



OLD SAYBROOK UPGRADING SEPTIC SYSTEMS



CONNECTICUT ONSITE WASTEWATER RECYCLING ASSOCIATION  
SUPPORTING CONNECTICUT AND OUR ENVIRONMENT

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## July 2015

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Letter from the President

New Member Profiles

Email notice from the  
State of Connecticut

David Evans  
Legislation proposal

COWRA'S 2015 Installer  
School

COWRA'S 2015  
Pumper/Cleaner School

Technical Standards  
Revision

Old Saybrook Water  
Commission

Dates to Remember

#### Inserts

Technical Standard  
Revision

Technical Standard  
order form

COWRA Brochures are  
available to our  
Members at \$50.00 per  
100, including shipping.

We apologize for the  
increase in cost. The  
cost of printing has  
gone up dramatically.

## Letter from the President

Dear COWRA Members,

Greetings, it appears that spring came on a Tuesday this year and on Wednesday we went right into summer. However, on the bright side the housing market has picked up a bit, which will be a good indication that our industry will regain some ground.

I hope all of you are becoming familiar with the changes to the Technical Standard, which came out in January of this year. If not, please order a copy from the CT DPH. We have included in this newsletter a copy of the revision proposal so that you will know what parts of the code have been changed and an order form, if you want to order a hard copy from the State. You can also download the Technical Standard and other information from our website. At [www.cowra-online.org](http://www.cowra-online.org) please visit the From the State page for this information.

Best,  
Frank Talarico

## NEW MEMBER PROFILES COWRA WELCOMES

**Peter Pippin**, of P Pippin LLC rejoined us after a few years' absence. Pete is the owner of P Pippin LLC which is located in Broad Brook CT. Pete's services include septic installation, septic cleaning and inspections. Pippin LLC also offers landscaping services. Pete has owned his business since 1970. Prior to this he was part of a family owned business that was established in 1968.

**Joseph A. Gluse** of Prospect Excavating joined us. Joseph was a student in COWRA's 2015 Installer Course and is planning to take the state exam this September. Joseph is in the process of buying Prospect Excavating. His services include landscaping, excavation, drainage, tree removal, stump grinding and bucket truck services. Soon Joseph will be adding septic installation to his list of services. Joseph has been with Prospect Excavation for two years, the business is located in Prospect CT.

**Charles and Christopher Dutch** of Dutch and Associates, Inc. join us recently in January. Dutch & Associates has been in business over 30 years. Charles and Christopher provide Civil Engineering and Septic Design to many in our industry. Charles is also a licensed installer. Dutch & Associates also provides surveying services throughout the area. Charles and Christopher were both students in our 2015 Installer Course. Dutch & Associates is located in Colchester CT.

## NEW MEMBER PROFILES CONTINUED

**David Gesiak** owner of David J Gesiak LLC joined us in January of this year. Since 1998 David and his family have built a reputation on their high standard of work. Today David's team of professional builders and home remodelers works diligently to provide his clients with homes of outstanding quality through their impeccable work ethic. David was a student in this year's 2015 Septic Installer Course. His company is adding septic installation and inspection to their impressive list of services. To learn more about David's company, visit him on the web at [www.dghouses.com](http://www.dghouses.com)

**Michael Augeri** of Premier Contractors in Rockfall CT joined us. Michael is the owner of Premier Contractors. From property maintenance to organic lawn care, Michael's full range of landscaping services provide for every client's needs. Now, in addition to the Premier's beautiful retaining walls and patioscapes, Michael adds new services. These include septic installation, excavation, foundations, drainage and sewer line installation.

To learn more about Michael's company please visit them on the web at [www.premierct.net](http://www.premierct.net)

**Danny Uccello** joined us in April of this year. Danny is the owner and general contractor of DCU Developers LLC. Danny was a student in COWRA's 2015 Installer Course. He took the Septic Installer exam this spring and is now a newly licensed installer. DCU Developers LLC services include excavation, drainage and construction, septic installation and inspections. DCU Developers LLC has been in business 22 years.

