Households all across America will be receiving, or have already received, an important envelope in their mailboxes from the federal government. It is the 2010 U.S. Census questionnaire. Since 1790, every ten years our government has undertaken a comprehensive census of its residents in order to determine, as a nation, who we are, how many of us there are, and what our needs are. Indeed, census data has a tremendous impact on our lives—from determining our state’s representation in Congress, to allocating finite national resources to individual communities in a fair and equitable manner.

Though everybody has heard of the census, many people remain unaware of the important changes at the Census Bureau over the past ten years. During the 2000 census, five out of six households received a short census form which asked basic information such as the name, age, sex and race of all persons in the household. Only one in six households received the census long form, which asked a total of 52 questions about the residents’ demographic characteristics, the housing they live in, how they go to and from work, the languages they speak at home and other information that helps define the patterns of community life in our country. The long form also included questions about personal and household income, and the data generated from these questions, when aggregated over various levels such as city, town, county and state, yield important statistical measures such as the median household income of an area.

Reliable indicators of community income levels (and many other societal variables) are as important as ever in 2010, but the manner in which the raw data is collected has changed. When census questionnaires are mailed out, for the first time since 1940, nobody will be receiving a long form; rather, every household in America will receive a simple, 10-question short form. The income characteristics of American communities are no longer derived from the decennial census. To get a better handle on these and other community characteristics, the Census Bureau has developed a more robust survey instrument known as the American Community Survey (or ACS).

According to the Census Bureau, the American Community Survey
- is an on-going survey;
- is sent to a sample of the population;
- tells us what the population looks like and how it lives;
- helps communities determine where to locate services and allocate resources.

The American Community Survey provides critical economic, social, demographic, and housing information to this country’s communities every single year.

While the decennial census will continue its focus on counting the population, the American Community Survey will provide communities every year the same kind of detailed information previously available only when the U.S. Census Bureau conducted a population census every 10 years.

Many localities often complain they do not have the up-to-date information they need in order to better understand community issues, respond to needs, and allocate programs and resources. By responding to the American Community Survey questionnaire, you are helping your community establish community goals, identify community problems and solutions, locate facilities and programs, and measure the performance of programs. Only a small sample of addresses is selected to participate in the American Community Survey, and any given address may only be selected for the sample once every 5 years.

You can find out more about the American Community Survey online at: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/ and be sure to download the handy Q&A overview pamphlet at: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/ACSQandA_ENG.pdf.
Who’s New at RCAP Solutions

Jennifer Husmer – Marketing/Communications
Jennifer Husmer has been hired as the Communications Coordinator for RCAP Solutions, Inc. and reports to the Director of Planning & Development. She is responsible for the creation, coordination, implementation and enhancement of all communications initiatives in support of RCAP Solutions. Jennifer will be assisting in a comprehensive communications and marketing effort to build the name, brand and capacity of the total organization. She brings a vast knowledge of writing and editing communications including press releases, web site content, articles and campaigns.

Renee Perdicaro – Executive Office
Renee Perdicaro has been hired as the Executive Assistant to the President & CEO of RCAP Solutions, Inc. Renee will assist in the continuation of our development and communications activities, in addition to areas of special projects, event management, board of director support and overall management of the executive office. Renee brings a bachelors degree from Boston College in Advertising and Public Relations as well as cultivated expertise in legal issues and processes as a Paralegal.

James P. Starbard – Community Resources
James Starbard joins RCAP Solutions as an Environmental Water and Wastewater Technician and is located in our Worcester, MA office. Jim will help RCAP Solutions to build a sustainable presence and contribute to improving the quality of life in rural Rhode Island and Connecticut, as well as working on projects in Massachusetts. Jim comes to us with a solid history with municipal work in both water and wastewater. He is working towards a Masters of Occupational and Environmental Health & Safety from Anna Maria College, Paxton, Massachusetts and holds several professional licenses in Massachusetts including Registered Sanitarian and Title V System Inspector.

RCAP Solutions Training and Education Initiatives

Sukhwindar Singh, Director of Education and Training
RCAP Solutions is committed to education and training as a means of helping to assure public and individual self-reliance to improve the quality of life for individuals, families, and the communities in which they live and work. Our expert Community Resources staff coaches and teaches in areas that include board training to develop community capacity and community infrastructure; and employs small system experts knowledgeable in safety and security, asset management, income surveys, USDA financial and managerial reports, and operations and maintenance best practices. Our dedicated Client Services staff offers assistance that helps transition clients to work through workforce development programs and housing programs. We are further engaged in utilizing technology and broadband services in our communities and with our clients to provide fair and equitable access to information and learning resources. We are sure you’ll agree that learning should be accessible to all… to educate, elevate, motivate and sustain. This is the path to self-sufficiency.

