



# RECOVERY ZONE

SUMMER

2024

## Symposium Summary

Author: Allyson Felsburg, Town of Jupiter



Celebration by the Board of SEDA's 30th Anniversary

This year's Annual Symposium was held in Tampa, Florida at Tampa Marriott Water Street. We had a total of 159 attendees, bringing us back to pre-Covid attendance. SEDA celebrated its' 30 years of dedicated service to the membrane community and commitment to providing operators across the Southeast United States with superior training and education. Throughout the symposium attendees had the opportunity to reflect on how the membrane industry has transformed and grown through the past 30 years. Presentations ranged in topics from Concentrate Management to Membrane Cleaning to Operations Efficiency and Safety. The facility tour featured the Pinellas County Waste to Energy Facility demonstrating the versatility of membrane applications outside of drinking water treatment. This was our first year in which we included a fundraising event. This event gave attendees the ability to donate to Directors mason jars throughout the event and the Director that had the most money on the last day of the Symposium got a plate full of whipped cream to the face. Director Paul Biscardi ended with the most money and proudly took the pie to the face. This fundraiser brought in over \$1,000! The funds will be used to provide a financial assistance to high school student(s) to attend next year's Symposium. It is important to continue to encourage the next generation to enter the water industry and pass on all the knowledge and experience that has been gained in the previous 30 years. We look forward to seeing everyone at our 2025 SEDA Annual Symposium in the Florida Keys!



Paul Biscardi taking a pie for our Scholarship Fundraiser



Teams Competing in the Trivia Contest

# MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Greetings everyone! For those that attended the SEDA Symposium in June, I hope you enjoyed it as much as we did. It was great celebrating the 30th Anniversary of this amazing association and reflecting on some of the key contributors that got us to where we are today.

Looking back made me think of when I was first introduced to SEDA. My introduction is probably similar to many of you – by word of mouth from a friend who was a colleague and mentor.

For me, it was Brian Matthews, who is enjoying his well-deserved retirement after working for the City of Palm Coast. I met Brian in 2005 while I was working as an engineering consultant to the City. Brian talked to me about SEDA and the benefits of being a member. He also told me how getting involved in the association changed his career and how it would have an equally positive impact on mine.

Brian set the bar high – he became a SEDA Board member in 2000 and was instrumental in continued development, improvement and instruction of the SEDA MOC courses and many technical workshops. After 14 consecutive years of service on the SEDA Board, he continued to stay active on the MOC Committee and as the SEDA Quiz Questions contributor to the SEDA Recovery Zone newsletter.

I took Brian's advice and joined SEDA in 2006. I am happy I did because I have met countless members that have educated, encouraged and inspired me in my career. The more I got engaged in this organization, the more fulfilling it became. It is the members that volunteer and the members that attend our events that make this organization what it is.

More recently, two others that elevated this association are Past Presidents Karla Berroteran-Castellon and Pierre Vignier. The Board and I thank them both for their hard work and dedication to SEDA. As we move forward as an association, it is important that we consider the past and how we got here. That is why the Board created two optional At-Large Advisor positions so the current Board retains the knowledge of past Board members. Karla and Pierre are both gracious enough to continue to serve the Board, this time as Advisors.

We have an exciting year ahead. We have identified chairs of each of our committees. You don't have to be on the Board to be a member of a committee, so if you are interested, please reach out and we can get you engaged. Who knows, you might just end up being elected to the Board some day!

Sincerely,

Ryan Popko, P.E.



# MESSAGE FROM OUR OUTGOING PRESIDENT

*A Note of Appreciation to Board Members,*

*I wanted you to know how much I appreciate your hard work and contribution to the association. It's been a notable experience for me to have met you. Thank you for your positive moving experiences.*

