



# MAKING IT CLEAR

Serving the Needs of Georgia's Onsite Wastewater Industry

P.O. BOX 2946 | LAGRANGE, GA 30241

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from the President.....1

2021-2024  
GOWA Officers ..... 3

Business Plan Basics:  
Look Before You Leap! .....4

On-Site Waste Management  
Systems Education at the  
University of Georgia..... 6

GOWA 2022  
Rates for Advertising.....7

Moving Effluent is  
More of an Uphill Battle  
These Days..... 10

What GOWA does for the  
Industry..... 11

Hard to Find and Retain  
Good Workers? Treat Them  
with Respect..... 12

Water Planning Regions..... 14

GOWA  
Membership Form..... 15



**Jan Bentley**  
*Owner, Portable Services, Inc.*  
*President, Georgia Onsite Wastewater Association (GOWA)*

## Letter from the PRESIDENT

Happy spring everyone!

Despite the recent stormy weather and rainfall, the promise of sunny clear skies and warm weather is something to get excited about. I hope you are well and are taking care of yourselves as we move through another busy spring season.

GOWA continues to serve you and your interests in the industry! We wrapped up the educational cycle with over 1200 attendees in the 16 regional meetings offered across the state. Thank you for continuing to make GOWA your number one choice for continuing education in Georgia. The 2022 GOWA Field Day will take place in the fall at the UGA Experiment Station Demonstration Site in Griffin. More information on the Field Day will be released later this summer, so be sure to stay on the lookout.

GOWA has been shortlisted for hosting the NOWRA conference in 2025!

I'm excited to announce that GOWA has been shortlisted for hosting the NOWRA conference in 2025! As a reminder, GOWA is now a full affiliate member of NOWRA (National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association), which benefits YOU! Don't forget you can obtain your continuing education credits by taking online courses through NOWRA. More information can be found on GOWA's website at [www.georgiaonsitewastewater.com](http://www.georgiaonsitewastewater.com).

Within this newsletter, you will also find a media kit for future advertisers, membership information, and some helpful articles to assist you with your industry work.

As always, it is an honor to serve as your President. I am proud of our industry and those that work in it. As a member of GOWA, you are a part of an elite group of industry professionals and business owners who keep homes and communities clean and safe. I know each of you is a professional that cares about your work, your customers' welfare, and our industry. Thank you for all you do to keep our industry strong.

- Jan





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# Business Plan Basics: Look Before You Leap!

Joan Koehne, *Pumper Magazine*, January 2022

**A thorough roadmap for your business follows every step from procuring startup funds to charting an exit plan when it comes time to step away.**

The circumstances are perfect — you're ready to make a major career move. You've decided to open your own pumping business. You have an idea of how to pull it off and the confidence to get started. Now you need a well-conceived business plan to set you on the right path.

Dave Kaster, principal at Fidelis, has written over a thousand business plans for clients at his advisory practice in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Kaster says clients need just two things before writing a business plan. "They need an idea to start with, and they need the time to explore the idea," he says.

You start with a concept of how to generate money for a particular service or product, and then you make sure that concept passes an evaluation on various levels. If you're ready to write a business plan, you already know what you want to do. Now you just need to flesh out your ideas by answering five questions: Who? What? When? Where? and How?

"Who does what? What are you trying to do? When do you do it? Where and how do you do it? But the biggest question is the 'why'?" Kaster says. "Once you decide to do a business plan, that's what I'd start with: Why are you doing it? Because that gives you the end result."

## THE ENDGAME

"You absolutely have to start with the end in mind," Kaster says. The first step is understanding the end goal. Decide what you want out of the business, and work backward from there.

For example, maybe you want to build a wastewater business from the ground up and run it for 20 years. Kaster says you have to determine how you want to get out in the end. If you plan to pass the business to your kids, it makes sense to invest in a permanent building, expensive equipment and a long-term marketing campaign.

It's a different mindset if you plan to be in business for 5-10 years, retire and let the company fade away.