Please see training sessions schedule on page 3.
Training Sessions Schedule

4/08/2010
**Septic Systems and Our Lakes, Ponds and Rivers**
Colchester VT Town Hall, Colchester, VT
**Contact:** Mr. Tom Clark

5/18/2010
**PA State Data Center 2010 Census Date Workshop**
Penn State Harrisburg Main Campus, Middletown, PA
Learn to use American FactFinder, the Nation’s Leading Tool for Obtaining Population and Economic Statics. Register online at http://pasdc.hbg.psu.edu; select Census Date Workshops
**Sponsors:** Penn State Harrisburg Institute of State and Regional Affairs; United States Census 2010: United States Census 2000: Economic Census

**Free Water Sectors Interdependence Training**
**Target Audience:** Executives, managers and operators of water sector (water and wastewater) utilities as well as representatives from other critical infrastructures
Washington, DC
Water Environment Federation (WEF), Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
**Contact:** jsullivan@wef.org
See www.rcap.org for other dates and other cities.

11/30/2010–12/2/2010
**Joint RCAP National and Housing Assistance Council (HAC) Conference**
Washington, DC
**Contact:** Joy Barrett, jbarrett@rcap.org

For more information about developing or providing educational programs in your state, please contact Ms. Sukhwinder Singh at ssingh@rcapsolutions.org.

Upcoming trainings can also be found at http://www.rcapsolutions.org/trainings.htm.

Profile in Leadership

Janis Conlon, Immediate Past Chair

Janis Conlon has served on the RCAP Solutions Board of Directors since 1986 holding the positions of Vice President, President, and Immediate Past Chair. Since 1995, Janis has directed the North Central WIC Program – a program of the Montachusett Opportunity Council, Inc. in Fitchburg, MA. She has broad experience with community development programs and is active in local and regional organizations addressing social welfare issues.

Janis will be serving one more year on the Board of Directors and reflects on her time here. She has seen RCAP Solutions do a lot of great work in difficult times and has seen many changes for the good. In 2000, when President and CEO L. Earnest Beresh passed away, there was a lot of uncertainty about the direction in which RCAP Solutions (previously Rural Housing Improvement) was going and who the new leader would become. When Karen Koller was hired as the new President and CEO, Janis saw the agency become reenergized due to Karen’s vision and strong leadership.

RCAP Solutions continues to do great work and change lives for the better, and because of this, Janis finds her position to be very fulfilling. She enjoys hearing and reading about the difference RCAP Solutions is making in people’s lives and is also excited to work with a staff that is passionate about the work they do. She is also proud to be part of an organization that is dedicated to providing clean water to communities and finding the solutions needed to rebuild our infrastructure, our jobs, and our personal sustainability.

Janis believes that with continued hard work and dedication, RCAP Solutions will expand its horizons and continue to make a difference for many years to come.
In communities with public water and sewer infrastructure, well-managed operation and maintenance is of fundamental importance. Prudent management ensures public health, security, community development opportunities, and (as Maine’s tourism board would say), keeping things “the way life should be.” The focus of RCAP’s assistance is to address concerns of small community water and wastewater treatment systems. These systems are often the most vulnerable and least prepared to deal with breaches of safety, security and emergency crises.

Security Concerns of Small Systems and WARN

For small community water-sector systems, safety and security issues are usually limited to concerns about local vandalism, or perhaps a disgruntled employee who has been reprimanded or dismissed. Although these issues are generally not considered as terrorist attacks, they are very important concerns, and good system management should address them in several ways, including:

- employee background checks;
- varied patrol schedules;
- locks, lighting, fencing, and motion detection cameras;
- emergency response training and drills.

Within the RCAP Solutions Northeast region successful efforts have been made to launch and implement Water and Wastewater Agency Response Networks (WARN). WARN formalizes mutual aid among the water sector utilities under the motto “Utilities Helping Utilities.” To many citizens, this sounds like a repetition of “Mutual Aid,” which is already established and automatic among fire departments, police, and electric companies. However, most rural water sector utilities are separate and independent of municipal governments. They may be organized as separate municipal departments, or special purpose districts. Despite their critical importance, most federal officials did not include these districts as part of their state or federal emergency management agencies. It was only very recently that the water sector was recognized and considered as first responders in emergencies.

