



51st QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING OF THE AOWB

The AOWB quarterly meeting was held April 10, 2008, in Montgomery, Alabama with Chairman Alton Williams presiding. Special Guests were recognized and heard along with special requests that had been received via mail. The minutes from the previous meeting were read and approved. Treasurer Hack Sain gave the treasurer's report which was also ap-

proved.

A rule change for graduated late fees was presented and unanimously approved. More details regarding this important change can be found inside this issue. At this time a new Executive Director has not been named. The Board has formed a committee to set job qualifications as well as job duties. The information they find will be brought to the Board at its

next quarterly Board meeting which will be held on Tuesday, July 29, 2008. Any correspondence or assistance needed should be directed to Melissa Hines – Executive Secretary. Any complaints should be submitted in writing to the Board to the attention of Mr. Mike Talley, Enforcement Division.



LICENSEE UPDATE!

The Alabama Onsite Wastewater Board would like to welcome the 73 new licensees to the industry thus far in 2008. These individuals have trained, been tested and met all of the

qualifications of the Board to obtain a license. We wish them well in their business. Since January 1, 2008 the Board has renewed 1,313 licenses. If you have not renewed your li-

cence as of this date, you should not be doing any type of work. If you feel you have not renewed your license and need assistance, please feel free to contact the office.

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Office Closures/meetings/ deadlines

- May 26, 2008-Memorial Day—AOWB OFFICE CLOSED
- July 4, 2008—AOWB OFFICE CLOSED
- AOWB Quarterly Meeting - 07-29-08

PUMPER SHOW RECAP—LOUISVILLE—2008

ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

The Enforcement Division of the AOWB has been hard at work again this quarter. The investigative committee met and 8 cases were found with probable cause.

These cases were scheduled for administrative hearings at the April 10, 2008

Board meeting. 7 of those cases entered into a consent agreement with the Board.

The Board held one administrative hearing.

Joshua Carter—hearing held—installed without a permit; **Clarence Crook**—consent agreement—maintaining incomplete pumping logs; **Patrick Jones**—consent agreement—falsely completing a cep-5 and pumping without a permit; **Robert Pesnell**—consent agreement—failing to pump both sides of a septic tank; **John Savage**—consent agreement—pumping without a license; **Don Wade**—consent agreement—installing without a permit; **Chris Wells**—consent agreement—sold septic tank without providing the required information to the LHD upon request; **Butch White**—consent agreement—installed three septic tanks without a permit. All of the licensees that entered into a consent agreement paid a \$500.00 administrative fee to the Board. The enforcement division had three unlicensed persons arrested for installing a septic tank without a license. They are: **Mr. John Lee Adams, Scott Brady Weaver and Richard Brandon Payne.**

Another enforcement issue is bonds expiring and licensees continue to work. The Board ruled that if you have an expired bond, you will be sent a letter, if you don't respond, we notify the county health departments and take your name off of the official roster. To be placed back on the official roster, submit your bond via U.S. mail, fax or email.

Please submit all complaints in writing via fax, U.S. mail or email at mike.talley@aowb.alabama.gov

TWO LOCAL MEN PROSECUTED FOR SEWER CRIMES—They each received one year of probation for installing septic tanks without a permit—By Kelly Townsend

Those who fail to follow the rules and regulations of the Alabama Waste Water Board in installing a waste-water system could face severe penalties. Recently, two DeKalb County men, Pete Dalton and W.C. Brewer, found out what those penalties meant. According to Jim Hollins, state environmental director, both men were previously arrested and went to court for installing a wastewater system without a permit. They received one year probation last week in court, as well as a mountain of court costs, Hollins said. But what the sentencing does is put their livelihood in jeopardy because if they are caught doing something like this again, they could actually go to jail the next time around. He said even though both men had a license, a permit is also required. The difference between the two is that a license is for them to operate and the permit is for them to do the actual work on the particular job, Hollins said. He said permits have to be issued by the health department and an arrest warrant will be issued for those who fail to abide by the law. This is a law that has been in place for several years, Hollins said. He said that in both of these incidents both men had installed wastewater systems without obtaining a permit. The permit allows the health to inspect all of the work and to make sure that the installation is done properly.

