In March of 2009, the RCAP network and the American Water Works Association (AWWA) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The highlights of the MOU recognize the importance of working together to promote efficient technical assistance and training programs in the advancement of mutual goals to provide plentiful supplies of safe water across America. This includes the following:

- Cooperate and communicate collaboratively and foster the development of local-level communications
- Explore project cooperation on joint projects and/or programs
- Collaborate on the advancement of the industry

In an effort to promote this initiative and move the goals of the MOU forward, RCAP Solutions has assumed a leadership role by serving as chairman of the national AWWA SSOS committee. The committee is comprised of water and wastewater sector professionals from Maine to Hawaii including system managers, AWWA and environmental training center staff, technical assistance providers, engineers, security experts, regulators and system operators. These varied and eclectic backgrounds provide vast resources, knowledge and experience to help move committee tasks forward.

Initial work with the SSOS involved setting up a regular time for the conference calls to accommodate committee members in 5 different time zones. The SSOS conference calls take place the first Tuesday of each month at 1:00 p.m. EST; and an agenda is forwarded the week before with new business items and old business whose tasks are yet unfinished.

One of the first items accomplished by the committee was the development of a mission statement. After several conference calls the statement was finalized:

Thank You from RCAP Solutions, Inc.

As our program year comes to a close and we look forward to another dynamic year of community work, it is important to acknowledge those that have made it successful for the residents and communities we serve. Successful community projects across our region all have a common denominator—community support and involvement. For this, a note of thanks goes out to the many who have helped to make our communities a better and safer place to live. This includes the residents who live in the communities, the planners and designers of community projects, the construction workers, the technical assistance providers, and those in government at the local, regional, state, and federal levels.

To implement any successful community project, in these times, takes a great
Who’s New at RCAP Solutions

Jennifer Toler – Financial Services

Jennifer Toler has been appointed to the position of Senior Loan Analyst in our Gardner, MA office. Jennifer will work with the Executive Director of RCAP Solutions Financial Services, Inc. in all aspects of the lending programs. She will be involved in marketing of loan programs, community outreach, database management and optimization, ensuring compliance and accuracy in both internal and external reporting. Jennifer brings extensive knowledge of various homeownership programs coupled with the ability to assist clients throughout the mortgage process.

Jonathan Brinker – Database Management

Jonathan Brinker has been hired as the Database Administrator for RCAP Solutions, Inc. Jonathan will administer, manage, design, document and evaluate a variety of database management systems. He will be involved with performing technical, analytical and professional services for programs, database-driven Web sites, office operations support, problem resolution, as well as maintenance and monitoring of database server performance. Jonathan has a Bachelor’s Degree in Computer Science from Framingham State College.

Educating Ourselves About the US EPA and Environmental Tools

Sukhwindar Singh, Director of Education and Training

In this issue and in future issues, we hope to highlight the tools and resources at the forefront of Environmental Protection. RCAP Solutions as a northeastern partner of the RCAP (Rural Community Assistance Partnership) Network receives EPA funding to assist small communities and systems with drinking water and wastewater compliance and capacity development issues. The mission of US EPA or the US Environmental Protection Agency is to protect human health and to safeguard the natural environment—air, water and land—upon which life depends. The US EPA is also responsible for researching and setting national standards for a variety of environmental programs. The US EPA works to develop and enforce regulations that implement environmental laws enacted by congress. We encourage you together with your RCAP Solutions technical assistance provider to learn more about Administrator Lisa Jackson’s seven priorities and to visit the newly designed website at www.epa.gov to locate resources and information of importance to your community. Whether you are investigating issues associated with the oil spill in the Gulf, or looking for information on the Safe Drinking Water Act, or locating environmental tools for your water or wastewater system, or investigating environmental resources for your classroom, we encourage you to start here.

See page 10 sidebar for a related article.
To raise awareness through targeted public outreach and educational presentations in business associations and on-site about the potential problems and issues encountered when there is a change in the use of an establishment resulting in a public water system that serves 25 or more people for 60 or more days per year. The expected outcome is to add to the knowledge base of business professionals (commercial Realtors, lenders, attorneys, planners and inspectors) and their clients involved in the development of private wells for public use resulting in fewer unregistered or out of compliance Public Water Systems (PWSs).
Dates and Locations in Central Massachusetts are to be determined.
Contact: Sukhwinder Singh at 814-861-7072 or ssingh@rcapsolutions.org, or tbaker@rcapsolutions.org to bring this presentation to you.

