

## RI Wastewater Treatment Crews Honored for Outstanding Response to 2010 Spring Flooding

The Department of Environmental Management congratulates Peter Eldridge, superintendent of the West Warwick Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility and Joel Burke, superintendent of the Warwick Wastewater Treatment Facility, for recently receiving Regional Treatment Plant Operator awards from the US Environmental Protection Agency. Eldridge and Burke were nominated for the awards by staff from DEM's Office of Water Resources in recognition of their outstanding response to and ongoing rebuilding efforts after the 2010 floods. Both the West Warwick and Warwick facilities were submerged and rendered inoperable as a result of record-breaking flooding of the Pawtuxet River last spring.

The Department also extends its congratulations to Earl Salisbury of the Cranston Water Pollution Control Facility. He received the Operator of the Year award for exhibiting on-the-job excellence from the New England Water Environment Association at its annual meeting in Boston.

In addition, EPA honored the Narragansett Water Pollution Control Association, the state's wastewater operator professional organization, for its response to widespread damage and excess flows at the state's pumping stations and treatment facilities during and after the 2010 flooding.

The Department of Environmental Management continues to monitor the Warwick and West Warwick facilities as repairs continue nine months after the flooding, although major treatment processes had been re-initiated within weeks after the flood waters subsided. Crews at the Cranston and Westerly facilities responded to less intrusive plant flooding, but both had major sewage pumping stations flooded for which the facility superintendents, Dan Gorka and Scott Duerr, facilitated extensive repairs. Statewide, personnel at all wastewater treatment facilities scrambled to maintain forward flow throughout collection systems and provide full treatment during and even weeks after the flooding. It was these shared efforts that prompted the DEM nomination for recognition of the Rhode Island profession in general.

Since the flooding, the state's wastewater operators – including those in Warwick and West Warwick – have been presented with commendations from DEM and Save The Bay, recognized by the Board of Certification of Operators of Wastewater Treatment Facilities, and were featured in the national wastewater publication *Treatment Plant Operator*.



(Left-Right) Executive Director of the Warwick Sewer Authority Janine Burke, EPA's David Chin, Warwick wastewater facility superintendent Joel Burke (no relation to Janine) and EPA's Jay Pimpare



(Left-Right) EPA's David Chin, Robert Rose from Geremia Associates, West Warwick Sewer Commission Executive Director Alexandra Griffin, West Warwick Councilwoman Filomena Gustafson, facility superintendent Peter Eldridge, facility assistant superintendent Scott Goodinson, EPA's Jay Pimpare