**Sonia Marino**, Director of Health at the Westbrook Health Department joined us in May of this year. Sonia recently became the new Director of Health for the Town of Westbrook. Prior to this position she was the town Sanitarian for Old Lyme. The decision to take the Westbrook position gave Sonia the opportunity to combine the Director of Health position with her Registered Sanitarian capability. This gave Sonia new responsibilities but also allowed her to pursue her work as a Sanitarian which she very much enjoys. She is described by Old Lyme officials as being a hard worker and a terrific supervisor who works well with others. We wish Sonia all the best in her new position and we welcome her as valued COWRA member.

## THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT DPH Has sent this notice to Engineers, Installers, Cleaners, Product Manufacturers and other interested parties currently on the Environmental Engineering Programs mailing list.

The Department's Environmental Engineering Program will no longer be mailing notices, training announcements and circular letters via the postal service. An electronic distribution list is being compiled and all future notification will be done via E-Mail. If you wish to receive notifications from the Environmental Engineering Program, please email your electronic contact information to:

Katy Graff: [Kathy.graff@ct.gov](mailto:Kathy.graff@ct.gov)

**There will be no change in the Local Health Department and Sanitarian notifications.**

**Members Please Note:  
This is an important email list to be on.**

## DAVID EVANS OF EVANS ASSOCIATES Always looking out for COWRA's Interests

For many years David Evans has been monitoring the CT legislature for any proposed bills that might affect our industry. In February David notified us of the following:

### S.B. No. 941 (RAISED) ENVIRONMENT.

AN ACT DELAYING IMPLEMENTATION OF CERTAIN STANDARDS AND SAMPLING REQUIREMENTS UPON THE DETECTION OF POLLUTANTS CAUSING CONTAMINATION OF SOIL, GROUNDWATER OR PUBLIC OR PRIVATE DRINKING WATER WELLS, to delay implementation of provisions of public act 13-308 concerning certain standards and sampling requirements upon the detection of pollutants causing contamination of soil, groundwater or public or private drinking water wells.  
REF. ENVIRONMENT

March 15, 2015 David sent this update:

### AN ACT DELAYING IMPLEMENTATION OF CERTAIN STANDARDS AND SAMPLING REQUIREMENTS UPON THE DETECTION OF POLLUTANTS CAUSING CONTAMINATION OF SOIL, GROUNDWATER OR PUBLIC OR PRIVATE DRINKING WATER WELLS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (Effective June 30, 2015) Sections 31 and 32 of public act 13-308 shall take effect July 1, 2016.

Sec. 2. Section 22a-6u of the general statutes, as amended by sections 31 and 32 of public act 13-308 and section 1 of this act, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2016): See our website for entire Bill.

## COWRA'S 2015 INSTALLER SCHOOL



COWRA's 2015 Installer School was held in a new location this year. For over 12 years COWRA held our yearly courses at Wesleyan University. However, due to the many problems that Wesleyan has had to deal with over the past year they changed their insurance requirements. Insurance requirements went from



2.5 million dollars' worth of coverage to 11.5 million, divided into multiple policies, thus making it impossible for our little non-profit organization to afford their requirements.

Unfortunately, Wesleyan University did not enlighten us of these changes until December 18, 2014. With many places closed the week of Christmas and New Year's and our class scheduled to begin on January 15, 2015, this gave us very little time and many additional hours of work to re-schedule a time and place for our two courses.

After many frantic calls we found the deKoven Community Center on Washington Street in Middletown. The deKoven Community Center is a non-profit organization that rents their facility out for very reasonable rates to other non-profit organizations. In some ways this was a more convenient place to hold our classes. However in other ways it is not. Several scheduling changes were made and after all the bumps were smoothed out we had a wonderful class with a very bright group of students.

The course began at the end of January and finished in early March. Instead of the course being on consecutive Thursdays, it was held on Wednesday evenings with a one week break in the middle of the course. There were 39 students enrolled in this year's class. Enrollment was up from the last 3 years. We are hoping this is a sign of the recovering housing market.



**Douglas DiVesta, P. E. of DiVesta Civil Engineering Associates**

Doug is a Civil Engineer and owner of DiVesta Civil Engineering. He is a Professional Engineer with years of experience and expertise in the area of septic design. He has been teaching our installer course for 28 years. Doug is dedicated to helping his

students entering the septic industry perform their services with the standard of excellence that is the model and tradition for the COWRA organization. Doug's teaching brings to our students years of experience solving the problems of difficult lot terrains and the myriad problems that may accompany an installation. Doug's dedication is a treasure both to our organization and the students he helps usher into their professional lives. Doug is a seasoned teacher with a ready answer and examples for every student's question.



