

The background features a series of concentric circles in light gray, some solid and some dashed, creating a ripple effect. A large red speech bubble shape is centered on the page, containing the main text.

Workforce Development Municipal Perspective

Presented by: R. Paul Streets

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Introduction

- **Robert “Paul” Streets**
- **Public Works Director**
- **Works for Midwest City (28 years)**
- **Started at the bottom of the ladder**

Workforce Challenges 1990 - 2010

- Traditionally, Municipal jobs were very stable with little turnover or vacancy.
- Lots of applicants to choose from, except in one dept.
- Sewer Line Maintenance has always been an issue.
 - Traditionally there has always been a 10-20% vacancy.
 - High turnover created difficult working conditions.

Workforce Challenges 2010 – 2019

- **Number of applicants for vacancies started to shrink.**
- **New employees wanted more than just stability.**
- **Concerned about finding talented applicants.**
- **Workforce is getting older**
- **Workforce example: Line Maintenance combined to address ongoing issues with unfilled positions.**

Workforce Challenges During COVID

- Protecting and retaining employees becomes very difficult.
- Everyone becomes essential.
- No virtual option creates additional challenges.
- NO APPLICANTS....
- Vacancy jumps to >25% across Public Works

Workforce Challenges Post COVID

- Where did everyone go?
- New applicants are looking for security and flexibility.
- Traditional recruiting methods are not working...
- Had to hire candidates more quickly.
- Combined pool of applicants.
- Commercial Driver's License (CDL) rule change.
- Persistent vacancy rates in Certified or technical positions.

Workforce Crisis

- Workforce in Water or Wastewater fields is aging rapidly.
- No interest among young(er) people.
- Wages are stagnant.
- Essential Services vs' Emergency Services
- Positions or jobs associated with water and wastewater are UNDERVALUED!

Workforce Needs

- Younger dedicated applicants.
- Diversified workforce
- Higher level of respect.
- Better wages.
- Real cost or value of water must be communicated.
 - Employees
 - Resources
 - Infrastructure

Workforce Partners & Stakeholders

- Department of Labor
- Oklahoma Rural Water Association (ORWA)
- Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB)
- Consultants
- Municipalities & HR Departments
- Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) -- Operator Certification.

Contact Information

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