatment systems.

Your input to the activities of this center is important. An advisory board has been established to provide guidance. Membership of the board is comprised of folks representing TOWA, TVA, TDEC, Tennessee Association of Realtors, the Nature Conservancy, the Tennessee Association of Building Contractors, the Tennessee Association of County Executives, the Tennessee Environmental Health Association, and the National Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives. Mr. John Gibi and Mr. Tom Petty have been selected as the TOWA representatives on this board.

I look forward to getting this program started. Hopefully the installation of displays will begin in February. The development of educational materials has already started. I hope that you will support this educational effort by taking advantage of the training opportunities and by providing feedback as to how we can better serve the needs of this important industry.

Dr. John R. Buchanan, P. E.
Assistant Professor and Center Director
Department of Biosystems Engineering & Environmental Science
The University of Tennessee

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