**Robert Smith Sanitarian with the Torrington District**

2015 was Bob Smith's second year teaching out Installer Course. Bob knows the Technical Standard inside out, backwards and forward and upside down. Any student who leaves the course not understanding the Technical Standard

was probably sleeping. Bob is a tremendous asset to our organization. He brings a deep understanding of the septic installation process, both from the installer's perspective and the sanitarian's perspective. There can sometimes be tension between the health district and the installer. Bob understands this and explains the necessity of bridging that gap and maintaining a professional perspective.

Each section of the Public Health Code is examined and explained to our students, as the Code will govern them for as long as they work in the septic industry.

This year was particularly time-consuming for both Doug and Bob as the Technical Standard was revised in January of 2015. This complicated teaching this course. Those students who were planning to take the first scheduled exam had to be prepared to be tested on the 2011 Technical Standard. Those taking the second, third or fourth exam scheduled by the State were be tested on the 2015 Technical Standard. All installation and repair performed after January 15, 2015 must be installed according to the 2015 Technical Standard. Doug and Bob made sure our students were prepared for whichever exam they were scheduling.

Our students are taught to identify the different soil layers, understand the function of test holes, percolation rates, hydraulic factors and set-back distances. Our students leave prepared with the knowledge and understanding of all the different components of septic installation.

Students learn the various septic products available and must be able to discern when to use which product.

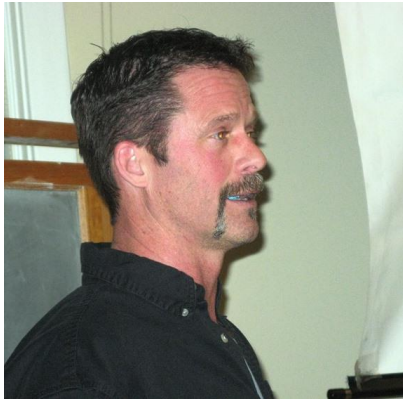
Students will understand the science that establishes a lasting system. Any student who takes the COWRA installer course will emerge with a full understanding of those provisions of the Public Health Code that govern the installs, the products that best suit a particular install and the importance of a proper installation. Doug and Bob are dedicated to preparing tomorrow's professionals.

With the preparation of the annual Study Guide, teaching and preparation for each class, Robert Smith and Doug DiVesta spend a great deal of time. This project expands dramatically each time the Technical Standard changes. Over the years the Study Guide has been re-written and updated several times for our Installer students. However, when the course begins in January and the Technical Standard is not released until mid-January this substantially increases the work of preparing for this course. Doug and Bob have surpassed mere loyalty to our organization. This is truly an act of great generosity and dedication and our organization is in debt to these two men, who work so hard for our organization and the students.

## COWRA'S 2015 PUMPER/CLEANER SCHOOL



This year our Pumper/Cleaner School is held on March 11 2015, each year this course is held on the last night of our Installer School and is attended by all the installer students and those who will be applying for their cleaning license only.



**Jon Skipper of Wastewater Services, LLC**

Jon Skipper and Drew Gilbert have been teaching COWRA's Pumper/Cleaner course since 2008. When Jon and Drew generously agreed to teach, they made many course changes and in doing so, transformed the course into a high-quality informational preparation,

for those entering the septic system cleaning profession. These two guys are also very funny individuals who each year leave our students laughing. However, our students also leave with an in-depth understanding of the complete process of septic tank cleaning, inspection, baffle and filter replacement, and quality workmanship.

Both Jon and Drew have been in the septic industry for many years. They are licensed installers who run Wastewater Services, LLC.

Drew and Jon bring years of experience, skill and knowledge to their task. They developed a program of Septic Cleaning Procedure for this course that prepares our students for the State Cleaners exam. Students taking this course learn proper procedure for pumping and cleaning. They learn safety practices, the septic tank inspection process, inspection of filters and baffles, and preparing Permit to Discharge forms.