*Keep up with the excellent service and make it enjoyable as always!*

*Past President,  
Pierre Vignier*



# 2024-2025 SEDA Board of Directors



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President



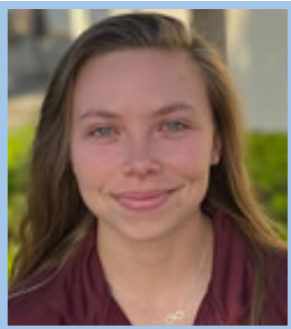
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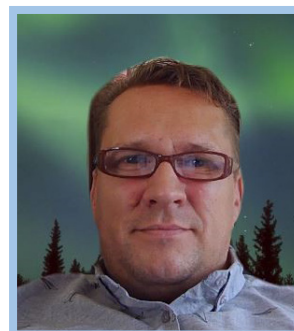
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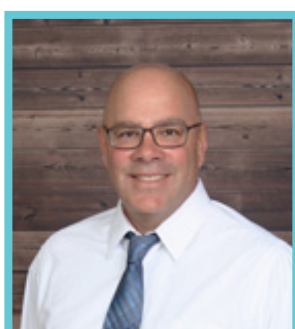
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# Symposium Photos



Scan here for all Symposium Photos



# Hazen

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# SYMPOSIUM AWARDS CEREMONY

**Outstanding Operator  
of the Year  
Ashley Arnold**



**Educator of the Year  
Joshua Utter**



**Board Recognition Awards  
Pierre Vignier**



**Scholarship Winner  
Christopher Hagglund**



**Special Recognition  
William Crosby**



**President's Recognition Award  
Fred Greiner**



**Outstanding Small Plant <5 MGD  
Mt Pleasant Water Works**



**Operator of  
the Year Nominees**

Ashley Arnold  
Town & Country Utilities  
Stephen Bishop  
Island Water Association  
William Crosby  
Indian River County  
Michael DelGuzzi  
City of Pompano Beach  
Mario Isidron  
Seminole Tribe of Florida  
Richard Johnson  
City of Pompano Beach  
Richard Johnston  
Lee County  
Denis Ortega  
Seminole Tribe of Florida  
Anna Patrick  
City of Palm Coast  
David Voisinet  
Martin County Utilities

**Outstanding Large Plant >5 MGD  
Town of Jupiter Utilities**



**Water Quality Person of the year  
Anna Patrick**



**Vendor of the Year  
Odyssey Manufacturing Co.**



**Outstanding Small  
Plant <5 MGD  
Nominees**

Mt Pleasant Charles H.  
Hindman RO WTP1  
  
Seminole Tribe of  
Florida - Brighton  
  
Town & Country  
Utilities

**Senior Operator of the Year  
Richard Johnson**



**Board Recognition Awards  
Karla Berroteran**



**Outstanding Large  
Plant >5 MGD  
Nominees**

City of Pompano Beach  
Island Water Association  
  
North Lee County  
Reverse Osmosis Plant  
  
Town of Jupiter Utilities



# Symposium Photos





# Member Spotlight

**1. How did your career in the Water or Wastewater Industry get started? And how did it evolve over the years?**

I was introduced to the water treatment field when a friend told me about a local C license class. I gave it a shot because of the statistics for career longevity and then got hooked on the overarching purpose, data analytics, and hands on applications.

**2. What/who prompted you to join SEDA? How did you get involved in SEDA on a deeper level? Explain your history with SEDA.**

Fred Greiner got me started with SEDA as a trainee at the City of Palm Coast. As a membrane plant operator, I found the technical sessions especially applicable. After some time logging our membrane data and updating our data normalization files, Robert Nelson trained me on the membrane clean in place. I later attended SEDA's MOC I with Fred and Robert to deepen my membrane knowledge. I look forward to taking MOC II and MOC III.

**3. How did being a member of SEDA benefit you? What did you enjoy the most about SEDA?**

My first experience with SEDA was the 25th anniversary spring symposium. It was such a blast to attend.

**4. What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

I enjoy walking Palm Coast's many trails when I can find the time... usually while playing Pokémon or listening to an audiobook or podcast. I also love to spend time with my family as often as we can get together.

**6. What advice do you have for the younger generation in the beginning years of their careers in Water/Wastewater and SEDA?**

My advice is ask questions, take every opportunity to learn something new and to refresh the old, and always keep learning.

