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WEFTEC 2017 Crowd Ranks Among Top 5 *90th annual conference and exhibition draws more than 22,000 to Chicago*

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – With 22,860 registrants and 1,011 exhibitors using 305,600 net square feet of space, WEFTEC 2017 was one of the largest and best-attended events in the conference's 90-year history. The Water Environment Federation's (WEF) 90th annual technical exhibition and conference was held Sept. 30- Oct. 4 at McCormick Place in Chicago, Ill.

Water professionals from around the world attend WEFTEC for the latest developments, technologies and services for the water sector. WEFTEC 2017 highlights included the installation of an outdoor classroom at Manierre Elementary school during the 10th annual Community Service Project; exciting discussions and knowledge exchange during the Women in Water session, as well as countless workshops, technical sessions, and networking events; the fifth annual Innovation Showcase, the Operator Ingenuity Contest, and the recognition of 25 new Utility of the Future Today recipients for exceptional performance in sustainable water management and operations.

The [#mywaterlegacy social media campaign](#), launched during WEFTEC 2016, entered its second phase, focusing on mentorship and workforce development. These themes were captured in a new [video](#) that made its debut during the well-attended Opening General Session. "My water legacy, mentorship, innovation, and workforce development – these are far more than a program theme or lofty buzz words," 2016-17 WEF President Rick Warner said during the session. "They represent a conscious decision to pursue a life of service and to find pathways to success." The Opening General Session also featured a new format, WEF Talks, which included testimonials from four water leaders about their journey into the sector.

"Commemorating 90 years of accomplishments brought a unique energy to WEFTEC 2017," WEF Executive Director Eileen O'Neill said. "It was especially touching to return to Chicago, the place where it all began, not only to celebrate the tradition, but also the people, ideas and innovations that will continue to move the sector forward."

Planning for next year's event in New Orleans is already underway. More than 800 companies have reserved more than 282,000 net square feet of space at New Orleans Morial Convention Center and the [2018 Call for Abstracts](#) will open on **Tuesday, October 24**. Submissions will be accepted through **December 3, 2017**.

For more information about the WEFTEC 2018 Call for Abstracts, please contact speakers@wef.org. For more information about exhibition and sponsorship opportunities, please contact weftecsales@wef.org.

WEFTEC 2018 will be held Sept. 29–Oct. 3 at New Orleans Morial Convention Center in New Orleans, La. Registration and housing will open in spring 2018. For more details, visit www.weftec.org.

For WEFTEC 2017 highlights and coverage please see the online editions of the [WEFTEC Daily](#).

WEFTEC press releases

- [TRA CReWSers, Aqua Techs Win 2017 Operations Challenge Competition](#)
- [WEF Announces Third Year of MS4 Award Winners at WEFTEC 2017](#)
- [Teams from the University of Guelph and University of Colorado - Boulder Win 2017 WEF Student Design Competition](#)
- [WEF Announces Winners of 2017 StormTV Competition](#)
- [WEFTEC 2017 "Can't Miss Events for Wednesday, Oct. 4](#)
- [WEFTEC 2017 "Can't Miss Events for Tuesday, Oct. 3](#)
- [WEFTEC 2017 "Can't Miss Events for Monday, Oct. 2](#)

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About WEF

The Water Environment Federation (WEF) is a not-for-profit technical and educational organization of 33,000 individual members and 75 affiliated Member Associations representing water quality professionals around the world. Since 1928, WEF and its members have protected public health and the environment. As a global water sector leader, our mission is to connect water professionals; enrich the expertise of water professionals; increase the awareness of the impact and value of water; and provide a platform for water sector innovation. To learn more, visit www.wef.org.