**Drew Gilbert of Wastewater Services, LLC.**

COWRA is very fortunate that Jon Skipper and Drew Gilbert generously donate their skill and knowledge to guide our students through this process. Each year they educate our students with the skills they need to secure their Pumper/Cleaner License.



**MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE:**

As of January 2015, the new edition of the CONNECTICUT PUBLIC HEALTH CODE, On-site Sewage Disposal Regulations and Technical Standards for Subsurface Sewage Disposal Systems was published. You can find a complete copy on our website at [www.cowra-online.org](http://www.cowra-online.org), or at the State website, <http://www.ct.gov/dph>.

**CONNECTICUT RIVER AREA HEALTH DISTRICT COMPLIANCE WITH STATE REGULATIONS**

COWRA has received several phone calls and emails from consumers who were outraged by the Town of Old Saybrook



mandate to replace their functioning septic system with new ones that comply with the CT State mandates. One gentleman called the public officials of Old Saybrook, "Environmental Nazis." A woman who had just purchased her

home 2 years ago, said she was being "strong armed by public officials." It is possible that some real estate agents have not disclosed this information properly to new home buyers. There has been much confusion and debate about this issue. Even among our own members, there seems to be confusion about this subject.



**Along the streets of Old Saybrook there is the evidence of compliance**

However, these changes are now law and after decades of controversy and multiple legal encounters between the Town of Old Saybrook and the State of Connecticut, the Town and the State reached an agreement in 2009. Below is a summary of the outcome of that agreement. Much more information about this subject can be found of the Town of Old Saybrook website at [www.oldsaybrookct.org](http://www.oldsaybrookct.org). We have also placed a link on our [www.cowra-online.org](http://www.cowra-online.org). Following is from the Old Saybrook website:

In August 2009, Old Saybrook voters overwhelmingly chose to pursue a decentralized wastewater management district approach to address their long-term sewage treatment needs, rather than a centralized sewer system. The implementation of this program, which will occur in phases from 2010-2018, will require the upgrade of approximately 1900 septic systems to meet new minimum requirements, known as the Upgrade Program Standards. What this means is that the following process will occur for each property in the designated district:

1. The Old Saybrook Water Pollution Control Authority (OSWPCA), in conjunction with the Connecticut River Area Health District (CRAHD) will conduct an evaluation of the property to determine if the existing septic system meets the minimum requirements of the Upgrade Program Standards adopted for the district.

a. If the septic system meets or exceeds the standards, then a new permit will be issued to the property by CRAHD affirming that status

b. If the septic system does NOT meet those standards, then an upgrade to meet those standards will be required. That upgrade could involve the expansion of the existing system, the

construction of a new system or the installation of an advanced treatment (AT) system. If the requirement is to upgrade the septic system, the property owner will receive an order to do so from CRAHD. If the requirement is to install an AT system, the property owner will receive an order to abandon their existing system from CRAHD, and an order to install an AT system from the OSWPCA.

c. AT systems will only be required on specified "water proximity" lots and on lots where there is insufficient room to construct a septic system that meets the Standards.

2. If an upgrade is needed, the property owner has two choices on how to meet this requirement

a. They can hire a septic system installer (and engineer, if necessary) to design and install a system which is compliant with the Standards, or

b. They can allow the town to perform the upgrade as part of a contract for properties in their neighborhood.

Note that all septic system upgrades, whether performed by a town-sponsored contractor or one hired by the property owner, will be required to be reviewed and approved by CRAHD.

The town brochure is intended to offer the property owner some ideas on what each of these options might entail. The three major categories that the property owner might consider when making this decision are Cost, Control, and Convenience.

It should be noted that, if the decision is to participate in the town upgrade contract, the property owner will still be involved, to a certain extent, with decisions regarding the siting of the new or upgraded system on their property. In addition, the town will work with the property owner on issues such as construction scheduling, although flexibility on this issue may be limited due to contractual constraints.

All town-sponsored contracts will require the contractor to restore the property's landscaping to a condition equal to or better than its pre-construction status.