**Anna Patrick**



# Member Spotlight

1. **How did your career in the Water or Wastewater Industry get started?**

My career in Water Treatment began with being surrounded by many influential people in my life who work in the industry. My childhood best friend's father retired in water treatment, my friends lay pipe in the distribution system and my other friend is a wastewater plant manager. After starting as a trainee in 2017, I knew this industry was exactly where I was meant to be. I had the most inspirational supervisor at my first plant, Jesse Victory at the City of Fort Myers who was patient, knowledgeable and instilled a vast amount of core information in me. I achieved all 3 levels of licensing, and my passion has only grown. I've operated RO, Nano combined with RO and Lime softening plants while being a part of building Babcock Ranch's new water and wastewater treatment plant additions. I now work at a dual plant as a Water Treatment Lead while working towards my wastewater C license.

2. **How long have you been a member of SEDA?**

I've been a SEDA Member since 2020.

3. **How did being a member of SEDA benefit you? What did you enjoy the most about SEDA?**

My interest in SEDA began in 2020 and my passion escalated when I was able to participate in the classes at the 2024 symposium while receiving an award. The instructors were all very clear with the information, and the knowledge I gained from that short period of time was tremendously valuable. Fun fact, I thoroughly enjoy the SEDA Quiz's.

4. **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

In my free time I enjoy scuba diving, fishing, boating, hunting and anything outdoors related. I love nature.

5. **What advice do you have for the younger generation in the beginning years of their careers in Water/Wastewater and SEDA?**

My advice to the younger generation or anyone just getting started in water treatment is, soak in all the benefits from the chaos when things don't go as planned. I've learned more in this career during equipment or process malfunctions than any smooth sailing day. Always look for the positives and be as interactive and hands on as possible. All operators come from different states, countries and treatment processes but trainees have so much to offer with a fresh set of eyes and a new, innovative mindset. Inner peace is a must.

Thank you so much for nominating me to be featured in Recovery Zone. I truly appreciate it!

**Ashley Arnold**



# Public Relations Committee

By Jennifer Ribotti, Tetra Tech, Chair Public Relations Committee

SEDA is on social media! Give us a follow on LinkedIn to keep updated on the latest news, workshops, MOC schools, and more. You can find us by searching, "Southeast Desalting Association (SEDA)". Our LinkedIn page is meant to keep our community informed and engaged on all of our yearly activities including the Annual SEDA Symposium held in June, the topics being covered in our workshops, updates to when the latest "Recovery Zone" newsletters are being released, plant and project highlights, and last, but not least, photos and recaps of all of the fun we have at our events. If you're interested in being a part of the Public Relations Committee, send us a message.

You can also visit our website at [www.southeastdesalting.com](http://www.southeastdesalting.com) for more information.



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# SEDA Tech Transfer Workshop

Author: Karla Berroteran-Castellon, Village of Wellington

## Membrane Autopsy and Cleaning Studies Overview Workshop

The workshop was Hosted at Indian County River - Vero Beach FL on May 15, 2024

The speaker was Ricardo Avena, AVISTA Territory Manager, Application & Sales - Southeast USA

In the first half of the morning, there was an introduction to different autopsy techniques for membrane autopsies and micron filters, membrane case studies, and various cleaning studies overviews.

During the second half of the session, we covered the interpretation of autopsy results cleaning troubleshooting, and recordkeeping.

At the end of the class, there was a plant tour of the North County Water Treatment Plant, Indian County River. There were 15 participants. The class was very informative and dynamic. All participants were pleased with the lessons learned.

### Classroom Pictures

Speaker: Ricardo Avena, AVISTA



### Pictures of the Plant Tour, North County Water Treatment Plant Indian County River

Chief Operator William Crosby and Leon Liberus Water Plant Superintendent



# AMTA/SEDA Joint Workshop



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for PFAS Treatment and Emergency Response

Decatur, AL

October 2-3, 2024

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# HELP WANTED - Join a SEDA Committee!

Author: Ryan Popko, JEA

SEDA has a number of committees that are led by our board members. However, you don't need to be on the board to participate in a committee. If you are interested in getting involved in any of our 2024 committees, please reach out to the Michele Miller (admin@southeastdesalting.com) or one of the committee chairs below:

## **Finance:**

The finance committee prepares plans for financing activities and an annual budget to govern SEDA's operation. Modification of dues rates, event registration rates, event sponsorship rates, alterations to financial plans, and budget amendments are reviewed by the finance committee which are submitted with accompanying recommendations to the Board for action.