System Training in Asset Management
RCAP Solutions has been teaching CEU-accredited asset management classes for several years and can assist anyone with asset management questions, its’ implementation and the use of CUPSS or alternative software.
Contact: Art Astarita at 207-766-3065 or aastarita@rcapsolutions.org.

System Training in Safety and Security
RCAP Solutions has been making presentations on this topic for a number of years throughout Pennsylvania and New Jersey.
Contact: Tom Essig at 717-766-0969 or tessig@rcapsolutions.org.

Board Trainings
A variety of technical, managerial, and financial topics for Board Trainings are available by contacting your local RCAP Solutions State Lead for more information.

Professional Workshops and Conferences
Pennsylvania State Data Center 2010 Census Data Workshops
Learn to use American FactFinder
Penn State Harrisburg Main Campus Middletown PA
Registration: http://pasdc.hbg.psu.edu; select Census Data Workshops; $99

9/14/2010-9/16/2010
National Capacity Development-Operator Certification Workshop
Dallas Texas, Crowne Plaza Downtown Hotel; free
For registration form and to make your hotel reservations go to: http://www.epa.gov/region6/water/swp/drinkingwater/registration-operator-seminar.html
Contact: Meghan Klasic at klasic.meghan@epa.gov

11/30/2010-12/2/2010
2010 Annual RCAP Training Conference in Partnership with Housing Assistance Council (HAC) National Rural Housing Conference
RCAP’s event will kick off on Nov. 30, while the HAC’s program begins on Dec 1. Both events will take place at the Washington Marriott Wardman Park. For more information visit www.rcap.org/conference.

Upcoming and newly announced trainings can also be found at http://www.rcapsolutions.org/trainings.htm.
A deal of commitment and perseverance. It is also about project readiness, particularly as it relates to gaining funding assistance. This can often take several years to plan, design, fund, construct and open the doors for operation. Those communities which take this challenge on, with their own resources, often show the commitment and capacity to build, own, and operate a successful and sustainable community facility. Project management is now more importantly about designing a system that small rural communities can afford, sustain and manage than constructing facilities which will demand continual funding to own and operate.

Affordability has always been important when developing a community project. However this is now more important than ever. It is here, that our political representatives and funding agencies deserve a particular THANK YOU for seeking to fund more projects and continuing to provide the opportunity to access funding and provisions of technical assistance at the local level. Without their support and backing many of our badly needed facilities would continue in disrepair and our water quality diminish. Again a note of appreciation to those we have been able to work with over the past year and we look forward to continued community service in the upcoming program year.

Cash for Communities

Frank Emmick, Director of Grants & Contracts

One of the major activities of RCAP Solutions’ field staff is to assist communities to locate funding opportunities, develop applications, and obtain grants and loans. Funding for new facilities, expanding or upgrading drinking water and wastewater treatment systems, or replacing aging and inefficient infrastructure comes from many sources but most frequently from USDA Rural Development, Community Services Block Grants, state revolving loan funds and bonds.

In the past five years alone, RCAP Solutions has provided technical assistance to more than 1,660 communities and helped leverage over $200,000,000 in grants and loans to rural communities and their utilities throughout nine northeastern states, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. This issue of From Watershed to Well highlights some of the technical assistance that RCAP Solutions’ Field Specialists are currently providing to communities.

THANK YOU…continued from page 1

When the well’s dry, we know the worth of water.

- Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) Poor Richard’s Almanac, 1746
Nanatomqua Mobile Home Park Cooperative is located in the small Central Massachusetts Town of Brookfield, a rural area where farming and the Quabog River take up a majority of the town’s land. The Nanatomqua Park is an age restricted retirement community made up of 85 mobile homes. The Park is located on the banks of the Quabog River and has wetlands surrounding most of its boundaries. The Nanatomqua Mobile Home Park Cooperative is a non-profit entity which is overseen by a board, made up of residents.

