



ALABAMA/MISSISSIPPI SECTION

American Water Works Association

Gimmicks and Gadgets Award

Sometimes operators have to think outside the box to solve a problem. Have you come up with an innovative solution to an everyday problem that saves your utility time and money? Share your inventions and success stories with *Pipeline* readers in the AL/MS Water Joint Annual Conference annual Gimmicks & Gadgets Contest. Winners are eligible for a prize, will be featured in *Pipeline*, and recognized at the AL/MS Water Joint Annual Conference and entered into the AWWA National Competition with a feature in *Opflow* and a chance to win cash prizes.

Entry Requirements

Submit your entry through the entry link on the AL/MS website at www.almsawwa.org. Each entry will be screened by the AL/MS Awards Committee and, if not found dangerous or otherwise unacceptable, will be approved for entry into the annual competition and for possible publication. Entrants will be notified concerning the status of their entry. A signed release will be required before any publication is made.

Guidelines

Gimmicks & Gadgets entries are judged on the basis of originality, simplicity, use, and application to the water industry. A successful entry will be a novel and relatively simple mechanical device or procedure. It will be designed to provide a more efficient, safe, or simplified way to perform a routine task or function in the maintenance, operation, or construction of a water utility system. Commercially available products are not eligible. All entries must be submitted by a current AWWA member or member utility.

How to write and submit an entry

Getting Started – The idea for the device or procedure is really the most important part of the story. Everything else (the details of how to construct and implement, and so forth) can usually be set down in a simple standard format.

If you have ever solved a problem for your utility by inventing some sort of tool or new method for getting a job done more quickly, better, or for less cost to the utility, then you have created a gimmick or gadget. That was the hard part of the process. The next step is to put the idea on paper to share with your peers in the water industry – and possibly win a prize.



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Entry Outline

Use this outline to help you get organized and tell your story. As you'll see on the previously mentioned entry form, begin with your name, title or position, affiliation or organization, mailing address, phone number, and email.

- Next, give the gadget or gimmick a name (for example, the lid-lifter, meter box lock-out); any title that briefly describes what the gadget or gimmick does or will do.
- Describe why the gadget or gimmick was needed. Include the problems that were experienced by the utility before the device was used or the procedure was implemented.
- List the equipment and supplies needed to make the gadget. This list should include the exact dimensions, sizes and quantities that are needed to build the device. If possible, include a total price of the supplies and the total amount of time it takes to build the device.
- The easiest way to explain how to build the device is to use a simple step-by-step approach. Begin with the first step you took to construct it. Be careful not to skip any steps. To reproduce the invention in their own workplace, readers need to know all the construction details.
- Finish by describing what was achieved by using the device. Estimate of how much money and time has the device saved? List of any benefits that have resulted from its use, such as improved operator skills or record keeping, safer working conditions, increased job pride or streamlined office procedures.

Graphics and Videos

Provide drawings or photos. The old adage “a picture is worth a thousand words” still holds true. An illustration helps the reader to understand the idea in a concrete way. Illustrations or photos must be submitted digitally and must be at least 300 dpi (high resolution).

Winners and Notification

Winners will be notified by the AL/MS Awards committee, and their entries will be featured in the Summer issue of *Pipeline*. Awards and/or plaques will be presented at the AL/MS



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Water Joint Annual Conference in April. The winners will be entered in the AWWA national Gimmicks and Gadgets competition with a chance to win cash prizes and recognition in the *Opflow* magazine.