# EXCELLENCE IN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

## Nomination Form

### APPLICANT INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGENCY NAME</th>
<th>PINE BLUFF WASTEWATER UTILITY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CITY</td>
<td>PINE BLUFF</td>
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<td>STATE</td>
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<td>SERVICE AREA POP.</td>
<td>50,000+</td>
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<tr>
<th>KENNETH JOHNSON</th>
<th>GENERAL MANAGER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE COMPLETING THE APPLICATION</td>
<td>TITLE</td>
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<tr>
<td>1520 SOUTH OHIO STREET</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<th>PINE BLUFF</th>
<th>AR</th>
<th>71601</th>
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<tr>
<td>CITY</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>STATE</td>
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<td>ZIP</td>
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<tr>
<td>(870) 535-6603</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ken@pbwastewater.com">ken@pbwastewater.com</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th>PHONE</th>
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<td>Ken Johnson, GM</td>
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SIGNATURE OF AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

### CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I certify that this document and all attachments were prepared under my direction or supervision in accordance with a system designed to assure that qualified personnel properly gathered and evaluated the information submitted. Based upon my inquiry of the person or persons directly involved in gathering and evaluating the information, the information submitted is to the best of my knowledge and belief true, accurate and complete.

In submitting this application, I agree to NACWA using all or part of this application as an example to be posted publicly for future utilities to reference.

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<tr>
<th>KENNETH JOHNSON</th>
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<tr>
<td>NACWA PRIMARY CONTACT NAME</td>
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NACWA PRIMARY CONTACT SIGNATURE
NOMINATION SUBMITTAL

I am applying for recognition under the following category*:

☑ Platinum (9 Attributes)
☑ Gold (7 Attributes)
☐ Silver (5 Attributes)

*Applications that do not meet the minimum qualifications for the selected recognition category will be considered for other categories, as appropriate.

I am including the following Attributes in my written narrative. Note that every applicant is required to include Product Quality and Financial Viability as part of their minimum demonstrated Attributes. Please check the appropriate boxes:

☑ Product Quality (Required Attribute)
☑ Financial Viability (Required Attribute)
☑ Customer Satisfaction
☑ Stakeholder Understanding & Support
☑ Operational Optimization
☑ Employee & Leadership Development
☑ Enterprise Resiliency (Inclusive of all enterprise resiliency initiatives, not solely emergency management)
☑ Infrastructure Strategy & Performance
☑ Community Sustainability
☑ Water Resource Sustainability

I have attached or provided hyperlinks and relevant page references to my utility’s Strategic Plan, Financial Plan, and any other Strategic Metrics not otherwise included in your Strategic Plan and Financial Plan. Please check the appropriate boxes and provide hyperlinks, if selected.

☐ Strategic Plan Hyperlink: ________________________________

☐ Financial Plan Hyperlink: ________________________________

☐ Strategic Metrics** Hyperlink: ____________________________

**not otherwise included in Strategic Plan or Financial Plan

Please submit completed nominations by May 9, 2018 to btrombino@nacwa.org
For questions, please contact: Bredy Trombino, Program Administrator at 202.533.1820 or btrombino@nacwa.org
Pine Bluff Wastewater Utility (PBWU) has demonstrated excellence in our operation and dedication to service in many key areas. In 2017, we received the Platinum8 Award for 100% compliance with our NPDES discharge permit over the past eight (8) years. Our effluent quality meets our National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit limits on a daily basis. Our Boyd Point Treatment Facility has successfully met full compliance with regulatory requirements consistently. We strive to continue being a valuable asset to the City of Pine Bluff, the City of White Hall and all surrounding areas.

We produce treated wastewater effluent that protects the public health and is safe to the environment at a rate that is very economical for our customers. Our effluent quality is maintained through diligence collection, testing, analyses, and a biological treatment process as part of our 90-day process. PBWU’s Boyd Point Treatment Facility is one of the largest municipal treatment facilities in the nation with more than 500 acres. Our facility has undergone modifications for efficiency, enhanced capacity and compliance with current environmental requirements.

