



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF WATER COMPANIES

# Community Engagement Seminar Agenda

Tuesday, May 22

*All times below are in Eastern Time.*

**8:00 a.m.**      **Light Breakfast**  
*Third floor - Adams/Washington Rooms*

**8:30 a.m.**      **Welcome Remarks**  
Rob Powelson

**8:40 p.m.**      **Setting the Scene**  
Joe Rodota, Forward Observer

As founder and CEO of Forward Observer – a longtime consulting partner for NAWC’s Truth from the Tap campaign – Joe Rodota has helped clients solve a broad array of public affairs challenges. With experience that includes driving communications strategy for the Reagan White House, serving as a top aide for Governors Pete Wilson and Arnold Schwarzenegger, and generating more than 55 state and local ballot initiative wins, Joe will offer critical insights on how to build and execute engagement strategies that win over key audiences.

**9:10 a.m.**      **Stake Holder ID & Analysis**  
John Cipriani, Candid Counsel

Research shows that opinions on water service can be moved with effective messaging. NAWC members provide a superior product, but getting that message across and combatting the crisis of confidence in tap water is not exactly an easy task. Let’s talk about how to address concerns about the U.S. water grid and refocus customers’ attention on the reality that NAWC’s utilities provide a product that is not only safe and reliable, but superior to other options.

**10:10 a.m.**      **Break**

**10:15 a.m. Case Studies**

*Denise Free, NJ American Water*  
*Rebecca Stenholm, EPCOR*

Decisions are being made across the country about the ownership of local water/wastewater utilities. Salem, NJ, officials were looking to sell their system, which local elected leaders said had become too expensive and complicated to run. Bullhead City, AZ, officials used customers' concerns about water bills to win authorization to use condemnation to take over the local regulated, private water utility. Join us for a conversation about the communication efforts in two communities and how similar the outreach was.

**11:00 a.m. Communications Planning**

*Kyle Butts, Forward Observer*  
*Kristin Elder, H&K Strategies*  
*Alissa Koay, Lot 16*

Community Engagement – whether talking to consumers, legislators or regulators, remains consistent at the core. The team that supports NAWC and its member companies offer a wide variety of strategic and tactical support designed to provide you with a winning edge. Let's talk about what resources are available to assist you.

**12:00 p.m. Lunch**

**12:45 p.m. Community Relations Workshop**

*Matt Dole, Communications Counsel*

Aligning the community around our initiatives and the complexity of water and wastewater service is increasingly challenging. Join us for an interactive workshop on how to meet your communities where they are and successfully engage while also navigating the constantly changing online space. This experiential learning will help with knowing the rules of engagement will help you achieve your goals if you're talking to customers, regulators or legislators.

**3:45 p.m. Final Thoughts**