Chair: Paul Biscardi, pbiscardi@hazenandsawyer.com

## **Legislative:**

The legislative committee tracks information concerning legislation proposed for consideration in the Congress, in the State Legislatures, or by other governments affecting the interest of SEDA and its members. When appropriate, the committee prepares position documents on behalf of and for consideration by the Board. The committee disseminates that information in the SEDA Recovery Zone newsletter and presents updates at the annual SEDA Symposium.

Chair: Allyson Felsburg, allysonf@jupiter.fl.us

## **Membership:**

The membership committee seeks and reviews applications for membership in the three different membership Divisions: 1 – Public Agencies, Industrial Users, Water Suppliers, 2 – Manufacturers, Suppliers, Consulting Firms, and 3 – Individuals, Libraries, Students and Affiliates of Division 1 or 2. The membership committee seeks to obtain the widest possible participation among qualified applicants and makes membership recommendations to the board and membership is approaching the milestone of 1,000 members.

Chair: Nick Black, nick.black@kimley-horn.com

## **Membrane Operator Certification:**

SEDA founded the Membrane Operator Certification (MOC) program in the 1990's and the committee is responsible for updating content and implementing training for operators as well as utility managers and others in the industry focused membrane treatment. The program has grown to include four different modules, each three-days in duration: I – Introduction to Membrane Systems, II – Advanced Training of NF/RO Systems, III – Advance Training of MF/UF Systems, and IV – Advance Training of MBR Systems. The MOC committee organizes the MOC events including coordination with host facilities, scheduling speakers and administering the comprehensive examination.

Chairs: Ricardo Avena, ravena@avistatech.com

Melissa Fernandes, mfernandes@membranechemicals.com

## **Newsletter:**

The newsletter committee is responsible for creating and publishing the quarterly membership newsletter – The Recovery Zone. The committee manages a call for articles, edits the articles, compiles and formats the newsletter including upcoming events and advertisements. Content includes topics such as the president's message, legislative updates, event recaps, facility and member spotlight and SEDA quiz. Recently, the Recovery Zone has gone from a hard copy print edition to a digital edition.

Chair: Ryan Popko, Popkrr@jea.com

## **Nominations and Elections:**

Nominations and elections committee propose a slate of directors for the annual Board of Directors election cycle consisting of active members that are and are not Board members. The committee conducts the election, which is distributed to every active member for voting, closes the polls, tallies votes, and announces the results of the election. All three membership Divisions are voted on each year. Board of Directors are elected or appointed to serve a term of two-years with approximately one-half of the total number elected or appointed each year. SEDA encourages members that want to dedicate their service to the membership to be considered for election to the Board.

Chair: Joey Tippett, christopher.tippett@lanxess.com



### **Program:**

The program committee is responsible for preparation of the annual symposium and other events where appropriate. The committee considers the objectives of SEDA and the technical interests of the members in creating programs. The annual symposium requires several different tasks including but not limited to negotiating with host hotels, scheduling the plant tour, developing the technical program and speakers, hands-on training sessions, awards luncheon and other aspects like the networking events.

Chair: Allyson Felsburg, [allysonf@jupiter.fl.us](mailto:allysonf@jupiter.fl.us)

### **Public Relations:**

The public relations committee is responsible for developing and implementing programs which inform and educate the public and SEDA's membership as to the positive benefits of desalting and membrane processes. Public relations also manages SEDA's branding and social media channels.

Chair: Jennifer Ribotti, [Jennifer.ribotti@tetrattech.com](mailto:Jennifer.ribotti@tetrattech.com)

### **Technology Transfer:**

The tech transfer committee is responsible for generating and conducting programs of technology transfer designed to increase the knowledge of and interest in desalting, water reclamation and other fields of interest to our members. The 1-day tech transfer events include classroom and hands-on learning, each covering a different topic such as membrane cleaning, post treatment, troubleshooting, chemical pretreatment, pilot plant operations, instrumentation & controls, or raw water supply.

Chairs: Ricardo Avena, [ravena@avistatech.com](mailto:ravena@avistatech.com)

Melissa Fernandes, [mfernandes@membranechemicals.com](mailto:mfernandes@membranechemicals.com)

### **Awards/Scholarships:**

The awards and scholarships committee is responsible for updating the criteria for annual awards for operator, treatment plant and scholarship awards. The committee advertises, receives and reviews the awards that are presented at the annual SEDA Symposium.

