

Your Biggest Asset



Let's face it. We're not getting any younger, and neither is our industry's workforce.

When we talk about asset management, usually we are referring to maintain-

ing infrastructure and other resources related to storm water management. But often an organization's biggest asset is its employees. Municipalities, utilities, and construction and engineering firms are quickly learning that investing time and money into employee selection and training can be mutually beneficial for both the employee and employer.

Finding and retaining skilled employees is becoming increasingly difficult. Baby boomers, many with decades of experience in the industry, are retiring in droves, and many employers are struggling to attract younger employees eager to begin a career in the water field.

Attracting young people early on is key to maintaining a workforce passionate about water. Last year, Baltimore City, Md., launched the Baltimore City Water Industry Youth Career Mentoring Program. A partnership between the city's Mayor's Office of Employment Development and Department of Public Works, the program was designed to teach local young adults about opportunities within the water industry while also developing a pipeline of future workers

with the skills needed to fill entry-level positions. The program was a success, with 15 of the 19 original participants now employed in full-time positions in the industry. This type of outreach can be helpful in marketing a career in the water industry to the next generation.

Once you've found the right people, you then have to keep them. Investing in continuing education opportunities for your employees will keep them engaged and ensure your team stays informed about the latest trends and developments in the industry.

Institutions such as StormwaterONE offer continuing education training courses for storm water professionals. Visit the Training Programs tab on www.estormwater.com to view a list of available courses by state. Investing in these courses and the education of your employees now can help ensure success for your organization and its employees in the long term.

Are you struggling to find and retain skilled employees? How do you keep current employees engaged? Email your thoughts to swseditor@sgcmail.com. **SWS**

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ON THE WEB

Submit your nominations for the SWS 2016 Top Storm Water and Erosion Control Projects awards program.
www.estormwater.com/top-projects-nomination

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