Lessons Learned from Emergency Preparedness Drills

Emergency Response training and drills are necessary to reduce inefficiencies of time, effort and manpower when a crisis strikes. Crises can include vandalism but more often involve severe weather events. It is valuable for water sector systems to participate in emergency response drills and to exercise with other organizations and agencies (hospitals, fire, police and town officials) that would be actually working together during the actual crisis. These focused exercises would reinforce the required routines and galvanize teamwork.

Pennsylvania’s WARN (PaWARN) and Maine’s WARN (MEWARN) held workshops and desktop exercises that discussed response roadblocks to storm and earthquake scenarios. In accordance with Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP), the following comments and solutions were documented in the “hot wash” from these exercises:

1. Internal and external communications was the most significant challenge:
   - Phone land line & cell companies – first responder
   - City radio system
   - Ham radios/CB radios
   - Two-mile radius radios
   - Satellite phones
   - Runner system (i.e., snow-mobiles in the winter)

2. Involvement with EMA/LEPC/EOC:
   - Get water utilities connected with EMA and improve communications
   - Go to LEPC meetings
   - Invite other first responders and EMA to the plant
   - Credentialing for water sector

3. Website functionality:
   - Be able to provide information during a power outage through hard copy or remote digital format
   - Resource tracking
   - Links to weather updates, EOC locations, LEPC and critical forms
   - Map of all of the systems within the state
   - Ability to look at members and find similar services

4. What can unaffected utilities do to be proactive?
   - Everyone become a WARN member since there is strength in numbers

continued page 5
RCAP Partnership Receives $5 Million in Stimulus Funds from USDA

Scott Mueller, Director of Community Resources

The Rural Community Assistance Partnership, Inc. (RCAP) has been awarded a $5 million grant of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds through U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development. RCAP Solutions is one of six partners serving the northeast region, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. The economic stimulus funds will be used to provide help to water and wastewater systems in rural communities in addition to its regular programs through on-site technical assistance, training and publications.

USDA Secretary, Tom Vilsack, made the announcement that RCAP was the recipient of the funds on March 8 and are being provided through the Technical Assistance and Training Grant (TAT) program administered by USDA Rural Development. RCAP applied for the funds in January.

“The Obama Administration supports the construction of new sanitation infrastructure that safeguards the health of rural residents,” said Vilsack. “These funds will help ensure that operators of rural utility systems receive the training needed to plan new, safe reliable water systems.”

RCAP Solutions along with its other partners plan to begin the year-long Technitrain ARRA program on May 1. The majority of the funds will be disbursed through RCAP’s six regional partners to carry out technical assistance and training to 420 water and wastewater systems across the U.S. The regional partners expect to hire additional staff to implement the program in communities.

RCAP will coordinate with state and area Rural Development offices to select water and wastewater systems to receive assistance from RCAP’s Technitrain ARRA program. All of the chosen systems will be applicants or recipients of ARRA funding through USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS). RCAP will focus on assisting RUS borrowers to comply with ARRA provisions. Approximately 25 percent of the communities receiving assistance will be in persistent poverty counties.

Part of the grant will be used to produce several publications for RUS borrowers and on effective management, operations and maintenance of small, rural water and wastewater systems. RCAP hopes to distribute these publications in print and on the Web.

The Technitrain ARRA program is an extension of RCAP’s regular programs. RCAP’s ongoing Technitrain program has been funded by USDA since 1988. President Obama signed The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 into law on Feb. 17, 2009. It was designed to jumpstart the nation’s economy, create or save millions of jobs, and address many infrastructure needs in urban and rural areas.

RCAP Solutions and the Rural Community Assistance Partnership provides technical assistance and training to ensure that small, rural communities, most of which are economically disadvantaged and have a population under 2,500, have safe, clean drinking water and reliable wastewater systems.

These funds will help ensure that operators of rural utility systems receive the training needed to plan new, safe reliable water systems.

Planning for Emergency Funding

How do small systems find quick bridge financing to reimburse responding systems? How do small systems pay for broadband access? How do WARNs financially sustain their websites?

In the case of statewide or regional crisis, governors usually officially “declare” the emergency and FEMA response is enacted. For FEMA reimbursement, it is very important that systems document the request for assistance, every response step, and cost. Having a signed WARN mutual aid document that also meets FEMA requirements. However, in the more common an “undeclared” emergency, how do small systems requesting assistance reimburse the responder the cost of what could be a significant amount of work?

