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NJWEA's 109th John J. (Jack) Lagrosa Annual Conference and Exposition



*Preserving &
Enhancing
The Water
Environment*



Post-Conference Issue
See Pages 18-65

Wastewater Hall of Fame



ROBERT VILLÉE

Rob Villée has served in the wastewater industry since 1977. Over his professional career, Rob worked at four sewerage authorities in New Jersey, including South Monmouth Regional SA, Hazlet Township SU, Northeast Monmouth County Regional SA, and settling at the Plainfield Area Regional Sewerage Authority (PARSA) in 1996. Rob retired from PARSA in 2019 after 23 years as Executive Director. Rob has received awards from USEPA for his work in the US Virgin Islands, and from WEF, AEA, and NJWEA for his work on collection systems. He is the recipient of both the WEF and NJWEA Collection System Awards.

Rob served as the NJWEA Central Section President in 1996-1998 and as the National Collection System Chair for WEF in 2010-2012. Rob Chaired the NJWEA Operations Challenge Committee and was PWOD/PWO Representative on the Executive Committee. Rob was vice Chair of the Public Education Committee. Rob has spent and continues to spend much of his time on public education. He actively participated in committee programs such as the Adopt-A-School and similar public-school programs, regional science fairs, the NJ Science Teachers Convention, at the League of Municipalities and more recently with programs on "flushable" wipes.

Since 2011, Rob has focused on the issue of flushable wipes. This earned him the nickname "Lord of the Wipes". During this time, he has been one of the lead members in the wastewater industry taking on the manufacturers self-created technical guidelines for flushability. This led to the creation of the PARSA Potty in 2013 to challenge the claim that a brand of flushable wipe broke up during the flush. Additionally, with the help of the PARSA staff, they duplicated the manufacturers disintegration test apparatus, the Slosh Box. The data produced from these devices were instrumental in the FTC case against that manufacturer.

Rob has been involved in both national and international negotiations on Flushability. He was the WEF representative on the 2014 Joint Workgroup on Flushability, and the 2015-2017 negotiations with the wipe manufacturers trade association on their 4th Edition of their Flushability Guidance Document. He was also the United States wastewater representative for ANSI on the 2015-2018 ISO Technical Specification for Flushability.

In 2016 he was part of an international wastewater group that published the "International Water Services Position Statement on Flushability". This was signed by 30 countries and over 300 organizations. Rob is currently a member of the International Water Service Flushability Group (IWSFG.org), that in 2018 published a wastewater approved Technical Specification for Flushability. Rob's role has been the design of the benchtop disintegration test. The group has members from Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Spain, Turkey, and the United States. For his effort on wipes Rob was one of the inaugural recipients of the WEF Volunteer Service Recognition Awards in 2017 and the NACWA Distinguished Service Award in 2020. Retirement hasn't slowed Rob down. He, along with his Canadian Colleague Barry Orr, served as technical advisors for the Charleston, SC Lawsuit, where Kimberly-Clark agreed to have their flushable wipes meet the IWSFG Technical Specification, which utilizes the disintegration Test designed by Rob. In recent years, Rob provided presentations for the Australian, New Zealand, and Japanese Wastewater Associations. Rob continues to take an active interest and role in advocating for compliance in use and definition of the flushable wipe.

Rob holds S-4, C-4 and N-2 NJDEP operator licenses. Rob is a member of the Select Society of Sanitary Sludge Shovelers (1998), a charter member of the NJWEA Golden Manhole Society and recipient of the WEF Collection System Committee Golden Manhole Society. Rob has received the NJWEA Collection System Award (1998), Public Education Award (2002), the USEPA Environmental Quality Award, Arthur Sidney Bedell Award (2003), Leroy Forman Award (2020), Central Section Service Award (1995), the Central Section Thomas Crapper Award (1998) as well as other honors.

Rob Villée has and continues to provide the NJWEA, WEF and other organizations in the United States and internationally his wisdom and expertise in environmental science attaining the noted status of a member of the NJWEA Wastewater Hall of Fame.