BOARD PASSES GRADUATED LATE FEES—TO BEGIN JANUARY 2009

Each year we have over 300 licensees who do not renew on time as required by law. For the ones who do abide by the law and the rules, this is truly not a level playing field. The Board voted unanimously to pass the graduated late fees that was presented to the Board. Beginning January 1, 2009, if you hold one, two or three licenses you shall pay the \$100.00 (late) restoration fee for each license you hold. If you have a basic installer license and a pumper license you will pay \$300 renewal fee and \$200 late fee. If you have not renewed by February 15 you are charged \$100.00 restoration fee for each license you hold plus a \$250 penalty fee. If you have not renewed by April 15, you are charged \$100 restoration fee for each license you hold plus \$250 penalty fee plus \$500 delinquent fee. It will pay to renew on time. This process is due to the number of people who fail to either pay their renewal on time, renew their bond on time or obtain their continuing education on time. All three of these items are of the most urgent nature in regards to renewing your license. All three need to be completed by December 31, of each year. If you have any questions regarding this new process, please feel free to contact our office for further clarification. We are providing examples below for you.

January 1 through February 15

John Doe has a pumper license and a basic installer license. His renewal fee is \$300.00 He is late renewing, so he must send in an addition \$200 for late fees. His total renewal fee is \$500.00

February 16 through April 15

John Doe has an Advanced Level I license, a manufacturer license and a pumper license. His renewal fee is \$500. He is late renewing because he did not obtain continuing education the year before and has not sent in his renewal fees. He must pay \$300 in late fees and also pay a \$250 penalty fee. His total renewal fee is \$1,050.00.

April 16 through remainder of year

John Doe has an Advanced Level II license and a pumper license and an inactive manufacturer license. His renewal fee is \$625.00. He is late renewing because he did not send in his renewal fees before December 31. His late fees are \$300.00. (\$100 late fee also applies to inactive fees as well). He must pay the \$250.00 penalty and pay a \$500.00 delinquent fee. His total renewal fee is: \$1,675.00.

We strongly encourage you to go ahead and register for your continuing education classes before December 31. Also, mark your calendars, the first working day of October, we mail out renewal forms to our licensees. By law we are not required to mail out renewal forms, however, we do this as a courtesy to our licensees. If you have not received a renewal form by October 31 of any given year, please contact our office.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES—DALE MASK—EXCERPT FROM ONSITE INSTALLER MAGAZINE—JUNE 2007



Your competitor can be your friend,” says Dale Mask, owner of Dale’s Septic Service LLC in Eclectic, Ala., 33 miles northeast of Montgomery. Networking with others, he says, “builds friendly relationships and bonds that can bring more business for all.”

This outlook is not typical in the onsite installation and service industry. But for Mask and others in his market area, collaborative relationships have decreased daily travel to jobsites, created congenial interactions, facilitated equipment sharing, shortened response times for repairs and service when he or competitors are swamped with work, and generally have made work life less stressful.

Mask got into the onsite business 18 years ago. At the time he was the superintendent of a well drilling crew. He was traveling all over Georgia and Alabama and saw his family

only on weekends. “The septic system installing industry pretty much guarantees that I’m working close to home,” he notes. His understanding of machinery, soils and construction helped him in his new venture.

Supervising 11 employees keeps Mask busy. He guides two crew chiefs, his son Tony and employee Jeff Adams, each of whom leads a three- or four-man crew. Brandon White, an equipment operator, supports the two crew chiefs’ work.

With customer interaction, preparation of job proposals and quotes, and work flow coordination, Mask’s time is fully committed. These days he describes himself as a catch-up man. “I don’t spend too much time on the jobsites,” -he says. “I have good crew chiefs, whom I support more as a consultant than an overseer. I’m always available should they need me.”

In addition to installations, these crews also do system repairs. A different two-man crew keeps a vacuum truck on the road for tank cleaning. This part of the business is not a sideline but a full-time operation. In the office, Sharon, his wife, manages two other employees.

Building friendships

While seeking differentiation, Mask does not set himself apart from industry peers. In fact, he is a leader in industry education and in coalition building among the state’s installers.

As onsite systems became more complicated, Mask sought out every available learning opportunity. A few years ago, the Alabama Onsite Wastewater Association recruited him as a trainer, and that role puts him in front of a large number of installers across the state.

As a trainer, he is the logical person for his former students to call when they encounter problems — and they do call him. From his experiences, first teaching and mentoring installers, then selling onsite treatment systems, Mask has emerged as one of the “go-to guys” for onsite system help in the state.

“Sometimes the mentoring gets time consuming,” Mask says. “I once spent two days on a jobsite helping another fellow do his first drip installation.” Mask had sold the installer the aerobic treatment unit (ATU) he was using and wanted to be sure it was installed properly. It is from these one-on-one encounters, and from rubbing elbows with his peers, that he has developed many close professional and personal relationships.

He and several nearby installers have built an informal network through which they subcontract for each other as schedules, job locations, equipment availability and other circumstances dictate. Sometimes the

STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5—BUILDING COMMUNITIES

customer relationship remains with the installer that first sold the job, and sometimes the customer is handed off to the other installer, who establishes a direct relationship with the customer. The idea is collaboration, not competition.

