RURAL AND SMALL SYSTEMS Sustainable Utility Management Workshop Highlights

***This handout is designed to support workshop participants communicate the importance of the* Sustainable Utility Management Workshop *with their community decision makers and utility leaders.***

## Key Takeaways

We recently attended a workshop sponsored by the \_\_\_\_\_ [association name or other TA providers], USDA, and EPA.

The workshop was different than most others we attend. It really focused on teaching us how to assess the overall health of our system using materials developed by USDA and EPA. These workshops are taking place all over the country sponsored by the State Rural Water Associations and other Technical Assistance providers.

The workshop also gave us an opportunity to talk with managers and operators from other local systems about our successes, challenges, and how we will use the workshop tools to support planning and decision making in the future.

## Workshop Highlights

The Ten Key Management Areas

Financial Viability

Operational Resiliency

Infrastructure Stability

Product Quality

Community Sustainability and Economic Development

Employee and Leadership Development

Water Resource Adequacy

Customer Satisfaction

Stakeholder Understanding and Support

Operational Optimization

The workshop covered several components of utility management and future planning, including:

* An overview of Ten Key Management Areas that cover all aspects of system operations;
* A utility Self-Assessment exercise based on the Management Areas
  + Group discussion of the Self-Assessment results
  + Group discussion on how each utility can improve performance based on the Self-Assessment results;
* Practices, tools, and measures for improving performance;
* Resources that can support us in each Management Area; and
* An exercise for creating an action plan to follow up on the results of the Assessment

Working through all of these activities helped us get a clearer picture of how we can improve our system now and in the future by prioritizing what’s most important to our utility and community.

## Where do we go from here?

* We would like to take some time with our staff to go over the Self-Assessment results, and use this as an opportunity to start developing an improvement plan for our system.
* Our next step will be to brief Board members on this action plan.
* EPA and USDA have worked with utilities, water associations, and technical assistance providers to create materials to help us develop our improvement plan. These materials are free and easy to use. We can find them online:

[**http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/sustain/watereum.cfm**](http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/sustain/watereum.cfm)

[**http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/services/sustainable-management-tools**](http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/services/sustainable-management-tools)