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TRA CReWSers, Aqua Techs Win 2017 Operations Challenge Competition

Texas teams take first place in 30th annual competition

CHICAGO, Ill. – Two teams from Texas clinched first place in their respective divisions during the 30th annual Operations Challenge competition. TRA CReWSers won Division 1, and Aqua Techs took home the top prize in Division 2. Both teams represent the Water Environment Association of Texas. The fun-filled, high-energy event took place at WEFTEC 2017—the Water Environment Federation’s 90th annual technical exhibition and conference—in Chicago.

Members of the TRA CReWSers are: David Brown, Dale Burrow, Raudel Juarez, Quintin Winters, and Jake Burwell (coach). Members of Aqua Techs are: Edward Burrell (coach), Kevin Willey (captain), Ryan Brunette, Christian Mendez, and Ernesto Romero.

One of the most anticipated events during WEFTEC, Operations Challenge is a unique and fast-paced test of the essential skills needed to operate and maintain wastewater treatment facilities, their collection systems, and laboratories—all vital to the protection of public health and the environment. This year’s competition included 44 hardworking teams from the U.S., Canada, and Argentina and Denmark.

Over the past 30 years, Operations Challenge has steadily grown from the original 22-team event to this year’s 44-team, two-division format. Teams are judged on the best combination of precision, speed, and safety. The winners are determined by a weighted point system for five events including collection systems, laboratory, maintenance, safety, and process control. This year’s process control event was revised to include the installation of an Insetra Tee compression fitting, provided by Advanced Drainage Systems.

Winners in both divisions include:

Division 1

First Place: TRA CReWSers

Water Environment Association of Texas

Trinity River Authority, Dallas, Texas

Second Place: L.A. Wrecking Crew

California Water Environment Association

Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, Whittier, Calif.

Third Place: OCWA Jets

Water Environment Association of Ontario

Ontario Clean Water Agency, Stratford, Ontario

Division 2

First Place: Aqua Techs

Water Environment Association of Texas

Dallas Water Utilities, Dallas, Texas

Second Place: Jamaica Sludge Hustlers

New York Water Environment Association

New York Department of Environmental Protection, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Third Place: Controlled Chaos

Water Environment Association of South Carolina

Mount Pleasant Waterworks, Mount Pleasant, S.C.