Their water service is provided by a ground water system made up of three wells, which is operated by a contracted licensed operator. The Park’s wastewater is handled by several on-site wastewater disposal systems which are spread throughout the park.

Nanatomqua Mobile Home Park is considered a Public Water System (PWS) hence it is subject to Sanitary Surveys, which are currently being done by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and are known as “inspections” by the PWSs.

During a recent Sanitary Survey, several issues concerning the water and wastewater infrastructure were discovered. These deficiencies lead to Mass DEP issuing an order to correct these problems, along with a fine of $5,570.00. To avoid having to pay the fine, the community entered into an Administrative Consent Order with Mass DEP. The Consent Order stated that the “Cooperative must bring its water and wastewater infrastructure into full compliance within five years or the fine will stand, but if corrected within the allotted time, the fine will be rescinded.”

The major violation that the Nanatomqua Cooperative has to deal with evolves around their wastewater system, which in turn adversely affects the water quality of the wells and wetlands that are in proximity of these units. The Park is in violation of Groundwater Discharge Permit and Wellhead Protective Area regulations predominantly caused by septic system leach fields located within the setback boundaries of the wellheads. Septic Systems located in wellhead protection zones and other nitrogen sensitive areas are “failing to protect public health, safety and the environment” and must be repaired or abandoned. In addition, the Cooperative is required to place secondary containment under outdoor fuel oil tanks located near wellheads and wetlands.

RCAP Solutions, Inc. has agreed to assist the Nanatomqua Mobile Home Park Cooperative with their compliance issues. RCAP Solutions Specialists have met with the Cooperative’s Board on several occasions and recently conducted an on-site “Wastewater Systems and Their Effects on Public Water Supplies” training for the community. The Park’s existing wastewater infrastructure is currently being evaluated and an engineer’s plan of improvement will be rendered after the results are compiled. RCAP Solutions specialists will provide technical support and advice throughout the process, continue to educate the park’s board so that they can make better decisions and serve as true advocates for the Cooperative until the project comes to a successful completion.

Come Visit Us:

Upcoming Tradeshows are a good way to keep up-to-date on emerging technologies, ways of managing your business, and renewing your relationships with RCAP Solutions.

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<th>DATE</th>
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<td>Concord</td>
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<td>November 15–18, 2010</td>
<td>Atlantic City</td>
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St. Francis Water District – Maine
Arthur Astarita, Maine State Lead & Community Development Specialist

St. Francis is located 20 miles west of where Route 1 ends in Fort Kent. The Water District serves 93 equivalent dwelling units (edu) including an elementary school and a 22-bed senior housing complex. The water demand is about 11,000gpd or about 118gpd/edu. The District water source has been an impounded brook which was constructed in the early 1900s to service a now-defunct steam engine railroad line.

Project Details
RCAP Solutions was first referred to this project in 2004 by Maine Drinking Water Primacy. This surface water sourced system was financially failing and received a disinfection by-product violation. A needs assessment revealed three priorities:

1) determine qualifications of the system to fund improvements;
2) adjust current inadequate user rates; and
3) investigate benefits of current system upgrade versus source conversion to groundwater. The opportunity to interconnect is not available because of their rural geographical setting.

Solution/Resolution
RCAP assistance to the project has been extensive and has involved working closely with more than a dozen stakeholders including USDA Rural Development, Maine DEP Bureau of Land and Water Quality, the Maine Drinking Water Primacy (DWP), the Maine Dept. of Economic & Community Development (CDBG), the Maine Bond Bank, Aqua Maine and various engineering firms.

RCAP Solutions conducted an income survey to evaluate the water user’s capacity to fiscally support the current system debt as well as the needed system upgrades. In 2005, rates were increased to 2.37% of the median household income. Although this was a drastic increase, it was required in order for the District to sustain solvency. It was the first increase in seven years.

By leveraging the DWP Capacity Development Grant and the CDBG Planning Grant, RCAP Solutions facilitated 100% funding for a preliminary engineering study for upgrades to the treatment system. Through the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process, the district chose Woodard & Curran engineering firm, which produces an excellent study detailing the issues, alternative solutions and cost estimates.