*In many of the neighborhoods of Old Saybrook there are narrow dirt roads and tightly packed houses. These house lots are tiny. In many cases these postage stamp sized yards are the only place to park a car. It is hard to envision how these areas could comply with individual septic system requirements. Over the years many summer cottages have been converted into year round homes. There is no one size fits all fix for this dilemma.*

## FINANCIAL HELP FOR ELDERLY & DISABLED

### Sewerage Benefit Assessment Relief for Certain Elderly and Disabled Homeowners

Pursuant to section 7-253a of the Connecticut General Statutes, eligible homeowners, as defined hereinafter, may apply to the Water Pollution Control Authority for approval of a relief plan, as defined hereinafter, for the payment of sewerage assessments made to such homeowner under the benefit assessment policies of the Water Pollution Control Authority adopted pursuant to sections 7-249 through 7-254 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

The Water Pollution Control Authority may approve any such relief plan, subject to the provisions of this Ordinance. An eligible homeowner, as such term is used in this Ordinance, shall mean a homeowner eligible for tax relief for elderly taxpayers under the provisions of sections 12-129b or 12-170aa of the Connecticut General Statutes or eligible for tax relief for elderly or disabled homeowners provided by the Town of Old Saybrook pursuant to section 12-129n(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes. For a complete reading of this relief program your will find this document on the towns website at [www.oldsaybrookct.org](http://www.oldsaybrookct.org)



**The signs are there.**

*Although the town voted overwhelming to support these changes, when you talk to the residents affected by the new compliance you find a divide. There are those who feel the town has taken the right steps and other who feel the town has taken them for ride.*

There are many pros and cons to the Old Saybrook Water Pollution Control Authority mandate for town residents. If a homeowner upgrades through the town's program, the homeowner pays half the cost of the upgrade, with a loan option of 2% interest over 20 years. However this option deprives the homeowner of participation in the cost and scheduling negotiations of his/her upgrade. On the other hand, should the property owner choose to hire a private contractor, he will be able to negotiate his own contract and has more control over the cost of the project, which might save him money. Those opting out of the public contract will not be eligible for the grants or low interest loans. Links to more information are available on the Old Saybrook website and the COWRA website.

While it is true that the residents of Old Saybrook voted for the non-sewering option and will now have to deal with on-site septic system repairs, the fact of the matter is that many residents are opposed to making these repairs/replacements on properties where no obvious signs of system failure exist. While it is also true that DEEP has recorded high levels of bacteria at some coastal bathing areas, there has been no definitive proof that the existing small lot developments are responsible for the bacteria discharges. DEEP and others are well aware that many inland and coastal public Water Treatment Plants occasionally bypass plants providing no treatment during major rain events and experience discharges to waterways during periods of equipment failure creating significant pollution events far exceeding the adverse impacts of the "suspect" homeowner septic systems. And so the battle between those who consider DEEP the Environmental Nazis and others who believe their actions can be viewed as valid in their role as stewards of CT's environmental future continues.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

### CEHA AND DPH ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING PROGRAM CO-SPONSOR TWO DAY SOIL TRAINING

Save the date! The 2-day 2015 soil training event will be held October 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> at the DEEP's Sessions Woods Wildlife Management Area in Burlington Connecticut. CEHA has been joined by the DPH Environmental Engineering Program to provide this valuable training. Once again we have obtained the services of Peter Fletcher, a respected soil scientist and trainer from Massachusetts. Mr. Fletcher has been well received at all previous trainings for his pleasant personality and superb teaching skills. Registration information will be provided in the near future.

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**Old Saybrook under construction**

## **FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED**

**UPDATES!!** Registration Information for 2015 State Installers & Cleaners-Exams:  
 You **MUST** contact the Department of Public Health to register for the Installers & Cleaners Exams.  
 Please Note: attendance at the COWRA Installer School **DOES NOT** register you for the State exam.  
 Please contact D.P.H. at 860-509-7296 for any information pertaining to your results and license.  
 You may also contact them by going to [www.dph.state.ct.us/licensure/apps/subsew.pdf](http://www.dph.state.ct.us/licensure/apps/subsew.pdf)

### **2015 Examination Schedule Subsurface Sewage Installer/Cleaner**

<b>Exam Date</b>	<b>Application Deadline</b>
September 4, 2015	August 21, 2015
December 4, 2015	November 20, 2015

**Connecticut Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association**  
 For a copy of COWRA's 2015 Study Guide please call (860) 267-1057)