As our population grew and industrial development occurred, Wastewater Utility increased its treatment capacity from 14 to 18 million gallons per day. The uniqueness of our system involves six (6) biological treatment lagoons, a diffused floating aeration system and three (3) large 600hp blowers in our operation. The success of our effluent is attributed to the natural interaction of sunlight, algae, microorganisms and oxygen that makes our wastewater clean and safe for discharge. As part of our performance measures, we analyze and test more than 3,000 water quality samples per month. This information is useful to track our effectiveness in making sure that we remain in compliance with set mandates.

Pine Bluff Wastewater Utility has been recognized nationally with another prestigious award we received from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA). Pine Bluff Wastewater Utility received the 2018 National Environmental Achievement Award in the Operations & Environmental Performance category. We endeavor to continue our efforts to make outstanding contributions in the wastewater industry.
Pine Bluff Wastewater Utility’s paramount concern is running an operation that is financially viable and sufficiently managed. In our matrix, we ensure that adequate resources are available to maintain the essential wastewater service we provide to our customers. We have adhered to local laws, adopted regional mandates and complied with regulatory changes to remain in a sound financial position. The sustainability of our operation has been secured by several initiatives we implemented:

1) 23% Rate Increase phased in over a three (3) year period of time for re-investment purposes.
2) $5 Million Dollar Sewer Revenue Bond to fund major capital projects to improve infrastructure.
3) Annual Audits that are clean reports with no significant deficiencies with internal controls.

PBWU provides operating performance measures to the Commission (our governing board) to document our overall condition. All financial transactions are handled in accordance with policies/procedures related to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), segregation-of-duties and risk reduction practices. We ensure that proper revenues are received and that they are sufficient for Operations & Maintenance (O&M), Debt Service Requirement and Capital Improvements.

- **O&M:** PBWU’s long-term financial planning includes having a Cost of Service Evaluation (CSE) performed every five (5) years. This evaluation was crucial in establishing a target rate that is sufficient in comparison to other cities in our region. Our rate increase was based on factors indicated in our evaluation and has proven to be beneficial in providing additional revenues. Asset measurement is a factor we consider as we appropriate a minimum of 10% to our Emergency Fund. We make sure that monies are readily available in the event of a major emergency or catastrophic event.

- **Debt Service:** PBWU’s Accounting Manual delineates specific requirements as established by annual audits and internal controls to reduce the possibility of financial risks or fraud. Annually, we are required to provide Continuing Disclosure to all banking repositories and other entities. This information is necessary for bond-holders to ensure adequate financial coverage toward existing bonds and revenue sustainability.

**Capital Improvements:** Our budget process forecasts expenses and revenues to provide for the upkeep and efficient operation of our infrastructure, now and in the future. PBWU has established restricted reserve accounts (with Commission approval) for improvements at our Boyd Point Facility (11%) and Collection System (10%), respectively. PBWU was recently issued bonds of $5 million dollars toward the construction of a new lift station along the southern portion of the City. Some of those funds are earmarked for the installation of a new parallel force main across the Arkansas River. The existing line will be replaced after being in service to the City of Pine Bluff for more than 50 years.
Pine Bluff Wastewater Utility’s mission is to provide our customers with efficient reliable service while protecting the public health and maintaining a clean environment. Customer Service is our main concern. Our Customer Service Representatives (CSR) make every effort to resolve customer issues in a timely, professional manner. We have developed and implemented several Customer Service Initiatives:

1) We have formed a Public Education Committee. It is composed of seven (7) employees from different divisions or departments. They work to educate the public about Pine Bluff Wastewater Utility.

2) We have created a formal Brochure that explains our operation and processes. This helps customers better understand our functions and how PBWU benefits them.

