

# Analyzing data for Partnership helped Ephrata reach Phase III

By Bob Donnelly, Partnership for Safe Water Representative



## Ephrata Area Joint Authority

Shown are (front row, left to right): Barb Martin, AWWA PFSW Manager; Joseph Pezzino, EAJA Chief Operator; Jeff Iezzi, EAJA Water Quality; (back row, left to right): Kevin Anderson, PA DEP; Reid Campbell, AWWA Vice President; Gene Koontz, Incoming AWWA President; Bob Thompson, EAJA Director of Engineering; and Tom Natarian, EAJA Director of Operations.

The Ephrata Area Joint Authority (EAJA) has been one of my favorite water systems to work with over the past few years. They, like many of our other independent systems, chose to join the Partnership family to see what the buzz was all about but more importantly to possibly improve their treatment results.

Like many of us, Ephrata WTP lies in a location in which the raw water source sees contributions from multiple areas including agriculture, suburban areas and older urban communities. The system is stressed by this flashy source which results in constant challenges to the operators, especially following rain events. The operators always "pushed" to meet these challenges but felt an organized plan of attack would better prepare them for current and future challenges. They looked around, found the Partnership was a good fit, and joined the family.

The four steps outlined in the Partnership program seemed to fit their need and apparently got them on the right track. They became committed, had the correct data to analyze their operations, and seemed to be making the right decisions.

The first step was the commitment by all parties, including management, operations and maintenance, to the Partnership ideals and goals. While seemingly a small step to the outsider it is in fact a giant leap forward. Ephrata took this leap and committed to the program and the challenges that come with it.

When I visited the plant after Ephrata committed to the program, the place was alive with new concepts, new directions and in some cases new ideas from new

operators. As it turned out, operators from other locations were also hearing about Ephrata's challenges and ideas and wanted to become a part of the solution.

Data was being collected and analyzed in a new way (called Phase II of the Program) and daily discussions by staff resulted in changes to the plant operations, resulting in improved plant performance. More importantly, for the sake of some imaginary time goal, they did not hurry this step along, they collected their data, analyzed their data and learned about the plant they thought they knew.

Their goal, as is it with all of us in the Partnership, is rock solid optimization, 24/7, all seasons, all year.

Finally, their analysis and hard work had paid off and they were ready to write their Phase III report, the report which provides the roadmap of where they had been and what would be necessary for the future.

By truly embracing the program, Ephrata staff has experienced first-hand this unique approach to optimization.

Ephrata staff recently received recognition for their hard work at the PA-AWWA Conference held in Bethlehem. At the Partnership Mixer, Ephrata's operators were awarded the Phase III Award recognizing their work and accomplishments by both PA and National AWWA staff and PA DEP representatives.

By the way, Ephrata is now working on their Phase IV step using the guidance and feedback gathered from their Phase III report. While I estimate they will complete this final step fairly quickly, at the recent Mixer, Operator Jeff Iezzi noted that "the road to optimization for us is a commitment for better water for our community, and so it should never end." Congratulations to the entire staff of Ephrata Water for a job well done!



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