Chair: Nate Litteral, [nlitteral@tequesta.org](mailto:nlitteral@tequesta.org)

### **By-Laws and Policies:**

The by-laws and policies committee is responsible for maintaining and updating SEDA's rules and policies including the associations mission statement, membership dues, meeting requirements, elections, directors, officers, committee roles and responsibilities, deposits and funds, records and reports.

Chair: Allyson Felsburg, [allysonf@jupiter.fl.us](mailto:allysonf@jupiter.fl.us)



**Students can attend our workshops  
at a discounted rate.**

Sep 10 - Hands-On Membrane Autopsy - Plant City - Students \$30  
Nov 12 - Post-Treatment & Corrosion Control - Wellington - Students \$30

A valid student ID must be presented at  
the time of registration.

# Role of Operators in Maintaining an Outstanding Reverse Osmosis Plant - An interview with Tony Hill

By: Jaclynn Levy, Mt. Pleasant Waterworks

The Mt. Pleasant Waterworks (South Carolina) Charles H. Hindman Reverse Osmosis Water Plant 1 recently won SEDA's 2024 Outstanding Water Plant Award in the under 5-MGD category. The five water treatment operators, Tony Hill, Graham MacDonald, Raoul Edjoo, Murry Campbell, and Michael Marker, work hard each day to maintain the intricate process of reverse osmosis at the utility's four reverse osmosis water treatment plants. Source water is pumped from the Charleston Aquifer 2,000 feet below the surface at a consistent temperature of 97 degrees Fahrenheit. This plant is the first RO plant in South Carolina, constructed in 1991.

I sat down with MPW's Water Operations Supervisor, Tony Hill, to discuss his team's role in maintaining Mount Pleasant Waterwork's Reverse Osmosis Plants for efficiency.

**Can you describe your daily responsibilities as a reverse osmosis (RO) treatment plant operator?** The day-to-day life of a water operator is never the same, but it usually begins with daily rounds. Our operators go around the plant to take meter readings, check chemicals, and record the data. As they do this, they make sure everything around the plant is well-maintained and operating smoothly. Other tasks include completing individual work orders and preventive maintenance. These projects can range from changing out large pumps to something as simple as repairing a small leak. Operators are also responsible for providing high-quality water to our customers. They do this by monitoring various parameters and making the proper adjustments to ensure our water quality stays consistent.

**Can you discuss any recent technological advancements in RO treatment that have improved efficiency?** We are on a 10-year schedule to replace RO membranes. Although our membranes are cleaned every 4-5 years and could last longer, we implement the 10-year cycle to ensure we stay updated with new membrane technology and run as efficiently as possible.

In addition, we recently changed our disinfection methods and sampling procedures. Our system changed from a calcium hypochlorite system to a sodium hypochlorite system. Further, we implemented a raw water blend to stabilize alkalinity and tank mixers to minimize short-circuiting. These changes have improved water quality and reduced corrective maintenance inside the plant and our distribution system.

**What is the key to being a successful water operator?** The key to being a successful water operator depends on self-motivation and a company willing to invest in your skills. Being an operator involves a lot of individual work, and our operators' success comes from their work ethic and commitment to being the best they can be.

Further, Mount Pleasant Waterworks is a company that invests in its employees. Our operators are required to hold a B license in Water Treatment by their second year of employment. MPW frequently conducts in-house short schools and budgets for each operator to attend at least one training or conference of their choosing each year. This ensures operators stay current on our field's latest trends and technologies.

**What role does preventive maintenance play in the smooth operation of an RO plant?** RO1 is the first reverse osmosis plant built by MPW. It is over 30 years old and still runs smoothly because it is well-maintained. Most of the equipment and structure are original, still operate, and look great. This would not be possible without the operator's dedication to consistent preventative maintenance.

**How do you stay updated with the latest trends and best practices in the RO treatment industry?** We continuously conduct research and attend conferences, such as SEDA. I also keep in contact with other operators and always look for new ways to improve.

**What does the award mean to staff?** Receiving this award is an honor for our utility. It acknowledges our entire team's hard work, dedication, and expertise. This award reflects our commitment to providing the highest quality water to our community and showcases our advanced technology.