"Define your exit strategy and what your ultimate goal is — to pass down to the kids, to sell, whatever — so any investors know exactly the end point or determination when and how to get out," Kaster says.

It's critical to conduct research to flesh out your business ideas. Talking to other pumpers is a good first step. Ask them how and why they got started and the difficulties they faced. Kaster suggests contacting a business consultant or marketing specialist to help put together your business plan.

"Picture a good time frame, 5-10 years down the road and determine what you want your business to look like," he says. "You need a target to start shooting arrows at."

One of the first things to decide is what type of work you want to specialize in. Will you limit your service to pumping septic tanks, or add septic system repairs, installing, portable sanitation or grease trap service, for example? From

experience, you know what you're good at and what services the market demands and is willing to pay for; a business plan puts it all down on paper.

## THE THREE ELEMENTS

"Someone could say, I'll just advertise on social media," Kaster says. "Who's going to do that? I haven't seen a business owner yet who's done that regularly, consistently and correctly. So, you need someone from the outside to really dive in."

A second element to strategize is operations. Determine how to manage your company in an effective way. "Working at a business is different than running a business," he says. "You have to think of things at a different level. You're not only affecting yourself, you're affecting the entire business. Clients. Suppliers. Every decision you make has ripple effects."

A third element to consider is financing. Decide how to finance your startup and how to use the money to grow your business.

"If you're going to family finance it, you owe it to your family to write a plan they can keep you accountable to," Kaster says. "You need to tell them, 'I'm going to keep you safe by following through with these plans.'"



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To learn more about ADS onsite solutions or any ADS product, please go to [adspipe.com](http://adspipe.com) or contact Stephen Brown at 706-466-4954 or [stephen.brown@adspipe.com](mailto:stephen.brown@adspipe.com).

# On-Site Waste Management Systems Education at the University of Georgia

Gary L. Hawkins, Ph.D.

Water Resource Management Specialist, UGA CAES Department of Crop and Soil Sciences, NOWRA Education Committee Chair

Brooklyne Wassel

Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent, UGA Extension – Pike County

We are very confident that if we say on a daily basis everyone either flushes the toilet, washes their hands over a sink, takes a shower, or otherwise uses water in a facility where that water is discharged through pipes and exits the facility, we would be correct. If the facility is connected to the local sewer system, the water heads to the wastewater treatment facility for processing and treatment. However, if the facility is connected to an On-site Wastewater Management System (or septic system), the water is managed and treated on the same site as the facility. Most of us reading this article right now understand this and you are saying to yourself “Self, do Gary and Brooklyne not understand this is what we do for a living?”. Well we do understand this, and as you also realize there are people that flush the toilets, take showers, and wash their hands daily that do not realize where that water goes after they flush or turn off the faucet. That is where education comes into play.

As background, Gary is an Agricultural Engineer who worked on animal waste management. Brooklyne is an Animal Scientist in Animal Nutrition. As the Water Resource Management Specialist/ Associate Professor (in the Crop and Soil Sciences Department) at UGA and the

Agricultural and Natural Resources Agent in Pike County, respectively one of our programs provides educational resources to help educate the general public on the “what happens after the flush or after the faucet is turned off”. Here at UGA we have developed and are continuing to build and develop educational aids to better assist us, as GOWA members, in the education of the general public. So what are some of these educational aids we can use? Let’s walk through a few of them.

## PORTABLE EDUCATIONAL AIDS

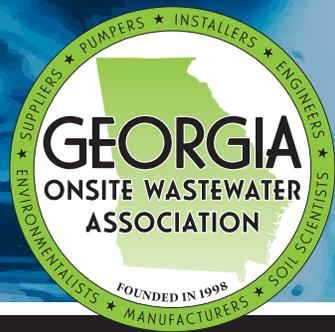
### Flushable or Non-Flushable Game

This game was developed a few years ago to help kids better understand what items should NOT be flushed and those that are OK to flush. The game is shown in the image below. The idea is to put the small bottles containing things such as facial tissue, small toys, slime, fats-oils-grease (FOG), other kid friendly items, poop, tee-tee, water, paper and cleaners into one of three spots ---Flushable (Green), Non-



Image of Flushable and Non-Flushable Game used to educate kids (and the adults associated with the kids playing the game) on those things that should and should not be flushed.