One of the alternatives was to convert to groundwater. The groundwater conversion was strongly supported by everyone as current system upgrades would double operating costs and require a higher level of certified operator which is not readily present in the area.

In 2007 and 2008, RCAP Solutions used the Maine Bond Bank Community Grant Program and the CDBG Special Projects Matching Fund grant to fund a successful drilling program to find groundwater in a sand/gravel aquifer. Testing proved the well to have sufficient yield and good quality water.

In 2009, a letter to the local state representative produced response from both congressional senators through the USDA that granted $481,000 to make the $1.3M source conversion project affordable and sustainable to the water users. The project realized 74% grant funding leveraging the loan balance and will increase user costs about $8 per quarter.

The groundwater source is expected to lower operating and maintenance costs for the District. However, the loan for the 1995 the slow-sand filter is active. Such is the plight of decade-old decisions haunting small water systems.

We let a river shower its banks with a spirit that invades the people living there, and we protect that river, knowing that without its blessings the people have no source of soul.

-Thomas Moore
Drinking Water System Rehabilitation: Town of Pittsburg, NH Votes to Improve the Village’s Drinking Water

Dr. Robert Morency, New Hampshire State Lead

The Town of Pittsburg, NH, the northernmost town in the state, is a small rural community where the chief industries are logging and tourism. Moose and deer outnumber people, and are common sights as one approaches from the south. The human residents are independent and self-reliant, there being a legacy of the “Indian Stream Republic,” which, in the 1830s, was a separate nation, belonging to neither Canada nor the United States.

The Town has maintained for many years a public water system that serves the village, which is also served by a small centralized wastewater treatment plant. Typical of the spirit of small towns in New Hampshire, the operator of the water system is also the chief of police, which is more than a full-time job in itself, given the independent nature of everyman, and the fact that Pittsburg is the largest town in New Hampshire.

The Connecticut Lakes, located in Pittsburg, are the source of the Connecticut River, the longest river in New England. They symbolize the abundance of fresh, clean water in this part of the world. So, for a long time there was not an awareness of how valuable a public drinking water well was in terms of its ability to provide safe drinking water to multiple homes and businesses, while meeting State and Federal regulations.

Once it became evident of problems with the wells, the community became acutely aware that, even with wide open spaces, there may be a scarcity of land to use for special purposes, such as drinking water sources.

In 2008, testing revealed a problem with bacterial contamination in one of the wells, which, upon further testing, showed the origin of the bacteria was from an old pasture adjacent to the well field. This necessitated the entire source be abandoned. In the meantime, a “Boil Water Order” was issued, which put a strain on customers, the operator, and the town finances. Increased frequency of sample collection and testing, led to a sense that having a nagging, long-term problem was not consistent with the community’s overall sense of the quality of life in Pittsburg.

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) recognized that because the problem with the wells necessitated seeking out public financing, it might also be advantageous to rehabilitate other parts of the system, including distribution and storage. As RCAP Solutions had worked with the selectmen’s secretary and water system operator in the past, we were asked to lend assistance in designing a comprehensive solution to a long-standing problem. In addition to assisting the select board to hold interviews with engineering firms, RCAP helped to write a warrant article, and testified before the town meeting alongside the NHDES. The outcome of the planning efforts was an overwhelmingly supportive vote from the citizens for an appropriation of $2,000,000 for the project. Working with the NHDES, the NH Community Development Finance Authority, and USDA Rural Development (RD), we were able to secure a Planning and Development Grant from RD, which, along with a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Feasibility Study Grant, funded ground-water exploration that has resulted in identifying a likely well site. The RD funds were used to complete an application for funding to the Water and Waste Loan/Grant Program, and the CDBG Feasibility Study has resulted in an application for a full implementation grant.

As of this writing, a likely well site has been identified, and the Selectboard is seeking approval to go ahead with permitting and land acquisition. In the coming months, they will be making design and financial decisions that will determine how the project is implemented. All parties are eager to proceed and resolve the drinking water issues in town for generations to come.