How does he determine which way to structure the customer/ contractor relationship? “After five minutes of conversation with the customer, you can tell how to handle it,” he says.

If a problem would develop with an installation (there have been none thus far), Mask and his collaborators would stand behind the job.

Family ties

Once, however, an installation done by an associate did not measure up to the standards Mask sets for a Dale’s Septic Service job. While the installation met the permit requirements and was approved by regulators for final cover, “It did not meet my professional standards,” says Mask. While the relationship continues to be cordial, he has chosen not to share additional work with that installer.

His experience during a family member’s recent illness illustrates the closeness of his bonds with other local installers. When his mother was hospitalized, several of his installer friends called weekly to inquire about her. They also helped keep his jobs going and offer any kind of assistance he might need.

These relationships follow a natural course of development. Starting at the peer-to-peer level, a respect for each other’s professionalism develops, Mask says. This is the foundation on which broader relationships are built. Next comes a comfortable friendship that, in turn, brings collaboration for problem-solving and mutual growth.

Finally, the confidence level is such that each feels positive about job referrals and subcontracting relationships. Like so many other kinds of relationships, it is difficult to describe how it gets going, but “When the time is ripe, it happens, and you feel good about it,” Mask concludes.

Employees appreciated

Mask believes there will be an increase in cluster systems, which he calls decentralized systems. He expects these systems will be built in the 5,000 to 20,000 gpd size range to serve groups of new homes. As the number of the maintenance-mandatory systems grows, the need for additional employees will follow. Mask is concerned that qualified employees may not be there to meet the demand.

To help keep his skilled local employees productive and happy with their work, Mask provides reliable equipment. He sees that as part of the employer-employee relationship, and cannot be taken for granted.

Dale’s Septic Service has a fleet of three midsize, track-driven excavators. Two are Volvo model EC55s built in 2004 and 2006; the third is a 2005 JCB model 8080. One 2005 RT10 JCB tracked skid-steer, a 1992 Ford L9000 chassis that carries a 2002, 3,800 gallon vacuum tank and five service trucks round out the motor-pool.

Mask recognizes the essential need for loyal employees who bring the necessary skills to every jobsite. He also recognizes the value of a network of installation professionals who, while they could be seen as competitors, have become collaborators. Nurturing these relationships helps him confidently build relationships with customers. Relationships are the foundation upon which he sees his business continuing to grow well into the future.

NOTE: Mr. Dale Mask holds one of the installer seats on the Alabama Onsite Wastewater Board.

FROM THE AOWA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR-DAVE ROLL

Dear Licensees,

Well, our 21st Annual Trade Show is history. As you know all too well, the economy is hurting everyone in the wastewater industry. Several of our exhibitors who have come year after year were unable to attend. Fortunately, we had seven or eight new exhibitors to offset the loss of our “regulars.” We had almost the same number of licensees as last year. I had worried that \$4.00 a gallon gas/diesel fuel would keep many folks home. So, despite the tornado warnings, everyone seemed to enjoy the Trade Show. Debra Campbell and Hank Vanderveen did a great job on portable restroom continuing education. The portable restroom operators have been neglected in the past and we are working hard to provide relevant training for them.

We were able to award 11 \$1000 scholarships to deserving students at the annual dinner. Al Ernst provided the entertainment and a good time was had by all. At the conclusion of the Trade Show, we had our “World Famous” reverse drawing. The winner had the choice of a mini-excavator, Ford F250 pickup Truck, Harley Davidson Ultra Classic Motorcycle or \$30,000 in cash. Kevin Avritt of Pine Level was the winner.

For those of you that need your continuing education- PLAN AHEAD! Allen and I will be in Dothan, Huntsville, Gadsden, Mobile, and Livingston throughout the rest of the year. By then gas may be \$5.00 a gallon so pick the location closest to you. I just hate it when someone from Huntsville calls a week after Allen and I were there and they have to drive an extra 100 miles (or more) to get their CEU's. So—PLAN AHEAD. Remember, the first day of the two day CEU will focus on installer education and the second day will focus on pumper/portable restroom education.

Dave Roll





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THE MISSION OF THE ALABAMA ONSITE WASTEWATER BOARD

The Alabama Onsite Wastewater Board was created to examine, license and regulate persons engaged in manufacturing, installation or servicing of onsite wastewater systems, including portable toilets, in Alabama. This Board was also created to establish the qualifi-

cation levels for those engaged in the manufacture, installation, servicing, cleaning or pumping of onsite wastewater systems and equipment in Alabama and promote the proper manufacture, installation and ser-

vicings of onsite wastewater systems.