3) We conduct Outreach Services by conducting facility tours. We do this conjunction with local high schools, industrial representatives, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff students and other groups such as Leadership Pine Bluff.

Pine Bluff residents enjoy reliable and affordable wastewater utility service. We strive to provide professional management of our utility as a public service. The single greatest predictor of customer satisfaction is the key measurement we employ: Customer Satisfaction Survey. Our goal is to:

- Gain responses about their overall experience when we service their residence;
- Determine the extent of the customer’s needs fulfilled; and
- Document our response time and how the customers perceive our reliability.

When CSR’s receive a customer call about a disruption of service, we immediately dispatch our Stoppage Crew electronically. Generally we arrive on-site within 30-45 minutes from the time of that initial call. This quick response results in positive evaluations that cause greater customer satisfaction.

PBWU makes every effort to correct or change sewer rates if there is a situation of incorrect billing due to plumbing leaks or other errors. Customers can complete our Sewer Adjustment Form (RSA), and bring proof of repair (i.e. plumber invoice, purchase receipt for plumbing-related supplies or provide us with an explanation) that corresponds with the leak and we will be happy to make an adjustment for them. Commercial customers can also benefit from our RSA Form to obtain a 1-Time Adjustment for “repaired” plumbing leaks at their establishment.

Pine Bluff Wastewater Utility values all our customers. We realize the importance of their satisfaction with the services we provide.
Pine Bluff Wastewater Utility is governed by a Utility Commission consisting of five members. The Commission’s primary responsibility is to oversee the financial matters, establish policies, and provide assurance that the citizens are provided with reliable wastewater service. The Commission meets monthly to review financial statements and provide approvals concerning legal, regulatory, or financial matters related to PBWU.

The Utility Commissioners support the General Manager in achieving the goals of Pine Bluff Wastewater Utility. They oversee and indirectly manage how funds are allocated and spent in relation to set objectives. Commissioners meet monthly to discuss revenues, expenses & financial statements as part of their fiduciary responsibility. They discuss the Budget, Operations & Maintenance activities, Debt Service requirements and Capital Improvement obligations.

The Utility Commission works to ensure that adequate financial resources are available for current and future projects.
Pine Bluff Wastewater Utility (PBWU) is responsible for the collection, treatment and disposal of 10 million gallons of municipal wastewater every day. We optimize our operation to maximize the services we provide. PBWU takes advantage of the diversity of its staff to cross-check all activities to ensure the attainability of our organizational goals. PBWU uses the following performance measures as a gauge of needed actions to improve our practices. We use a comprehensive database program to assist us in the operational maintenance of our system. Through our database system, we integrate work orders, inventory, service reports and caller logs. Wastewater Utility uses accounting and human resources software for applications such as payroll, purchase orders, bank reconciliation, general ledger, cash receipts, personnel files and W-2 taxes for all employees.

PBWU uses Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system to provide remote monitoring to most of our 50 lift stations. Pump Crews get electronic alerts via text message from the SCADA system whenever there is a problem or malfunction with our lift stations. We can instantly access any station to make changes, updates or adjustments by laptop. Easy access from anywhere allows Pump Crews the freedom of movement to monitor many stations at once. PBWU uses Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) equipment and industry standard cleaning vehicles to identify potential minor issues before they develop into major problems. We have the right equipment and vehicles ready to initiate corrective procedures so that we can effectively remove debris, make repairs, and eliminate blockages from within our sewer lines. After an issue has been identified, we immediately schedule a work order for maintenance or correction. Our service interruptions have gradually decreased from 2014 to 2017 as the graph below indicates. (Note: Figures for 2018 reflect January – April readings)
Pine Bluff Wastewater Utility (PBWU) subscribes to the concept of continuous education of our employees. We are committed to increase knowledge and teaching our staff to be better through skillset improvement. PBWU has a succession plan in place that prepares seasoned staff members to migrate into supervisory positions after senior employees retire. Our goal is to cross-train within departments for continuity purposes and provide employees with opportunities for growth. PBWU offers the following initiatives:

