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News Release

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AUB WORKERS TAKE TOP HONORS AT ASSOCIATION MEETING

ATHENS, Tenn. – The Tennessee Water and Wastewater Association (TWWA) recognized three AUB employees as tops in their field at a recent annual awards meeting.

Jeff Ferguson, chief operator of AUB's water treatment plant, received the H.B. Rosson award as the best water plant operator in the state of Tennessee.

Ferguson, a 30-year veteran of AUB operations, is known among his colleagues as a leader who stresses the importance of service to the community by producing the best water possible for AUB's customers. The plant itself was named top in the state last year by TWWA and recently was recognized by another state association as having the best tasting water in the region.

"Jeff performs every task and activity that he expects his direct employees to perform and he does so at the highest attainable level," said AUB's Jill Davis, who heads the water and wastewater division. "He leads by example and encourages his employees to continually hone their abilities and knowledge of the drinking water profession."

In a second award to AUB, Greg Hayes, chief operator of two AUB wastewater treatment facilities and a 23-year AUB veteran, was named the best overall wastewater treatment plant operator in the state and received the R.P. Farrell Award in recognition of that status.

Davis said that Hayes is sought out by operators and managers across the state for his expertise and knowledge of treatment processes.

"Greg is the 'go-to' person that others commonly approach for help whether they have a personal or work issue, and help is always delivered," Davis said. "And he is just as respected and admired for the things he does in support of his church and other community organizations."

A third industry recognition by TWWA went to Russell Coleman, lead operator for AUB's wastewater treatment operations. Coleman received the M.L. Brickey award as TWWA's best plant operator in the lower east region.

In just six years as an AUB employee, Coleman has progressed quickly from one of several plant operators to a lead operator while earning his Grade IV wastewater treatment certification, Davis said.

"Russell has demonstrated an outstanding mechanical aptitude and ability coupled with true enthusiasm for the field of wastewater operations," she said.

AUB General Manager Eric Newberry said that these awards are a testament to what can be achieved by good people doing good work.

“We have a great work force. I think each of these gentlemen would give credit to all of their colleagues just as readily as they accept the honor they have received in these awards. Athens and the community as a whole has a tremendous asset in people like this, and I’m thrilled to see them recognized for the ongoing accomplishments,” Newberry said.

Davis added that the evening had special meaning to the three AUB recipients because their own colleague, Randy Harrison, presented the awards. Harrison has served on the TWWA Lower East Region board since 2002 and has been chairman since 2006.

“It was a great night for all of the recipients, for Randy, for AUB overall,” she said.