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## **THE RAHWAY VALLEY SEWERAGE AUTHORITY HONORED BY THE AEA-NJ FOR SUPER STORM SANDY ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

*Rahway, NJ, April 4, 2013 . . .* The Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority (RVSA) has been recognized by the Association of Environmental Authorities of New Jersey (AEA) and awarded for their outstanding efforts and accomplishments during Super Storm Sandy. The RVSA was presented with awards for Mutual Aid and Individual Achievements at the Annual Wave Awards Luncheon held on March 13<sup>th</sup> during the AEA's spring conference at the Golden Nugget in Atlantic City.

The AEA's Annual Wave Awards recognize dedication, innovation and talent in New Jersey's publicly owned/operated water and wastewater utility sector. This year, a total of 20 organizations and individuals were recognized by their peers for excellence. The RVSA was honored with the Mutual Aid Wave Achievement Award for their assistance and aid to other sewer service providers during Super Storm Sandy. Five out of the six Individual Wave Achievement Award recipients were RVSA staff members, lauded for their efforts in maintaining RVSA operations during the storm, a challenge which many other local facilities were unable to achieve.

When Super Storm Sandy hit, the RVSA was receiving flows in excess of 125 MGD (Million Gallons per Day) which was approximately 4 times above average. Once the main electrical grid that powers the facility went down, the RVSA went into "Island Mode" – operating on natural gas through the on-site Co-Generation facility. The Co-Gen equipment subsequently shut down when a large process air blower tripped, requiring the

facility to move to back-up diesel generator power. A shortage of diesel fuel coupled with intense and long-term demand caused the generators to malfunction, which would have inevitably led to the facility's total loss of power. With this foresight, RVSA employees Dan Ward, John Buonocore, Jack Desimone, Peter Mladenovic, and Robert Remite worked together and reacted quickly to formulate an action plan. The team needed to restart the Co-Gen facility, but could not do so without power from the main grid. System safety features prevented the diesel generators and the Co-Gen equipment from working simultaneously. With that, the team crafted a work-around and performed a "modified blackstart" which essentially fooled the pre-programmed system, allowing them to use the faltering diesel generators to start the Co-Gen equipment.

"Our system is state-of-the-art, and this was a potentially dangerous move. One wrong switch and someone could have been seriously hurt," said James Meehan, Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority's Executive Director. "I am extremely proud, and frankly in awe of what our men accomplished. Many wastewater facilities that lost power during this storm ended up releasing hundreds of millions of gallons of raw sewerage into nearby water bodies. My team weighed the outcome of a loss of total power and made a quick, calculated and innovative decision – a decision that successfully kept RVSA running on 'Island Mode' for the next two weeks until we regained normal service."

In addition to the commendable efforts of these five RVSA employees, the RVSA as a whole aided nearby facilities that lost operations – actions that won them the Mutual Aid Wave Achievement Award. These efforts included accepting and providing lab services for other Authorities' Lab Technicians who were displaced and performing all of the testing on the Linden Roselle Sewerage Authority's permit required sampling when their lab was destroyed. When the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission (PVSC) facility was damaged, the RVSA accepted hundreds of loads of trucked in waste (leachate) from the

Monmouth County Reclamation Center and an industrial vegetable washing company in Northern NJ, that PVSC could no longer accommodate.

“The RVSA demonstrated countless efforts to keep their facility operational during Super Storm Sandy, serving their municipalities and helping aid other facilities that were unable to serve their own,” said Peggy Gallos, Executive Director of AEA-NJ. “These key RVSA actions prevented this damaging storm from creating an even bigger environmental disaster, and for that we honor their achievements.”



*(L to R): Bob Valent, Superintendent; Jim Meehan, RVSA Executive Director; Peggy Gallos, AEA Executive Director; Jerry Cevetello, AEA First VP; Rick Dovey, AEA President – RVSA Mutual Aid Achievement Award*



*(L to R) Jerry Cevetello, AEA First VP; Dan Ward, RVSA Maintenance Manager; Peggy Gallos, AEA Executive Director; Jack DiSimone, RVSA Electrician; Jim Meehan, RVSA Executive Director; Rob Remite, RVSA Electrician; Peggy Gallos, AEA Executive Director; Peter Mladenovic, RVSA Electrician; and John Buonocore, RVSA Staff Engineer – RVSA Individual Achievement Award*

The Association of Environmental Authorities of NJ is a 40-year-old association of public water, wastewater, solid waste and recycling service providers in NJ, primarily utilities authorities, and also including municipal utilities departments and vendors in the public utility sector. The AEA-NJ holds its Wave Award program annually. This year's spring conference was attended by more than 150 professionals, public officials and volunteers in the public water and wastewater community. AEA members provide drinking water, wastewater, recycling and solid waste services to millions of New Jersey residents.

The RVSA is an autonomous agency that owns and operates a wastewater treatment facility located in Rahway, NJ and a trunk sewer system that serves Member Municipalities

of Clark, Cranford, Garwood, Kenilworth, Mountainside, Rahway, Roselle Park, Scotch Plains, Springfield, Westfield, and Woodbridge and User Municipalities of Winfield Park, portions of Fanwood and Linden. For more information, visit [www.rahwayvalleysa.com](http://www.rahwayvalleysa.com).

Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority

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