

SE-TAC Program Begins 2nd 5-Year Cycle

Entering its 5th EPA funding cycle, the Southeastern Regional Small Public Water Systems Technical Assistance Center (SE-TAC) issued a new Request for Proposals (RFP) on June 14, 2004. The RFP was distributed to SE-TAC advisory board members, EPA Regions IV and VI Offices, university water resources research institutes, state rural water associations, state primacy agencies, and technical assistance providers in 11 Southeastern states.

A new venue for the RFP release was the TACNet exhibit at the American Water Works Association (AWWA) Conference held in Orlando, Florida. The AWWA is an international nonprofit scientific and educational society dedicated to the improvement of drinking water quality and supply. More than 12,000 treatment plant operators and managers, scientists, environmentalists, manufacturers, academicians, and regulators participated in the week-long conference. SE-TAC coordinator, Kim Steil, co-hosted the "TACNet: EPA Technical Assistance Centers" exhibit with staff from the other seven centers located throughout the United States. The AWWA conference was the kickoff for expanding SE-TAC outreach activities. As the number and scope of SE-TAC projects grows, so too will SE-TAC's outreach efforts.

The core of SE-TAC is its competitive grants program which provides seed money for new or enhanced training, technical assistance, or pilot projects. These grants enhance the ability of small public water systems to meet the Safe Drinking Water Act's increased technical, monitoring and reporting requirements and protect public health. The latest RFP, due October 1, 2004, solicits proposals in five areas: 1) source water protection implementation; 2) small public water system security; 3) training and technology transfer; 4) financial and managerial capacity development; and 5) distribution system operation and maintenance.

Drinking water systems have an enormous impact on public health, and the public health benefits of a well-run system cannot be overstated. Virtually every American relies on a public water system either at home or on the road. SE-TAC was designed with the understanding that regulations to ensure safe, reliable water are particularly challenging for many small systems, which often confront issues of affordability as well.

For more information, visit www.gri.msstate.edu/se-tac, or contact Kim Steil at (662) 325-7355, or by email at: kims@gri.msstate.edu.



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