Message from the President

This month’s EM provides policy and technical updates related to the U.S. National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The ozone NAAQS typically receives the most attention, but standards for particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen oxides are also important for public health and can create compliance challenges during permitting or State Implementation Plan development. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regularly reviews the science supporting the various NAAQS and updates them when appropriate. In practice, the updates lead to ongoing changes in both implementation guidance from regulatory agencies and compliance strategies for communities and permitted facilities. I hope this issue of EM provides useful information for members as you navigate NAAQS attainment issues.

Last month, I discussed mentoring, one of my long-term focus areas for our Association. This month, I want to delve into a second focus area: the use of modern media for content delivery.

A&WMA has adopted some new practices for delivering programs, including basic elements (e.g., LinkedIn groups and email news updates) and effective current practices (e.g., webinars). We have a minimal social media presence, though our Young Professionals Advisory Committee (YPAC) is active on Twitter and adds value. A key challenge is to match our capabilities with the needs of our members and customers. I have a few ideas and hope you, our members, can provide feedback and help innovate at the local level.

My kids spend a ridiculous amount of time watching YouTube videos. We can’t emulate the business model of the YouTubers they follow though. I don’t think A&WMA members are clamoring for videos of me adopting a silly voice and providing commentary as I navigate AP-42 or AERMOD input files. However, we could potentially cooperate with member companies or other partners to provide “how does it work?”-style videos for educational purposes. YPAC has been executing similar sessions at our Annual Conference & Exhibition for several years. In 2018, they added live demonstrations at the Young Professional Hub on the exhibit floor in Hartford. An accessible library that explains the fundamentals of stack testing or the operations of a baghouse may be useful for professional development.

While educational videos would be relatively static over time, A&WMA members are also looking for real-time updates on policy or technology changes. At our 2018 A&WMA Leadership Training Academy in April, our incoming YPAC Chair, Paul Algu, asked me to record a short interview on a professional development topic. He planned to post it online for Association YPs. I think these types of updates may be useful on technical topics as well. Our Association will not be able to produce podcasts with the production value of Freakonomics (http://freakonomics.com/archive/) or Revisionist History (http://revisionisthistory.com/) (two of my personal favorites), but could produce something simple with real value. A series of short updates on key priorities from state or local air directors would be topical for many of us. Similarly, sharing of compliance best practices or innovations from companies and consultants may be one way to stay current with technical trends.

I am not as tech savvy as many of our A&WMA members. If you have ideas on ways the Association could leverage technology to better serve our members and a drive to execute those ideas, please drop an A&WMA Board member a note or call. If you have successful examples from your Section or Chapter, please share them.

Thanks for your service as environmental professionals and A&WMA members. em