Cathy McComiskey, Selectmen’s Secretary/Town Treasurer; and Richard LaPointe, Water System Operator/Chief of Police.
Lake Carmi Project - Franklin, Vermont: Franklin Watershed Committee Receives Governor’s Award for Environmental Excellence and Pollution Prevention

In May of 2010, the Governor of Vermont informed the Franklin Watershed Committee that a panel of judges selected the Lake Carmi Phosphorus Reduction Project, for recognition in this year’s Governor’s Award for Environmental Excellence & Pollution Prevention, for showing progress towards protecting this troubled watershed with increased education and training, community consensus building, and buy in from the community to protect the watershed in a long term manner.

RCAP Solutions, Inc. has been working with the Franklin community and others in the region to protect and enhance the water quality of Vermont’s environment. This award-winning project stands out as a model to inspire all Vermonters to find innovative approaches to conserve natural resources, safeguard human and environmental health, and prevent pollution before it is a problem.

Franklin is a very small agrarian community in the north end of Franklin County on the Canadian border with an estimated population of 1,268. Lake Carmi, a small lake in the community, is surrounded by camps, cottages and farms (five dairy farms with many acres of corn, hay and pasture use); approximately 44% of the watershed for the lake is farmland. The shoreline has Lake Carmi State Park, one of the most heavily used state parks in Vermont, as well as approximately 38% or 2.9 miles of undeveloped shoreline. There are 206 camps and 3,700 feet of road within 50 meters of the shore and most of the camps are very close to the shore.

Lake Carmi is a relatively shallow lake with a maximum depth of 33 feet. The long axis of the lake which runs north south is approximately 3 miles. At the southern end of the lake is a wetland area called Franklin Bog. The lake and all but a small part of the bog lie within the Missisquoi watershed which eventually reaches Missisquoi Bay in Lake Champlain. The lake is natural but there is a culvert which during high water flow restricts the flow raising the water level about 2 feet above its natural level. A Dam located near the north end of the lake, that was originally built in the 1800s to power a sawmill, was rebuilt in 1970 further down the Pike River which flows out of the lake into Canada and eventually back into the Missisquoi Bay of Lake Champlain.

Lake Carmi has experienced high phosphorus concentrations and the resultant water quality problems for several decades. Late summer algae, reduced water clarity, and heavy aquatic plant growth persist, which has resulted in the State of Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Water Quality Division issuing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the lake. This total amount identifies the phosphorus which can enter the lake without causing water quality problems as part of section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. In this case it is the result of considering a very delicate balance between plant growth and water quality and the State has provided guidelines as to how much the load needs to be reduced.

In a large area, the camps or cottages crowd the shore of this lake and are inadequately served by water or wastewater facilities. Most residents get potable water from a nearby spring and their non-potable water from the lake. Nearby farmland drainage is also suspected in adding to the problem. Most of the camps are very small and have been passed down for generations with very little improvement.

In this community, concerned residents formed the Franklin Watershed Committee to work on water quality and protection of their watershed. This Committee has worked within the watershed to try and reduce the phosphorus and improve their lake. They have been able to work with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Water Quality Division and many other organizations including RCAP Solutions to foster septic maintenance and outreach, shoreline management and repair, stream and lakeside bank erosion, agricultural phosphorus reduction and...
Other SSOS accomplishments include the compilation of training materials suitable to fulfill the needs of small water and wastewater systems. The training materials attempt to achieve overall capacity and cover topics such as asset management, security training and watershed management concepts. These resources have been assimilated from existing training materials from the AWWA, RCAP and the National Environmental Service Center in Morgantown, West Virginia.

An SSOS promotional brochure is under development that will exist in hard copy and also be downloadable. The brochure will target operators offering license renewal “Continuing Education Units” and boards of directors providing insights to their fiduciary duties in running a water system. Also, the benefits of small system membership in the AWWA will be identified.

RCAP Solutions has completed the first year of a three year term as chair of the SSOS. Much has been accomplished, yet there is much to be done. Please stay tuned for updates of the next year’s activities with this important committee that will ultimately provide needed resources for small system long-term sustainability.
Water Supply in the Towns of Fayette and Varick, NY

Chris Nill, New York Community Development Specialist

The Towns of Fayette and Varick are two predominantly agricultural communities situated in New York’s Finger Lakes region. As it happens, they are two neighboring communities that for a very long time had a common problem. For years, residents and businesses located in the area relied on private, individual groundwater wells to meet all of their water supply needs. Nearly all of the wells yielded water of very poor quantity and quality, and in some cases included bacterial coliform contamination. The area of need comprises about 150 households and a number of farmsteads, plus a few small businesses, including at least one vineyard.