[continued]



# 2022 Rates for Advertising

Advertise in the GOWA publication, "Making it Clear" to increase your visibility and your business!  
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FOUNDED IN 1998

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Letter from the President  
Conference Guide ..... 4  
Exhibitors & Map  
Schedule  
Officers & Board  
Sponsors  
Ballot  
6 Steps to Develop Loyal Employees  
The Customer Won't Pay

**See Inside:**

**GOWA ANNUAL CONFERENCE GUIDE**  
**August 24 - 25 in Savannah, GA**

Read all about what's happening at the GOWA Conference on pages 4 through 8!

If you haven't registered don't wait any longer  
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ISSUE 3, APRIL 2020

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## MAKING IT CLEAR

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Letter from the President ..... 1

GOWA 2020-2021 Officers ..... 2

GOWA is Now a Full Affiliate Member of NOWRA ..... 4

7 Reasons to Put Golden Handcuffs on Your Best Employees ..... 6

We Want You to Hear From Us ..... 7

What GOWA Does for the Industry ..... 8

Thank You Sponsors ..... 9

Conference Highlight Photos ..... 10

Tour of Portable Services ..... 12

Conference Exhibitors ..... 13

You May Not Please Everyone with a Real Estate Inspection ..... 14

Why Your Employees Aren't Performing and What You Can Do About It ..... 16

GOWA New or Renewal Membership Form ..... 18

GOWA Brings People Together! ..... 19

**Letter from the PRESIDENT**

**Hello All!**

I want to thank everyone who participated in the 2020 Annual Conference in Augusta in February. As a resident of Augusta, it was truly an honor to have you there to help celebrate GOWA and the wastewater industry. As promised, there were opportunities for education, networking, tours, fun and fellowship. We hope you enjoyed the tour of Portable Services, Inc, and were able to take some things back to your businesses.

The conference saw over 100 attendees, taking educational classes and visiting with exhibitors. A big THANK YOU to our sponsors and exhibitors! Tommy Chambliss was the big \$100 raffle winner. See, there's a reason to stay until the end! We look forward to exploring ways to make each conference a greater success year after year.

Within this issue you will find some take aways from the conference, membership information, and helpful articles to assist you with your industry work. Planning is currently in the works for the next Field Day event. That date will be announced soon. Oh, and GOWA is now a full affiliate member of NOWRA, which benefits YOU! Within this issue, you can read up on all the benefits you will receive with this new affiliation.

As always, it is an honor to serve as your President. I am proud of our industry and those that work in it. As a member of GOWA you are a part of an elite group of industry professionals and business owners who keep homes and communities clean and safe. I know each one of you is a professional that cares about your work and your customer's welfare and our industry.

Keep up the great work!

- Jan ●

**Jan Bentley, GOWA President**

Keep up to date with GOWA news by visiting our website at:  
<https://gowa.wildoprivot.org>

page - 1

**CLEAR**  
Wastewater Industry

4100 13th | SAVANNAH, GA 31401

**MENT**

Wastewater systems in Georgia. Informed and well-trained operators enhance our industry as a whole and poorly trained operators reflect badly on us all. It's not just a matter of checking off the hours of continuing education needed to sustain your license, it's about providing the best services and solutions to our customers.

GOWA hosted 11 workshops in 2017 and six more in 2018 to provide opportunities for more than 50 contractors across the state to fulfill their continuing education requirements for license renewal. ASG did a good job pulling these together in short order and we are already planning ways to improve and enhance these workshops when we begin again in the fall of 2019.

