



2023 United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) Tribal Utility Finance Forum

Presented by the USET Office of Environmental Resource Management

Tuesday, May 16, 2023

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| 7:30 am - 8:30 am | Continental Breakfast |
| 8:00 am - 8:30 am | Introductions.
Welcoming, Marshall R. Sampson, Vice-Chairman, Tunica Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana |
| 8:30 am - 9:45 am | Tony Matlock, General Field Representative, AR & LA. Telecommunications Program, U.S. Department of Agricultural (USDA) Rural Development.
<i>USDA Rural Development offers several programs that Tribes and Tribal utilities can use to develop their water, wastewater treatment, telecommunications, broadband, electric and renewable energy infrastructure. This session will provide an overview of RD's grant and loan programs provided through Rural Utilities Service and USDA RD State Office staff. Updates will also be provided on Rural Development's Inflation Reduction Act Renewable Energy Programs.</i> |
| 9:45 am - 10:00 am | Break |
| 10:00 am - 11:15 am | David Conrad, Deputy Director, Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs. U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs.
David Sickey (Contr.), Senior Consultant. Loan Program Office (LPO). Tribal Energy Finance Program. U.S. Department of Energy.
Tribal Energy Sovereignty. <i>Representatives from the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs and Loan Program Office will share current funding and financing opportunities and other topics for consideration that support the pathway towards tribal energy sovereignty.</i> |
| 11:15 am - 12:15 pm | Erskine D. Benjamin, Environmental Engineer, Water Division, Safe Drinking Water Branch, Drinking Water Technical Assistance Section. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 4.
Christopher Johnson, Life Scientist, Drinking Water Section.
Identifying, Applying, and Utilizing Tribal Water Infrastructure Programs Within Your Tribal Communities. <i>EPA has over a dozen tribal water infrastructure programs to address a menu of priorities such as emerging contaminants like PFAS, service line inventories, lead service line replacements, water system upgrades, new wastewater systems, and climate change to name a few. How do you know which program is right for your tribal community? With so much information and not enough time or resources to examine it all, this presentation will hopefully bring clarity in identifying the best programs to match your communities' needs. The presentation will also review the application process as well as how best to utilize federal assistance.</i> |
| 12:15 pm - 1:30 pm | Lunch (provided and opportunity for networking). |

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1:30 pm - 3:00 pm	<p>Ahmed Rachid El-Khattabi, Associate Director. Hope Thomson, Project Director. Environmental Financial Center at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (EFC).</p> <p>Managing Your System into the Future: Assessing Utility Financial Health and Rate Setting Objectives. <i>This session will discuss how to think about a water and/or wastewater system as a financial entity and will examine the key financial indicators that allow these systems to make informed decisions in planning and investment. Specifically, we will cover operating ratios, debt service coverage ratios, and other financial metrics that may be influential in assessment of long-term financial sustainability. Additionally, we will present the basics of rate structure design, and how these structures may affect revenue generation, help or hinder various utility objectives, and potentially support affordability initiatives.</i></p>
3:00 pm – 3:15 pm	Break
3:15 pm – 4:00 pm	<p>Andrew Ohrt, Resilience Practice Area Lead. West Yost Associates.</p> <p>The Business of Cybersecurity for Your Organization. <i>Cybersecurity investments not only impact your organization's ability to protect its data, physical systems, and people, but the financial health as well. With the recent rollout of the U.S. EPA's mandatory requirements for cybersecurity, the regulatory environment for public water systems is dynamic. This presentation will discuss the new requirements, how an organization can understand the benefits of meeting the requirements, and how financial planning may be done to support the investment.</i></p> <p>Ben MacDonald, Waterworth. <i>Demonstrating how Waterworth helps utilities financial sustainability focusing on 3 core aspects: Visualizing and communicating critical infrastructure needs. Identifying how to fund these needs. Ensuring we keep it affordable for rate payers.</i></p>
4:00 pm - 4:30 pm	USET – Office of Environmental Resource Management (OERM) and Economic Development Presentation.
4:30 pm - 5:00 pm	Wrap up.
6:00 pm-8:00 pm	Reception (Hosted by Tunica Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana) Arsene Ballroom.

Wednesday, May 17, 2023 *(Tentative)*

7:30 am - 8:30 am	Continental breakfast.
8:30 am	Depart.
9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Site visit and/or presenters.
12:00 pm - 1:30pm	Lunch (provided).
1:30 pm -4:00 pm	Site visit and meeting room; meeting room available for one-on-one meetings with presenters and USET Program staff.
4:00 pm	Tribal Utility Finance Forum concludes.