# 2024 MOC Classes

**5**

**MOC Classes Completed, 3 Planned**



**2**

**Classes Out of State**



## MOC Hosts

- Town of Jupiter, FL
- MCAS Cherry Point WTP, NC
- Ormond Beach, FL
- Pinellas County, FL
- Mt Pleasant, SC

## MOC Sponsors

- American Water Chemicals
- Avista Technologies
- Kimley-Horn & Associates
- Komline-Harn

## MOC Instructors

- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Cole Anderson       | Fren Greiner       |
| James Anderson      | Fred Hemerick      |
| Jorge Atoche        | Carlyn Higgins     |
| Ricardo Avena       | Trent Jackson      |
| Robert Jason Bailey | Amir Kayvanzad     |
| David Calle         | Tatiana Konstantil |
| Allen Daniels       | Andrea Netcher     |
| Andrew Doak         | Tom Secord         |
| Rhea Dorris         | Joshua Utter       |
| Melissa Fernandes   | James Veen         |
| Russ Ferlita        | Rebecca Wilder     |
| Alex Garlaschi      |                    |

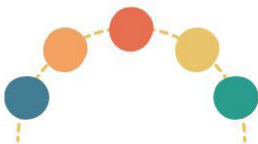
**132**

**Total Attendees**



**54**

**Attendees Successfully Completed**



# WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS



**JASON ARONIN**  
MANATEE COUNTY GOVERNMENT

**JOHN WILLIAMS**  
MANN-HUMMEL

**JUAN PINTO**  
ENERGY RECOVERY

**SCOTT RIXMANN**  
CITY OF JACKSONVILLE

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**NICOLE ZIMMERMAN**  
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# UPCOMING MOC CLASSES

## MOC II

SEPTEMBER 24-26

ORLANDO, FL

## AMTA/SEDA JOINT WORKSHOP

OCTOBER 2-3

DECATUR, AL

## MOC I

OCTOBER 8-10

POMPANO, FL

## MOC II

NOVEMBER 5-7

COLLIER COUNTY, FL

## MEMBRANE AUTOPSY

NOVEMBER 12

PLANT CITY, FL



Classes typically run from 8am to 5pm  
Attendees receive CEU's  
Lunch Provided

# Board of Directors Contact Information

## PRESIDENT

Ryan Popko	JEA	413-454-8081	Popkrr@jea.com
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## VICE PRESIDENT

Nick Black	Kimley-Horn	919-678-4133	nick.black@kimley-horn.com
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## TREASURER

Allan Clum	Mount Pleasant Waterworks	843-971-7524	aclum@mpwonline.com
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## SECRETARY

Joey Tippett	Lanxess Sybron Chemicals, Inc.	407-319-5549	christopher.tippett@lanxess.com
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## Division 1 Directors

Allyson Felsburg	Town of Jupiter	561-741-2735	allysonf@jupiter.fl.us
Allan Clum	Mount Pleasant Waterworks	843-971-7524	aclum@mpwonline.com
Ryan Popko	JEA	413-454-8081	Popkrr@jea.com
Nate Litteral	Village of Tequesta Water	540-221-0571	nlitteral@tequesta.org
James Dunmire	City of Plantation Utilities	954-253-7694	jdunmire@plantation.org

## Division 2 Directors

Ricardo Avena	Avista Technologies, Inc	305-343-7704	ravena@avistatech.com
Joey Tippett	Lanxess Corporation	407-319-5549	christopher.tippett@lanxess.com
Jon Friedrichs	JLA Geoscience	561-746-0228	jfriedrichs@jlageosciences.com
Melissa Fernandes	American Water Chemicals, Inc.	813-447-1409	mfernandes@membranechemicals.com

## Division 3 Directors

Nick Black	Kimley-Horn & Associates	919-678-4133	nick.black@kimley-horn.com
John Williams	MANN+HUMMEL	805-721-9966	j.williams@microdyn-nadir.com
Jennifer Ribotti	Tetra Tech	407-480-3934	jennifer.ribotti@tetrattech.com

## At-Large Directors

Leon Liberus	Indian River County	772-473-3077	LLiberus@ircgov.com
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