In the meantime, there will be an opportunity to be a jumpstart on continuing ed requirements at the GOWA Annual Conference coming up in August in Savannah. You'll find all the info about the meeting and how to register in this newsletter. An education committee is putting together an excellent program of education sessions and it's always valuable to network with all the sectors in our industry. Almost every conference, I learn something that helps me improve my business or avoid a mistake that someone else alerted me to at the meeting.

Many of us are going full out to keep up with demands of new construction as the economy in the state has rebounded, but we all know we can't count on boom times to continue. We have to invest in improving our skills and our businesses, and we have to invest in our future as an industry that supports GOWA.

I hope to see you all in Savannah!

page - 1

According to the Georgia Department of Public Health, county health departments permitted

Flushable (Red) or Cautionary (Yellow). I have used this at many different events and it is fun to watch the kids put the different items in the rack, but it is more fun to watch the parents when they say, “Now those little toys that you have, do we flush them or not?” or “That is facial tissue, so it is Flushable.” After discovering that is not the correct answer, they will ask, “Why not?” Then comes the discussion of why items like facial tissue or baby wipes or flushable wipes should not be flushed.

### Model Septic System

In conjunction with the Flushable and Non-Flushable Game, we have a small model of a septic system that we can use to show how a system works. The model system as you can see below is workable and contains a small toilet (which is actually a squirt gun), a 2-chamber tank, and a small distribution system. We use this in conjunction with the game above to discuss how the things that get flushed go into the tank, are treated, and the “cleaner” water is distributed

through the soil in the distribution system. Once we have explained this, we then tell the kids that if they flush too many, or any, of the “Non-flushable” items, they can see what it looks like if they open the toilet lid - this is where they get squied. They then want to show their parents.

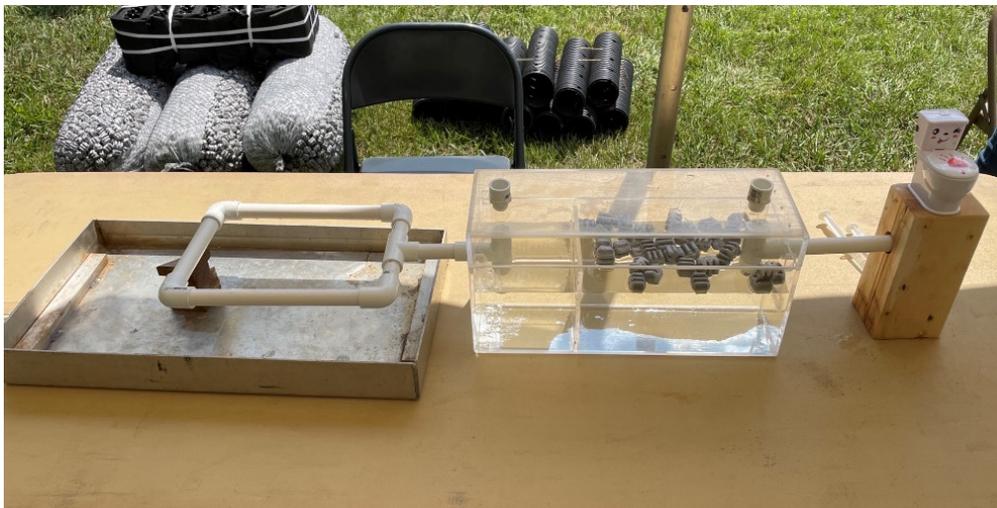
The previously mentioned game and small septic system model are some of the small items that fit into the truck and can travel to different events to provide education on septic systems. In addition to being utilized on the state specialist level, some of the County Extension Agents have used the game and model to educate at different events they have been involved with in their counties.



Image of one of the five cross sections used to educate on how water should flow in a trench with the five approved distribution systems.

