

CTAWWA's "Water Boot Camp" Intrigues Bridgeport Youngsters



Water Boot Camp student Nicholas Holodnak concentrates on his screen while Seb Agostino explains the assignment. As a result of his work at the boot camp, Nicholas was later chosen to begin an internship with Aquarion's Engineering Department.



Even lunch didn't interrupt the instruction during CTAWWA's Water Boot Camp. Instructor and co-author of the course, Seb Agostino, flanked by Jamie Arid (right) and Martina Powell (left) introduces the exercise that will take place that afternoon.

Drawing on the success of Portland High School's Water and People course, CTAWWA's Dave Kuzminski and Portland High School environmental science teacher Seb Agostino devised an intensive week-long version of the course this summer for students from Bridgeport's Central and Harding High Schools.

To accommodate as many interested students as possible, the course was given in two sessions: July 12-16 and July 19-23. Twenty students participated in the course, which was held at the Aquarion Water Company facilities in Monroe and Easton. Aquarion's John Herlihy hosted the classes, providing transportation to and from Bridgeport, lunch for the students each day, supplies and access to Aquarion's facilities and staff.

The students in the Water Boot Camp were selected after interviews. All were either entering their junior or senior year and each demonstrated an interest in the drinking water industry.

During the Boot Camp, Agostino and Kuzminski along with expert staff from Aquarion guided students through water filter exercises, fire safety demonstrations, laboratory testing and source water protection. Students also heard presentations regarding watershed and environmental management, meter testing, backflow prevention, information technology, customer service and GIS.

Friday afternoon of each week provided time for "graduation" where each student received a certificate of completion.

Dave Kuzminski noted that the Water Boot Camp wouldn't

"(Portland Superintendent of Schools) Dr. Sally Doyen attended classes, took the quizzes and even sat for the small water systems certification exam."

Funding for this summer's Water Boot Camp came from EPA Region 1. This past year EPA Region 1 awarded their highest external Environmental Merit Award to CTAWWA and the Portland School District for the Water and People course. Bureau Chief Jane Downing made the presentation in Boston's historic Faneuil Hall and as part of the award, CTAWWA also received a \$13.5 thousand grant to facilitate a "Water Boot Camp."

have been possible without Aquarion's help. "John Herlihy really understands the crisis that our industry will withstand as 40% of Connecticut's 1,032 registered water system operators retire over the next few years," Kuzminski said. "John and all the staff at Aquarion made the course highly engaging and interesting and saw that every question was answered professionally, but in a way the each young student could understand."



Jamie Arid (center) gets to work on his assignment in Aquarion's computer equipped classroom.

An interesting side note to this took place early in August when John Herlihy announced that Nicholas Holodnak, one of the students in the first week of Water Boot Camp, has been offered an internship with Aquarion's Engineering Department.

BASED ON THE SUCCESS OF WATER AND PEOPLE

In 2009, CTAWWA answered the call for more small systems operators with the development of the award winning Water and People course at Portland High School. The brainchild of Dave Kuzminski and Seb Agostino, the course was designed to expose high school seniors to potential careers in the water industry and even allow students the opportunity to sit for the State of Connecticut's small water systems certification exam.

The first semester Water and People was offered, 15 students enrolled and the next semester another 15 students signed up. The fall 2010 semester now has 29 students enrolled for the course.

As an example of just how thorough the Portland Public School system is in vetting a new course such as Water and People, an early enrollee was Dr. Sally Doyen, the Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Doyen attended classes, took the quizzes and even sat for the small water systems certification exam. 💧

CTAWWA Officers

Having received no further nominations by April 20, 2010, the Connecticut Section AWWA Secretary, Kathy Fortin, has cast a ballot for the following slate of officers:

Chair	One Year Term	Bill Kennedy
Vice Chair	One Year Term	Jack Keefe
Past Chair	One Year Term	John Herlihy
Secretary	One Year Term	Kathy Fortin
Treasurer	One Year Term	Kevin Barber
2nd Year Trustee	2nd of a Two Year Term	Ray Baral
1st Year Trustee	Two Year Term	Steve Melanson
National Director	Three Year Term	Marcey Munoz



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