- Annual Supervisor Trainings teach 1st & 2nd level Supervisors about dealing effectively with team members on various employee issues or challenging topics.
- Professional Development Courses (PDC) show staff how to perform basic tasks (related to their jobs or areas of expertise) better.
- Monthly Safety Meetings increases staff awareness about safety-related matters or teaches them how to be mindful of dangerous situations and how to use caution.
- Heavy Equipment Trainings offers field workers recurrency training on heavy duty equipment and helps staff remain current on new operation standards.
- Annual Tabletop Training helps employees discuss real-life case scenarios of crucial situations to discover if PBWU’s emergency response plan needs improvement.

PBWU wants our employees to be well-trained on the latest trends related to the wastewater industry. In addition to the concepts above, we sponsor our staff to attend major conferences and supplemental trainings hosted by nationally recognized authorities in our field. We encourage attendance at functions hosted by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Arkansas Water Wastewater & Water Environment Association (AWW & WEA), the Water Environment Federation (WEF), and the Arkansas Water Environment Association (AWEA).

Not only do our employees benefit from Leadership Development; but, Pine Bluff Wastewater Utility benefits from a qualified workforce. It is our contention that these and other teaching opportunities open the doors of knowledge so employees can apply what they learned to what they do at the Utility. We believe employees will perform better in the office and in the field if they are better educated.
The Utility Commission, Management Team and Staff work in unison to achieve company goals, reduce expenses, and correct problem areas. PBWU has conducted a Vulnerability Assessment on the entire operation and based on those results has enhanced security to protect our employees, facilities and infrastructure.

PBWU has implemented an Emergency Operation Plan and Procedures Manual to handle emergencies and unexpected impacts to our system. This manual will be exercised with local authorities (i.e. Office of Emergency Management, Police Department and Fire Department) to test the effectiveness of the plan. The manual serves as a guide to identify how PBWU will react in an emergency should one occur.

The Utility has integrated a state-of-the-art Security Access System at all our facilities. Each employee is provided with a key tag (keyless entry) to authorized locations. The key tags also control mechanical gates which only permit access to designated locations. For critical infrastructure, access to our pump stations is monitored and enabled through our enhanced security features. Employees are, also, provided with identification cards. For security purposes, we installed an advanced Camera System at our Administration Building and Operations Complex. The entire Operation Complex can be viewed on either a desktop computer or mobile device such as the company cell phone or I-Pad.

Routinely, PBWU has audits by the federal EPA and State regulatory agencies related to compliance issues. In meeting many of the goals, PBWU has a committee structure for employee participation. For instance, our Infrastructure Committee identifies and corrects problems in the collection system. We have a Safety Committee with regards to safety policies, accident prevention, and reduction in Worker’s Compensation claims. Other Wastewater Utility Committees are: Benevolence, Employee Fund, Infrastructure, Public Education, Quality Assurance, Technology, Website and Wellness.
Pine Bluff Wastewater Utility’s infrastructure strategy is built on four (4) key concepts:
1) Be proactive rather than reactive;
2) Repair minor issues before they become major problems;
3) Be committed to the continuity of service; and
4) Reinvest revenues back into our infrastructure.

Our greatest concern is maintaining our infrastructure systematically. To that end, we engage a Sewer Rehabilitation Project each year. The Utility Commission support our endeavors to budget monies to address issues within our collection system, manholes and pump stations on an annual basis. Since 2008, PBWU has invested approximately $4.5 million toward infrastructure improvement and ensuring the integrity of its assets. Among these assets are approximately 1,987,787 linear feet of gravity sewer mains, 274,613 linear feet of force mains, 50 pump stations, and 7,707 manholes to service nearly 50,000 residential, commercial, and industrial users.