### Shadow-Box or Cross Sections

Another model we use for education is a replica of the cross-section of the five approved distribution systems in Georgia. These cross sections are three feet across and three feet tall. The Figure below is a picture of the pipe and gravel cross-section. The cross-section has a piece of plexi-glass on it so we can use them as dry erase boards to show how water should move in the trench when properly working. We can also use the cross-sections for other education needs to explain water flow. You can also see in the image that they have both North and South Georgia soils to be used anywhere across Georgia.



Model septic system used for educational programs.

### Electronic Education

Besides the game and model, we have also put together some electronic aids to help educate the general public. These consist of a section of the “Water at UGA” webpage (<https://site.extension.uga.edu/water/>) where we have put some educational YouTube videos. The ones on there as of the date of this article were made to be used and were distributed during SepticSmart Week 2021. The videos go along with the different topics of that awareness week.

We have also developed a PowerPoint presentation that goes through the basics of septic systems that is used and made available to our County Extension Agents to do programs in their counties. The presentation goes over the basics of what a septic system is, how it works, some of the Do’s and Don’ts, and how to maintain and protect the system. If you have a need for such a program in your area, please contact your County Extension Agent (1-800-ASK-UGA1), and they can work with you to provide an educational program in their county(ies).

### Physical Educational Aids

Besides the game, model, and electronic aids, we currently have the Septic System Education Facility on the UGA Griffin Campus in Griffin, Georgia. At this site we have many full-sized displays that we use in conjunction with GOWA

to host field days for recertification events as well as Department of Public Health trainings for their new employees. Additionally, the facility is used for education of the general public. The facility has a serial trench set-up where we can “install” distribution systems for education and training, it has a tank and area where a full scale system can be built, it has full scale ATUs and tanks that are used for educating professionals in the on-site field. In addition to the Griffin site, we are in the process of building a similar facility in Watkinsville, Georgia. The Watkinsville site is close to Athens, so it provides an easy way to help students relate what they have learned in class and seen in pictures to the actual installation in the field.

As we said in the opening, we are very confident we can say: on a daily basis we all either flush the toilet, wash our hands over a sink, take a shower, or otherwise

use water in a facility where that water is discharged through pipes and exits the facility. And for those persons on septic systems, providing some education through various means will help them better understand, maintain, and protect their systems. For the students at UGA and other schools, learning how the material they learn in class relates to actual septic systems will benefit them in their future home ownership and in some cases their future employment. For the professionals in this field, having educational aids can help clients better understand the operation of septic systems as well as provide opportunities to learn about new advances in the profession. If you have ideas of educational aids that are portable or could be used at the training facilities, please let us know.



Septic System Education Site  
at UGA - Griffin

# Moving Effluent Is More of an Uphill Battle These Days

Jim Anderson and Dave Gustafson, *Onsite Installer Magazine*, March 2022

**Today's onsite system designs often require pumps carry water to a higher elevation for distribution. Follow these tips for proper pump selection and usage.**

We often get questions from homeowners about pump reliability in relation to the need for pumps somewhere in their system. Pumps these days are highly reliable if the correct pump is selected and installed. One pump is needed in most cases, but some systems require multiple pumps. We want to dedicate one column to explaining why we install pumps and some of the aspects for successfully using pumps.

In what we sometimes like to call the "old days," tanks were installed as deep as needed to receive sewage from the lowest level of the house. If the line was exiting from a basement this meant that the tank was installed at a depth of 10 feet or more. This made it very difficult to service the tank, much less repair or fix anything in the tank, such as replace baffles, etc.

While we still occasionally see deep tanks, they are usually the result of older installations. We now recognize the tanks should be installed close to the ground surface, ideally with no more than a foot of cover. This makes it much easier to locate and access the tank for regular maintenance and any necessary repairs.

The shallow location means there is often a sump and pump installed in the basement or lowest level of the house and the raw sewage is pumped up to the tank. A solids-handling pump is required. It is amazing how often we still see sewage effluent pumps or even clean-water sump pumps installed in these situations. They will not handle the solids and will frequently plug.

