



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Water Environment Federation installs MWRD's Tom Kunetz as president

A prestigious international water organization has elected a talented staff member of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) to a prominent role of leadership.

Tom Kunetz, assistant director of Monitoring and Research at the MWRD, was elected to the role of president of the Water Environment Federation (WEF). Kunetz formally received the "gavel of leadership" from outgoing President Jenny Hartfelder, of Denver, during a ceremony on Oct. 2 at the annual Water Environment Federation Technical Exhibition and Conference (WEFTEC) held at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center.

"I am grateful for the honor to serve and lead this tremendous organization that creates a community of empowered water professionals across the globe who provide clean water, public health and environmental protection," said Kunetz. "As the water sector faces the challenges of the future, we will need a workforce that is both talented and diverse. The Water Environment Federation is the organization that will provide the knowledge transfer and connections to create that diverse workforce of water professionals, who will continue the tradition of excellence in addressing the challenges of water security, resiliency, resource recovery, and the effects of climate change."

Kunetz has more than 30 years of experience as an environmental engineer protecting the water environment and public health, working in both the public sector and private sector. Kunetz has made a major impact with the MWRD as an innovation leader, championing new technology to implement resource recovery projects at the MWRD that encompass water reclamation and conservation, renewable energy and energy savings, and



MWRD Assistant Director of Monitoring and Research Tom Kunetz was formally recognized as president of the Water Environment Federation (WEF) during a reception in New Orleans when the WEF "gavel of leadership" was passed to him from outgoing President Jenny Hartfelder.

the recovery of nutrients that lead to cleaner waters locally and downstream. Kunetz has been instrumental in developing dynamic MWRD projects that include biogas production to save on energy costs at water reclamation plants and the harvesting of algae for the purpose of removing nutrients from wastewater.

"We have the world's most talented staff, so it is without surprise that Tom would be elected to this pivotal position of leadership for the Water Environment Federation," said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. "We wish him well in his new role and thank him for sharing his talents with the world. We know WEF will be in good hands under Tom's guidance."

Kunetz earned his bachelor's degree in environmental engineering from Penn State University, and his master's degree in water resources engineering from Villanova University. He is the 2012 national recipient of the Charles Walter Nichols Award for *(continued)*

Water Environment Federation installs MWRD's Tom Kunetz, *cont.*

Environmental Excellence from the American Public Works Association. He has served on the WEF Board of Trustees since 2013 and is a WEF Fellow.

“Tom is a true leader in the sector and brings an incredible depth of engineering and technical expertise as well as a commitment to the mission of clean water,” said Eileen O’Neill, WEF Executive Director. “Tom has made countless contributions to the water profession through his years of volunteering with WEF. A natural communicator and an advocate for innovation, his impact as a member of our Board has been substantial. We are grateful and fortunate to have him assume leadership as President and look forward to a productive year.”

WEF is a not-for-profit technical and educational organization of 34,000 individual members and 75 affiliated Member Associations representing water quality professionals around the world. Since 1928, WEF and its members have protected public health and the envi-



Tom Kunetz thanks WEF members, MWRD Commissioners and staff for their support during a reception in New Orleans announcing his role as president of the organization that serves 34,000 water professionals.

ronment. As a global water sector leader, WEF works to connect water professionals; enrich the expertise of water professionals; increase the awareness of the impact and value of water; and provide a platform for water sector innovation. WEF’s diverse membership includes scientists, engineers, regulators, academics, utility managers, plant operators and other professionals.

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwr.org) is an award winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.