



NMRWA 48th Annual Conference

Isleta Resort & Casino | April 14 – 16, 2026

ANNUAL AWARDS: Information

The New Mexico Rural Water Association recognizes the outstanding service and commitment of the men and women involved in operating, managing, directing, and supporting New Mexico's water and wastewater utilities through our Annual Awards Ceremony. Award recipients are acknowledged through press releases to newspapers and television stations statewide.

System Awards

System of the Year: Small, Medium & Large systems

Presented to an outstanding water system in each of three size categories (see below)

Wastewater System of the Year

Presented to an outstanding wastewater system

Tribal System of the Year

Presented to an outstanding Tribal water system

Individual Awards

Water Operator of the Year: Small, Medium & Large systems

Presented to an outstanding certified water operator in three size categories

Office Manager of the Year

Presented to an outstanding office manager of a water or wastewater system

Director (Board Member) of the Year

Presented to an outstanding member of a Board of Directors of a water system

Wastewater Operator of the Year

Presented to an outstanding certified wastewater operator

Tribal Operator of the Year

Presented to an outstanding certified Tribal water system operator

Instructor of the Year

Presented to an outstanding volunteer instructor for NMRWA

John Paden Award for Outstanding Service to Rural Water

This award is presented to an outstanding individual who has gone beyond the normal requirements of their job to help better all utility systems in the State. This special award recognizes persons who have achieved the highest standard of excellence in the industry. Therefore, the Awards Committee may not give this honor every year.

Other Awards

Associate Member of the Year

Presented to an outstanding associate member of NMRWA who has provided service beyond the normal scope of business to further the goals of Rural Water

Excellence in Environmental Achievement Award

This award is presented to an outstanding individual, water or wastewater utility that has gone beyond the normal requirements of their job to become better stewards of the environment. Recipients of this award are entered into a national competition held by the National Rural Water Association.

Legislator of the Year

Presented to an outstanding State Senator or Representative who has assisted Rural Water in the New Mexico Legislature

Drinking Water Taste Test

Presented to the best tasting water from a small system in New Mexico. The Grand Prize Winner will receive \$1,500 towards airfare and hotel accommodations to meet New Mexico's legislators and enter their water in The Great American Water Taste Test, sponsored each year by the National Rural Water Association during the Rural Water Rally in Washington, D.C. Special contest rules apply. Sponsored by Bohannon Huston, Inc.

System Size Categories

Small Systems	1 – 99 connections
Medium Systems	100 – 499 connections
Large Systems	500 connections and above, up to 50,000 population

Criteria & Nominations

Anyone may nominate an individual or system for an award. Nomination should include names, titles and contact information for both the nominee and the submitter. Nominations should include a narrative description of why you feel the nominee deserves this award. Award recipients must be current members of the New Mexico Rural Water Association, unless specially exempted by the Awards Committee. All award recipients must be nominated following this process unless specially exempted by the Awards Committee. Award categories that do not receive any nominations will not be given for that year. **Nominations must be received by March 27, 2026.** Email to executivedirector@nmrwa.org or mail to NMRWA, PO Box 92738, Albuquerque, NM 87199.

Annual Awards Luncheon

Awards will be given during the NMRWA Awards Luncheon at noon on Thursday, April 16, 2026, at Isleta Resort & Casino, 11000 Broadway Blvd. SE, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Prior notification may not be given to Award recipients.