



SIUE's Lallish receives IWEA Meredith Award

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EDWARDSVILLE - Rick Lallish, program director of Water Pollution Control at the Environmental Resources Training Center (ERTC) at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, has received the Illinois Water Environment Association's (IWEA) Kenneth Meredith Award.

The award acknowledges an individual who has performed duties above and beyond the usual employment requirements, so as to elevate the status of the wastewater plant operator and promote operator professionalism within the state.

“This award reflects the work done by all of us at the ERTC,” Lallish said. “We all go above and beyond for our students and operators throughout the state. One of my early mentors told me to always think of the operators, and I can honestly say this award reflects our commitment to every one of them.”

The IWEA is a community of dedicated professionals working to advance fundamental knowledge of the water environment. Its members are engineers, scientists, plant operators and students. They are employed at wastewater treatment plants, engineering firms and manufacturers of water treatment equipment.

Lallish was chosen by the IWEA for his outstanding efforts in assisting the many wastewater operators and professionals in the state. He is responsible for the training of hundreds of these operators each year. He is a member of various local and state environmental organizations, and serves on committees in each. He is currently the first vice president in the Illinois Association for Water Pollution Control Operators Association.

Lallish has over 23 years of experience in the wastewater field. He was employed by the city of Greenville before assuming his ERTC position in 2008. He also serves as the operator in charge of the SIUE Wastewater Treatment Facility.

[About the Environmental Resources Training Center](#)

ERTC is one of the most unique training centers in the nation and has been training water quality professionals since 1977. The instructors use its 30,000-gallon per day training-scale drinking water and wastewater treatment plant to teach students the skills needed to properly operate a plant. An example of the training impact that ERTC has on the water profession can be measured in the statistics from fiscal year 2013, when it trained more than 975 students and awarded more than 25,000 continuing education and contact hours.

To meet the important need for trained operators, ERTC annually provides up to 30 graduates from its Water Quality Control Operations Program. These graduates are

skilled operators and most possess their state certifications. The placement rate for graduates ranges from 70-80 percent.

ERTC courses are designed to assist entry level personnel, who are preparing for a career in drinking water and wastewater treatment systems, and persons already employed in such systems who desire education to upgrade job skills, obtain advanced certification levels and prepare for more responsible positions.

ERTC plays a role in the education of minority and female students, who typically makeup 20 percent of the students in the Water Quality Control Operations Program. Numerous displaced workers have completed the program and productively re-entered the workforce. Several displaced workers, who graduated from ERTC, have returned to visit instructors to thank them for “turning their life around.” ERTC also has a commitment to train the returning military veterans and assist them in re-entering the workforce.