## PRESSURE AND VOLUME

One major concern with pumping raw sewage up into the septic tank is creating turbulence in the tank, interfering with the settling of the solids in the tank. If the tank is not allowed to develop the three layers including the clear zone of liquid delivered to the next component, there is the potential for premature plugging of the effluent screen or solids delivered to the drain field, causing plugging or excessive biomat development.

If a sewage ejector pump is used, the maximum dose when the pump runs should not exceed 5% of the total septic tank volume. For a 1,000-gallon tank, the amount delivered should not exceed 50 gallons per dose. We always recommend using a two-compartment tank or two tanks in series in these situations to ensure proper settling time is provided. The pump should deliver sewage at a rate of no less than 10 gpm so it will keep up with the discharge rate of appliances, such as washing machines and dishwashers. This is of less concern these days with the advent of low-water-use appliances.

Deep tanks usually meant the soil treatment trenches or bed were installed deep so there could be gravity flow out of tank. The soil treatment and dispersal area were installed below or out the zone in the soil where there would be maximum treatment and often would be in contact or near limiting soil layers such as perched water tables, dense soil layers, or bedrock. To avoid these

problems, maximum trench excavations are often limited by code to 4 to 5 feet. Installation of shallow trenches, as we recommend, often requires a pump tank and pump to deliver sewage effluent up to a distribution box or dropbox.

## WATCH FLOW RATE

When effluent is pumped to a distribution or dropbox for gravity distribution in the trenches, effluent should not be delivered at a rate of more than 45 gallons per minute at the total dynamic head required for the elevation difference and friction in the supply line piping. This rate allows time for effluent to flow out the 4-inch diameter sewer pipe from the drop or distribution box to the trenches.

A reader recently asked if since distribution or dropboxes can have multiple outlets, should the rate should be higher because effluent could flow out more than one outlet? The answer is no, the rate should be based on the scenario where all the flow will exit one pipe. In addition, the flow from the pump should be directed to a wall of the box without an outlet, or a box used with a baffle to dissipate the energy of the water as it enters the box.

If it is necessary to pump to a pressure distribution system, low-pressure dose trenches, sewage treatment mound, or at-grade system, the pump requirements must meet the necessary flow rate to totally fill the distribution piping and deliver the desired dose amount at the required total dynamic head.

[continued]

Ideally, the pump should only run four to five times per day to maximize pump life. This would require a minimum dose of approximately 25% of the estimated daily flow plus the amount of drain-back from the supply pipe. This helps spread the flow out evenly during the day, while at the same time utilizing the whole soil treatment area. In some cases, it is desirable to add an additional tank to store effluent to handle peak flows and provide better flow equalization throughout the day. We will explore the topic of peak flows and flow equalization in a future column.

### **PUMPS COMMONPLACE**

With the advent of additional pretreatment devices (media filters, ATU's constructed wetlands) over the last decade or two, an additional pump has become necessary to move effluent from one treatment component to another. These are designed and specified to meet the specific requirements of the pretreatment device.

Currently it is not unusual to have multiple pumps within the treatment train for systems. Recognizing the specific pump requirements for each situation has now become a necessary skill for any sewage treatment system installer or service provider.



## **Georgia Onsite Wastewater Association**

Serving Georgia's Onsite Wastewater Industry

What GOWA does for the Industry:

- Provides educational opportunities
- Provides networking for both contractors and suppliers
- Created a forum for the industry to express their views and barriers to business in GA
- Provides a central point for industry and state agencies to interact on mutual ideas/problems and to resolve areas of concern
- Sends out up-to-date information through emails, faxes, printed newsletters and legislative alerts
- Represents the onsite industry before city, county, state, national groups and governmental agencies and provides a united voice for the industry

**Being a GOWA member is an investment in your future  
and the future success of your business.**

**Invest in your future, join GOWA today!**

# Hard to Find and Retain Good Workers? Treat Them with Respect.

Brigette Hyacinth, *Onsite Installer Magazine*, December 2021

## Attracting and keeping quality members on your team has never been more challenging. Follow these tips to improve job satisfaction.

