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## **Water Environment Federation Honors Water Professionals, Organizations for Service and Contributions**

ALEXANDRIA, Va.— The Water Environment Federation (WEF) proudly announces the 2018 WEF Awards recipients for individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to the sustainability of water resources and made a profound impact on the future of the water profession.

“The Water Environment Federation is extremely proud to honor the incredible contributions of these individuals and organizations in protecting one of the world’s most valuable resources and contributing to their communities,” said Eileen O’Neill, WEF Executive Director.

The 2018 recipients for Individual Service and Contribution Awards and Organization and Association Recognition Awards are:

### **Public Officials Award: Governor Brian Sandoval**

The Public Officials Award is presented to an elected or appointed public official that has made a documented, significant contribution in the areas of clean water legislation, public policy, government service, or another area of public prominence that resulted in improvements to the water environment. The award can be presented for public service at the local, state or federal level, and this year goes to Governor Brian Sandoval of Nevada. As governor, Sandoval formed a Storm Water Division within the Nevada Department of Transportation to protect water resources. As chair of the Western Governors Association, he convened the 2015 Drought Forum to address existing and future drought conditions. Gov. Sandoval also led the development of indirect potable reuse regulations, clearing the path for water resource recovery plants to demonstrate and implement indirect resource recovery in Nevada. Gov. Sandoval has championed efforts to protect, preserve, and grow water resources and water quality in Nevada and the western U.S. He has also brought water and water issues to the attention of the people, policy makers, and politicians throughout the country with his leadership.

### **Outstanding Young Water Environment Professional Award: Ryan LeBlanc**

This award recognizes the contributions of young water environment professionals for significant contributions to WEF and to the wastewater collection and treatment industry. The 2018 recipient, Ryan LeBlanc, is an active member of the North Carolina American Water Works Association/Water Environment Association and has consistently provided value and hard work. He served as vice chair or chair of the Students and Young Professionals Committee for five years and was instrumental in starting the Student Design Competition in North Carolina. LeBlanc was also part of the Annual Program Committee and served on the association’s Board of Trustees.

### **Outstanding Member Association Award: Pacific Northwest Clean Water Association**

The Member Association (MA) Awards were established to recognize outstanding Member Associations and MAs that excel in areas of membership retention, financial strength, new memberships, scholarship programs, student achievement and support, technology transfers, and/or award programs. The Pacific Northwest Clean Water Association (PNCWA) has shown outstanding growth in conference attendance and membership and is a creative, forward-looking WEF Member Association. Their onboarding programs to drive new membership and new member involvement have resulted in steady increases in both membership and annual conference attendance. This MA has developed several new programs for students and young professionals in recent years, including a popular summit, an adopt-a-school program to support water science education, and a strong and growing scholarship fund. PNCWA is actively working to increase the diversity of its membership and leadership, and has also developed a strong financial position. WEF is honored to recognize the PNCWA Member Association for its achievements in developing a growing, energized and diverse membership of clean water professionals in Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

### **Water Heroes Award**

The purpose of the Water Heroes program is to recognize individuals or municipalities who performed duties above and beyond the usual call of duty during an emergency situation to continue to protect the public and the environment. These duties shall elevate the status of the wastewater industry. This year's awardees are:

- **North Port Utilities Department, City of North Port, Fla.**

In early September 2017, Floridians braced themselves as Hurricane Irma descended upon the state. This Category 4 Storm caused billions of dollars in damage, more than 100 deaths, a record-breaking number of evacuations and left millions of residents and businesses without power. When Irma descended upon the City of North Port, North Port Utilities was prepared, but the city's size and sprawling nature of its infrastructure posed challenges for the staff. In the aftermath of Irma, widespread power outages from damaged power lines and transformers and phone system damage made the alerts from the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system, monitoring operations at the majority of the city's lift stations, unreliable. After the initial damage assessments were complete, field crews were dispatched throughout the city to maintain lift station operations; the majority of the city's 107 lift stations were without power. Many staff members worked 24 hours straight the first day. With limited staff, portable pumps and generators, field crews continually monitored and reallocated resources to avoid sewer spills during the first 48 hours while Florida Power and Light scrambled to restore power to the city. North Port Utilities staff remained alert and agile as they faced several days of intermittent outages. With rains continuing after the worst of the storm had passed, field crews worked in flooded areas around the clock, making repairs while constantly monitoring the system. It is the North Port Utilities staff's dedication to their profession and community that prevented catastrophic system failures, keeping North Port's waters safe from wastewater pollution in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma.

- **Jacobs – Key West, Pembroke Pines, West Melbourne and The Villages Operations & Maintenance Teams**

As Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria pummeled the Gulf Coast in 2017, more than 230 Jacobs employees in Florida lived and worked through the devastating storms. Four Jacobs Operations Teams – Key West, West Melbourne, The Villages and Pembroke

Pines – collaborated to face the challenges presented by these storms together. When communities began evacuating, the Operations Teams spent those days at their facilities, away from their families and homes, preparing the facilities, making sure the critical services would be provided. By adhering to their emergency preparation and response procedures, the teams were able to prevent undue damage and injury and were able to make critical repairs and return the facilities to service soon after these storms passed. The Major Maintenance Team positioned support team members throughout Florida with a stock of tools and supplies and provided the Operations teams that endured the most damage generators, fuel, additional staff, food and water. At Pembroke Pines, service was restored within 24 hours. The 18 staff members at The Villages remained on site for almost three days to maintain water system pressure and keep wastewater treatment facilities online. In West Melbourne, there were no sewer overflows, despite a 95 percent power loss in the area. And in Key West, which was directly in the path of the storm, members of the team refused to leave. Despite losing generator power halfway through the storm, the team had the wastewater treatment plant back up and running shortly after the storm. The Weather Channel reported that the wastewater treatment plant was the only utility on the island in operation.

The awards will be presented during WEFTEC® 2018, the Federation's 91<sup>st</sup> Annual Technical Exhibition and Conference, September 29 to October 3 in New Orleans.

For more information about the WEF Awards, visit <https://www.wef.org/awards>.

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### **About WEF**

The Water Environment Federation is a not-for-profit technical and educational organization of 34,000 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](http://www.wef.org).