



SIUE ERTC's Lallish nominated as IAWPCO Operator of the Year

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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 been nominated by the Illinois Association of Water Pollution Control Operators (IAWPCO) for its Outstanding Operator of the Year award.

Lallish is one of five nominees for the award to be presented during the IAWPCO's annual conference April 16-18, 2018. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's (IEPA) Division of Water Pollution Control, Field Operations Section nominated Lallish. Inspection teams comprised of IAWPCO representatives choose the winner.

The award emphasizes the relationship between adequate wastewater treatment and clean receiving waters, and to give public recognition and encouragement to those individuals who have operated their wastewater treatment facilities in an especially effective manner.

[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 make up 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.