Many companies invest heavily to improve the customer experience but sideline employees who are responsible for delivering that experience. What some business leaders forget is that their employees are their first and most important (internal) customers. This can seem especially true these days as installers struggle to keep crews intact and on the job every day.

If your workers don't believe in your business, the quality of their work will be poor or they may look elsewhere for employment opportunities. Business success starts with the employee experience. When employees are happy (feel valued, welcome, respected, heard), they will create remarkable experiences for your onsite customers.

### RAISE MORALE

You can't expect stellar customer service from employees who feel distrusted and discounted. Successful businesses focus on creating memorable employee experiences to keep their staff engaged and happy. Several years ago, Airbnb announced it was appointing a Global Head of Employee Experience. The following year, the company topped Glassdoor's list of the 50 Best Places to Work.

Instead of following the traditional business model, Airbnb creates change and empowers employees at all levels, which has a huge effect on the success of the company, both monetarily and culturally. What are some ways you can have that kind of impact on your workers in the onsite industry?

Always be quick to recognize and reward the efforts and contributions of employees. Nothing says we value you like showing how much you appreciate them. Employees spend half of their lives at work. It should at least be a pleasant experience. When workers are treated unfairly and as "second-class citizens," the result is decreased employee morale.

Low morale results in decreased employee productivity. Moreover, dissatisfied employees will share their negative work experiences with family and friends, thus turning away potential customers and employees. The employee experience is influenced by three factors:

- The physical environment in which employees work
- The support and tools an employer provides
- How an employer takes an interest in the well-being and success of employees

I'll share an example to illustrate my point. A retail store stated their employees were the "heart of the business." The retail area was clean and well stocked. Aisles were wide and well-marked with bright signage. Even the parking lot sparkled — there was rarely any litter seen in customer parking areas. Customers were impressed.

However, employee space was a different matter. Stock rooms were cluttered and dark. Staff locker rooms were poorly lit and maintained. The break room was bleak, with old, uncomfortable furniture, and trash bins overflowed. Even the vending

machines were inadequately stocked with only junk food. The message was clear — the company cares more about customers and less about employees.

### IT'S YOUR TURN

So how can you ensure you're treating employees as your most loyal customers? Try these solutions on for size:

### ENGAGE YOUR CREW IN THIS CONVERSATION.

No one knows how to upgrade the employee experience better than your employees themselves. Ask them what they love about working in the company and what they would want you to do differently to reduce frustrations and improve work conditions. Listening is crucial.

### INVOLVE EMPLOYEES IN DECISIONS.

Grant your staff autonomy and flexibility. Show you trust them to do the job you hired them for. Employees want to know their voices are being heard and their opinions matter. Provide consistent communication and a culture that welcomes feedback and employees won't feel like they're kept in the dark. Employees who are involved in any aspect of the company feel ownership.

### BE AUTHENTIC.

The driving force behind everything you do should be creating an atmosphere where workers feel like they belong. With a strong purpose, employees can easily see why leaders are doing what they are doing. Take action. Observe closely. Refine systems,

[continued]

policies and practices to honor employees. When people see you are sincere, you will get employee buy-in and win their trust.

**SHOW THEM YOU CARE.**

Your team members want to be treated as human beings. They have feelings, emotions and personal lives. When employees are facing personal issues (illness, family crisis, bereavement), be empathetic. Inflexibility and insensitivity will cause employees to withdraw and become disengaged.

**SHOW RESPECT**

When employees are consistently treated with trust, dignity and respect, they respond by giving their best. They care about the business, their colleagues and their customers. Employees demonstrate that care by serving customers wholeheartedly, solving problems quickly and working cooperatively. If you want to get the best from your employees, treat them like your most loyal customers!

