

NHWWA 2025 LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

Last week, I had the opportunity to attend the New Hampshire Water Works Association's (NHWWA) second annual Leadership Summit. This event provided insights into the current state of the water industry at both the federal and state levels, with a focus on recruiting and retaining the next generation of water professionals. As well as essential topics like employee engagement and effective communication.

The day began with staff from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, who spoke about funding opportunities available to municipalities throughout the state. They also shared legislative updates regarding water and wastewater, highlighting key changes and priorities for the year ahead.

After the morning sessions, we broke for lunch and were able to enjoy the stunning views of Lake Winnepesaukee from Mill Falls in Meredith, NH, which was a great time to connect and network with other professionals in the water industry.

In the afternoon, speakers from Concord, NH, and NHWWA, led a discussion on recruiting new talent into the water workforce. They emphasized the importance of raising awareness about the variety of available jobs and the educational paths required to pursue them which was insightful.

Employee retention was another key topic. Speakers from CDM Smith and Rochester, NH shared strategies to keep current employees engaged by helping them visualize and pursue growth opportunities within their organizations.

The final session of the day was led by a speaker from A Step Ahead Strategies. She facilitated an interactive activity on the importance of communication. Participants were divided into two groups—those who excel at listening and those who are better at giving instructions. Partners were matched across groups, and the instruction-givers had to describe an image they drew (using only circles, squares, and triangles) to their partner without showing it. The listeners then had to recreate the image based on the description alone. It was an eye-opening exercise that demonstrated how crucial clear and intentional communication is—especially in our industry.

Overall, the experience was enriching. I enjoyed meeting professionals from across New Hampshire who work in various capacities throughout the water sector. It was a great reminder that, while our roles may differ, we are all working toward the same goal: providing clean and safe drinking water to the people of New Hampshire.