Collection system maintenance and rehabilitation in Pine Bluff has been a primary focus for many years. PBWU allocates $500K (per year) toward Cured-In-Place Pipe (CIPP) methods and other trenchless technology endeavors. In 2017, PBWU performed 28,092 linear feet of television inspections and cleaned approximately 174,933 linear feet of its collection system.

PBWU currently maintains fifty (50) pump stations in Pine Bluff. Annually, the Utility invests an average of $200K toward pump station improvements. Our pump stations are enhanced with Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) monitoring system to manage well levels, runtimes, and other station characteristics. Air-release valve inspections are performed on a semi-annual basis to ensure proper functions. PBWU has also used epoxy coatings to rehabilitate and ensure prolonged life from aging stations. In 2017, the Utility secured a bond to install a new pump station on Phillips Road near Interstate 530 to enhance commercial and residential development.

Comprised of approximately 500 acres of lagoons and a state-of-the-art laboratory, the Boyd Point Treatment Facility is one of the largest municipal lagoon treatment facilities in the United States. PBWU expenses an average of nearly $170K per year on the maintenance of the levees, roads, and the diffused aeration blower system. The laboratory building was renovated in 2010 and enhanced with various equipment upgrades. The renovations included a wet chemistry area upgrade, new work-stations, updated machinery and other safety advancements.

Pine Bluff Wastewater Utility employee’s efforts have yielded a substantial reduction in mainline stoppages over the past decade. In 2017, the Utility’s sewer improvement projects reduced service interruptions to 20 mainline stoppages. In 2018, PBWU plans to continue our efforts to our infrastructure to benefit the City of Pine Bluff.
Pine Bluff Wastewater Utility (PBWU) has joined forces with The City of Pine Bluff, The City of White Hall, The Alliance and Community Development for the purpose of enhancing the quality of life in Pine Bluff. We endeavor to combine our resources, organize our workforces and utilize equipment to achieve like-minded objectives in the advancement of our community. PBWU strives to strengthen the ability of natural ecosystems; while, sustaining natural resources upon which our society depends.

PBWU is fostering economic growth while preserving the quality of the environment. We do this by:

A) Setting goals for overall infrastructure improvements to the system. This is done annually with our Capital Improvement Budget. This budget includes earmarking sections of the entire collection system that require improvements to reduce service interruptions and overflows.

B) Emergency Preparedness Initiatives. Disaster exercises are conducted in conjunction with other agencies, city departments (i.e. fire or police) and other utilities. This is done so we can practice what to do in catastrophic emergency situations.

C) Inclement Weather Procedures. This is a plan of action to activate our teams in case of flooding and wet weather events. We have purchased more generators, extra sump pumps, boats plus other heavy-duty equipment to help transport influent or massive volumes of flood waters through our collection system.

Pine Bluff Wastewater Utility implements these types of sustainability initiatives to protect our entire community from additional damages due to overwhelming situations. PBWU reinvests its revenues in our infrastructure as a proactive activities before an emergency arises to avoid reactive measures in response to disaster strikes.
Pine Bluff Wastewater Utility works to protect our water resources at all costs. Our biological treatment process lets “nature take its course”. We have one of the largest lagoon systems in the United States but we do not use artificial means to clean our influent. PBWU strives to ensure that effluent water is safe for the environment, wildlife and aquatic life. Our goal is never to neglect but to respect and protect our water resources through conservation and preservation.

Wastewater Utility understands our responsibility to enforce our pretreatment program. We encourage industrial users to implement effective pollution prevention programs to reduce waste stream loading. We protect our system from contamination at all costs through the use of bar screens, sealed manhole lids, samplings from industries, routine monitoring and regular testing of grease traps. PBWU upgraded our Boyd Point Treatment Facility, Laboratory & capacity loading in recent years. Our goal is to release a superior quality water effluent into the Arkansas River.

Wastewater Utility encourages activities in which we have an opportunity to share with the public the role of the Utility and the ways that residents can help minimize pollution.