
THE CORD REPORT

The official quarterly newsletter of CORD Ohio



CORD LOOKS FOR A NEW MANAGER

The CORD Board of Directors is taking applications/has begun the search for a new part-time membership director to assist with sustaining and promoting CORD membership.

With the sudden loss of a family member, CORD's prior membership director, Kevin Strang, resigned to be with his family. CORD appreciates Kevin's efforts and our profoundest condolences to Kevin and his family.

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The CORD Board of Directors feels that a new part-time membership director is needed to coordinate CORD's outreach program and assist with its other membership related duties. CORD is looking for a self-motivated individual with excellent communication skills. Minimum requirements include some experience with local governments. The wage will be based on candidate experience and will range from \$1,000.00 to \$2,000.00 per month.

The job description and application are available on the CORD website at www.cordohio.org or by contacting Catina Taylor at albers@alberslaw.com or by phone at (614) 464-4414 ext. 5. Applications will be accepted until December 15, 2018.

CORD Legislative Update

CORD has been tracking nearly 100 bills during the 132 nd General Assembly and has directly influenced the advancement or effected changes in numerous bills throughout the past year and a half. We have highlighted a number of our most recent legislative efforts below.

CORD has been closely monitoring efforts by the Kasich Administration to crack down on phosphorus runoff and pollution entering Lake Erie. Earlier this year the Ohio EPA crafted legislation regulating fertilizer use and creating a statewide phosphorus limit for wastewater treatment facilities.

The legislation was never introduced due to opposition from numerous stakeholders, including CORD. In place of the legislation, Governor Kasich signed an executive order declaring eight Lake Erie watersheds as "in distress" and charging state agencies to promulgate rules regulating farming activities. CORD continues to closely watch the state's efforts impose unjust restrictions on wastewater treatment facilities and is prepared to defend its members against any harmful policies that might be attempted.

CORD is often called upon to testify or offer comments before legislative committees in support or opposition of various pieces of legislation. This has certainly been the case during the 132nd General Assembly. CORD provided proponent testimony on SB 250, legislation designed to protect utilities and other "critical infrastructure" against damaged caused by protestors. SB 250 will enhance the penalties associated with such crimes. Prior to the bill's introduction, we worked with the sponsor to ensure that all components of water and wastewater treatment were protected under the bill. CORD also provided support during the committee process for HB 276, legislation that would increase penalties associated with threatening utility workers when they are on the job.

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Additionally, CORD submitted proponent testimony to the House Finance Committee for HB 221, which would codify policies adopted by the Ohio Public Works Commission to allow state funds to be used for the maintenance and replacement of water and sewer lateral lines. If passed, HB 221 would encourage systems to utilize state resources to replace and maintain lateral lines.

Earlier this year CORD identified language in legislation aimed at regulating submetering companies that would have subject 6119 districts to PUCO regulations. Two bills (SB 157 and HB 249) have been introduced to reign in submeter companies that mark up the cost for tenants' utility services. Under the bills, the PUCO would have regulatory power over submetering companies, which would include companies that sell electric, gas, water and sewer services. CORD has been working with stakeholders and legislators to provide clarity in the bill to ensure that 6119 districts would not be classified as utility "resellers" and thus subject to PUCO regulations.

Lawmakers are expected to return after the November election to begin the hectic period known as lame duck session. We expect this time to be especially chaotic as it represents the last opportunity for Governor Kasich and numerous term-limited legislatures to pass legislation before leaving office. It will be important to monitor all legislation closely during this time and be prepared to oppose any policies that would be detrimental to 6119 districts.



The District Studies Rates

One of the largest issues facing the water/sewer industry is how households will pay for the increasing costs for water and sewer systems. A national survey shows water rates increasing in 30 U.S. cities. That's why the Northwestern Water & Sewer District (The District) will be studying their rates.

The District is currently seeking an outside consultant to investigate the possibility of a customer assistance program and to look into an equal rate for all customers, including residential, multi-family, business and industrial.

The study will provide a ten-year plan for future rates, consider inflation and other possible future increases. According to District President Jerry Greiner, "Affordability, aging infrastructure, and increasing regulations are all challenges for any water & sewer utility; that is why we are looking at our entire rate system, to see if we can assist lower income users or help large consumers control their costs." The study is expected to be complete by the fall of 2019.



Accurate Assets

The Northwestern Water & Sewer District's (The District's) high-tech video sewer truck now has new technology to mark assets with pinpoint accuracy. A new GPS unit pairs directly with operator's iPhones/ iPads to collect real-time, high accuracy positional data while they do their sewer survey work. This allows for fast collection of new tap, lateral, clean out locations, and allows the Geographic Information System (GIS) editors to improve the positional accuracy of existing sewer mains in the system.

Originally located with sub-meter accuracy 15 years ago, the asset locations can now be corrected to within 2" to 6" accuracy. In the end, this helps us locate our assets with efficiency, saving time and keeping our operating costs lower.

Accomplishments

6119's around the state are being recognized for their visionary work. Here are a few accolades:

Northwestern Water & Sewer District
+ Ohio Geographically Referenced Information Program (OGRIP) - 2018 Best Practices Award

+ Ohio Auditor of State Award with Distinction - 2017 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report



PHOTO:

District GIS Professionals - Grant Adams & Erik Blake accept the OGRIP 2018 Best Practices Award in Columbus.