An RCAP Solutions’ Community Development Specialist met with local leaders and residents on numerous occasions between 2005 and 2007. Together they mapped out a strategy to build a workable co-funding arrangement involving multiple state and federal agencies. The goal was to secure low interest loans and grants to help make the anticipated $2.8 million public water supply project affordable to local residents and businesses in an area where the median household income was barely $30,000.

In order to execute the funding strategy, RCAP Solutions helped local officials plan and administer a household income survey to determine the areas eligibility for certain types of funding assistance such as that which is offered by USDA Rural Development and the NY Small Cities Community Development Block Grant program. Later on, RCAP Solutions also helped the community develop and administer a needs assessment survey which provided valuable documentation of current water supply conditions among area residents. Results of the needs assessment survey were then wrapped into the community’s funding applications.

Throughout the process, RCAP Solutions coordinated closely with the project engineer and other relevant parties, helped the community find an appropriate professional grant writer who later developed their NY Small Cities CDBG application, as well as helped facilitate two public informational meetings to keep local residents and business owners fully abreast of all developments with respect to project funding.

Thanks to everyone’s remarkably dedicated efforts, the project was awarded a $600,000 CDBG grant in 2007. Then, just in the past year, Fayette and Varick learned that they were also being awarded a $489,700 grant and an $817,000 loan for the project from USDA Rural Development, as part of the jobs-creating American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The whole project went out to bid in the spring of 2010 and ground was broken during the same season.

Thanks in part to RCAP Solutions’ on-site assistance, many families in the Towns of Fayette and Varick will now have access to safe, reliable water supply in their homes for the first time. In the words of Town of Fayette Supervisor Cindy Garlick-Lorenzetti, “After many years the goal has now been reached.”
In 1997, an RCAP Solutions Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) first began work in the community of Madriguera on referral from Rural Development (RD). The community had contacted RD to apply for funding, but Madriguera didn’t have the local capacity to make a loan. The community lacked focus for leadership, community organization, and capacity development.

The Madriguera community of Aguas Buena town is located at the East-center part of Puerto Rico. The community aqueduct provides drinking water to 176 families, 3 churches and 2 small markets known as “colmados.” When RCAP Solutions’ assistance commenced, the aqueduct consisted of an old unprotected well covered with zinc and a wood structure, and one storage and distribution tank.

At that time, the community charged a flat rate of $7.00 per month per user for water services. The community wasn’t well-organized and operation was none or inefficient, leading the system to be in the non-compliance list of the Puerto Rico Department of Health (PRDOH). Besides these conditions, it happens that the community confronted water quality issues after several over-flooding events in which runoff and contaminated water accessed the well system.

When compliance water tests were performed, the water system exceeded the action level for copper. The community decided to move the system into compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) which is required by the PRDOH and EPA. The community system has also complied with other government agencies such as the Puerto Rico Department of Nature Resources (PRDNR) and PRODS. In support of this project, RCAP Solutions assisted the community by:

- engaging customers and managers in efforts to ensure their drinking water system is viable and complies with SDWA;
- ensuring the community board sustain and undertake the well management and financial function;
- provided technical assistance to ensure that distributed water is as secure as possible with existing system;
- provided supervision, problem design and development of two proposals submitted to Aguas Buena municipality requesting funds on different stages;
- ensuring community completed a desktop evaluation report in compliance with Lead and Copper Rules;
- ensuring compliance with the PRDNR closure process for old well and obtaining required permit for new well.

With RCAP’s education, training and assistance, the community has been able to increase their technical, managerial and financial capacity, to make the Madriguera Aqueducts one of the best organized systems, resulting in greatly improved customer public health.

“Our community is very grateful to have Josefa Torres, from RCAP Solutions as our mentor, consultant and resource, without her our water system would remain the same,” said Mr. Velazquez, community president.
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