

June 27, 2006

To All State Operator Training / Certification Professionals,

As you are well aware, the cost associated with training and certifying water operators can be a tremendous burden on small, community public water systems. There is an increasing need to find comprehensive training that is of high quality and low cost. The *Operator Basics Training Series* was funded by EPA and developed by water and multimedia professionals to fill such a need.

After more than two years of development, *Operator Basics 2005* was officially released in June of 2005. Here at the Water Center, we have been overwhelmed by its enthusiastic reception from water professionals who are now using it regularly. *Operator Basics versions 2002 and 2003* have been used by an estimated 15,000 operators from all over America. Beyond our borders, enthusiastic trainers have used it in Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Australia and Canada.

In the year since releasing the 2005 version, we have distributed nearly all of the 20,000 CD-ROMs available from the first pressing. Operators in nearly every state have expressed an interest in having this training tool qualify for continuing education credits. According to our records, *Operator Basics* has been certified by at least 17 states. We are coming to you because we are interested in expanding the list of states that grant education credits for using this training tool.

The 2005 version includes three courses on one CD-ROM: an 11-hour course in Ground Water Systems, a 13-hour course for Surface and Ground Water Systems, a 9-hour Wastewater Lagoon course and a 1.5 hour presentation that allows users to tour 8 small drinking water systems. Most states are approving some, but not all, of these individual courses for continuing education credits.

Each course is divided into topical units which include “need-to-know” descriptive text and 30-90 minutes of “activities” that draw the user into an immersive experience. All units are illustrated with multiple diagrams and photographs. These vivid, engaging illustrations, photographs and animations take advantage of current computer capabilities and interactive learning styles. It’s fun!

Production of *Operator Basics* was largely funded by EPA’s Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water through its annual grant to the Montana Technical Assistance Center. As a result of this funding, our comprehensive, attractive, fun-to-use training tool is available **Free of Charge** (while supply lasts) through the National Drinking Water Clearinghouse. Since the first run of 20,000 units has already been exhausted, the NDWC will currently only distribute one CD-ROM per order. Multiple users can use the program online, and they are free to make copies of the CD-ROM using a personal computer.

The topics of the course units are:

SURFACE AND GROUND WATER COURSES

Unit 1 - Public Water Supply Basics

Unit 2 - Sources

Unit 3 - Treatment

Unit 4 – Distribution and Storage

Unit 5 – Pumps, Facilities and Controls

Unit 6 – Regulations and Monitoring

Unit 7 - Operation and Management

WASTEWATER LAGOONS COURSE

Unit 1 - Wastewater Basics

Unit 2 – Collection Systems and Lagoon Structure

Unit 3 – Wastewater Treatment

Unit 4 – Operation and Maintenance

Unit 5 – Monitoring and Reporting

Unit 6 – Troubleshooting Lagoons

The program also includes the following features:

- Math Practice Quiz Module and Glossary Games
- Exam Prep: quick-check your knowledge of drinking and waste water systems

After looking at what many states require for certification, we have put together a series of documents that should answer most of your questions and concerns. These documents are available for download at:

<http://watercenter.montana.edu/training/ob2005/certs>

Again, we believe that an efficient way to understand *Operator Basics* is to see it in action. To give this program a test drive, click on the following link:

<http://water.montana.edu/training/ob2005/run.html>

If you have any questions, feel free to email us at watercenter@montana.edu .

Thank you for allowing us to better serve you with free training that helps your operators protect the public health!