Typical emergency funds from USDA/Rural Utilities Service and HUD/Community development Block Grant (CDBG) are for “declared emergencies.” One solution as an avenue for quick access to funds is the RCAP loan...
Maintain Your Septic System and Protect Your Drinking Water

Robert E. Morency, Ph.D., New Hampshire State Lead

Septic systems are the way that most of us living in rural areas dispose of what goes down our toilets and drains. Typically, water leaves the house after having been used in the kitchen, workshop, or the bathroom and first enters a system of pipes leading to the basement. Larger pipes carry the water out of the house to a buried tank where solids settle down to the bottom, and greases and suds float to the top. Water that has been allowed to become clear while the settling has taken place leaves the tank as more water enters. The water that leaves the tank (now called “effluent”) is only partly treated, and now enters a system of perforated pipes, which allows the effluent to trickle down into a drainfield, where it is cleaned by bacteria in the soil that consume the remaining nutrients in the effluent. Finally, the treated effluent percolating downward re-enters the aquifer system, and is recycled.

Maintaining your septic system means paying attention to some proper, but simple, procedures. We want to avoid either KILLING the bacteria or CLOGGING the pipes and/or the drainfield. Let’s break it down to what we use, how we dispose of what we’re using, daily use of the septic system, and some simple rules to ensure that what’s in the ground (what we think of as the “septic system”) stays working and intact.

What we use: Use bleach sparingly. Put only toilet paper in the toilet; use low phosphate detergents and less water.

How we dispose of what we’re using: Don’t use a garbage disposal; don’t pour paints or other household chemicals in your drains; only human waste goes in the toilet (no plastic, cigarettes, trash, napkins, etc.).

Daily use of the septic system: Conserve water (overloading the system means too little time for settling); take shorter showers; do laundry in a few large loads, rather than many small loads; and keep food scraps out of the drains.

Keeping the septic system working and intact: Know where the drainfield is, and respect it as a delicate structure (no digging or driving on it); don’t pave it, play on it, or allow excess drain water from the roof to flood the drainfield; schedule inspections and pumping every 3–5 years; don’t use septic system additives—they are a waste of money and can do the system harm.

In addition, you should call a professional if you suspect a problem (strange odors, slow draining, septage backups into the house, pooling of water on the surface of the drainfield, or an unusually vigorous growth of grass on the drainfield).

Following just these few Dos and Don’ts will help you to maintain one of the most important (and expensive to replace) systems in your home, while helping to minimize the effects of non-point source pollution. Remember, the water that goes down your drain is constantly being recycled in the environment. What goes around comes around!
Searsport is a town located in Waldo County. Searsport was settled in the 1670’s and incorporated on February 13, 1845. David Sears of Boston, after whom the town is named, was one of ten who bought land in the area held by the heirs of General Samuel Waldo. Searsport has a total area of 30 square miles and the current population is 2641. During the nineteenth century the port had 17 shipyards and built 200 ships, while supplying fully one-tenth of the nation’s Merchant Marine deep water captains. The Penobscot Marine Museum in town faithfully recalls that heritage. Sears Island, known as Wassumkeag or shining beach by the Indians, has been a point of controversy for many years. The state’s second largest deep water port is ideally located from the point of view of railroad, wood products and other development interests. Others have expressed environmental and esthetic concerns about further industrializing this portion of the coast.

The Searsport wastewater plant has a daily flow of 60,000 to 80,000 gallons and has a design capacity of 20 MGD. The plant has primary treatment with pre and post chlorination. Approximately 5 tons of sludge per month is dewatered by a sludge belt press and then transported to a composting facility. The town collects sewage flows from 620 customers.

**Notice of Safety Violations**

RCAP Solutions was contacted after Searsport received a Maine Department of Labor safety inspection. The wastewater department required training and program development of a safety program for Bloodborne Pathogens to comply with DSL-OSHA standard (29CFR 1910.1030) which applies to non-healthcare employers.

**RCAP Solutions provided Technical Assistance in the Following Areas:**

- development of procedures and policies for a Bloodborne Pathogens Program;
- assist the department with a written hazard communication (Haz-Cat) program to meet the specific requirements of the department and formalize a program; and
- assist with the development of Lockout/tag procedures that assigns responsibility for the program, training, and annual reviews.

**Chemical Addition for Disinfection Significant Beneficial Impact**

The wastewater operators will meet the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens safety program required by the Department of Labor and have an understanding of best management practices to meet basic health standards. RCAP Solutions will continue to work with the Searsport operators to evaluate all safety programs and develop a Lockout Tag Out and Hazardous Communications Program to assure compliance with regulations and pass future inspections.
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From Watershed to Well
Spring 2010

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