



American Water Works Association  
**Pacific Northwest** Section  
Public Communications Division

**Division Report as of September 24, 2021**

**Jamie Porter, OR/ID Trustee Liaison**

**Conservation, Cross Connection Control, Customer Service, and Public Information Committees**

**CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**

Chair Dan Denning, City of Bend

Vice Chair Rochelle Gandour-Rood, Tacoma Water

Secretary Mark Taratoot, Corvallis Public Works

Mark is the veteran on the committee. Dan and Rochelle were newly elected at a meeting on May 20. Dan jumped right in to learn about Water Matters publication deadlines, and we corresponded to develop a committee budget request.

The Conservation Committee met virtually on August 25 to review 10 submitted abstracts. They have about 80 people on their distribution list, and 21 attended the meeting. They selected abstracts to fill a full 3-hour track plus one early bird session for Tacoma 2022. They plan to meet again in November to continue planning efforts.

**CROSS CONNECTION CONTROL COMMITTEE**

Chair Tonya Reiss, City of Spokane

Secretary Christine Hollenbeck, Clackamas River Water Providers

Tonya has led this committee for the last few years, much of that time during the COVID-era with cancellation of in-person meetings. Tonya reported no change in committee members for this year. She said there was not much participation in the committee last year, and it has been a struggle to get people interested.

There were no abstracts submitted specific to cross connection for Tacoma 2022, and Tonya has been swamped with a billing system upgrade at work so it was not realistic to make something happen at the last minute. We discussed trying to plan further ahead and offer some training at the 2023 conference. This committee could use some new members to add energy and ideas, and I am open to suggestions for names or activities that I can pass on to Tonya.



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**CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITTEE**

Chair Cathy Middleton, Rockwood Water PUD  
Vice Chair Marika Thomas, Lakewood Water District  
Secretary Carrie Bledsoe, Lakewood Water District

The Customer Service budget request assumes net income of \$1,700 based on Jacki Masters providing one training in the next year, or the committee providing one or more virtual classes if in-person meetings are not possible. Cathy reported that 4 abstracts were submitted for the Tacoma Conference for a total of 3 hours of instruction. At this time Jacki is still not able to teach an in-person class now with the lingering COVID restrictions, so Cathy has a goal of starting work on a video class soon. I connected Andrea (Public Information Committee) with Cathy (Customer Service Committee). They will meet October 1 to discuss possible collaboration on trainings.

**PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE**

Chair Andrea Watson, Tualatin Valley Water District  
Vice Chair Kim Marshall, Barney and Worth

Andrea and Kim are enthusiastic despite COVID, but they recognize that previous volunteers burned out and they need to expand the committee to help share the work. They especially desire new members outside of Portland for broader geographic representation. Abstracts were selected to fill a complete Public Information Track for Tacoma 2022.

Five members met on September 24 to start planning the awards program and webinars. The committee seeks to bring back the awards program at Tacoma, providing awards for the last two years to catch things up since the program dropped off when the 2020 conference was cancelled.

The Public Information Committee is excited to provide a webinar series on Affordability, sharing how different utilities offer low income assistance, how to incorporate diversity/equity/inclusion initiatives into such a program, and giving training on how to implement the federal Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP). This series could be a great way to partner with the Customer Service Committee and offer helpful training on how to share financial information with customers. As previously shared, Andrea (Public Information) and Cathy (Customer Service) will meet to discuss possible areas of collaboration between the two committees.