<https://www.onsiteinstaller.com/editorial/2021/12/hard-to-find-and-retain-good-workers-treat-them-with-respect>

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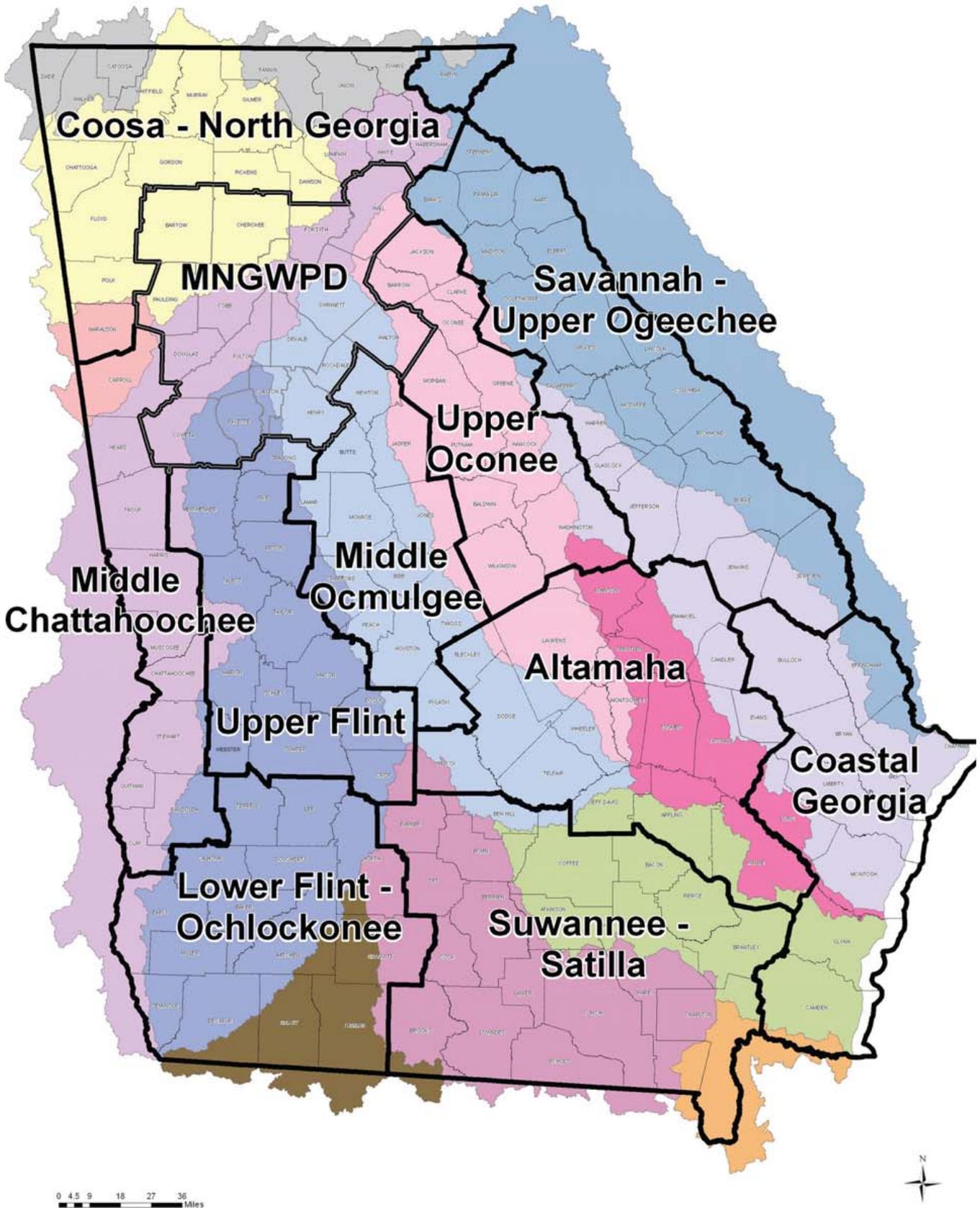
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# Water Planning Regions



# GOWA – New or Renewal Membership Form

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Primary Category  
(i.e. Engineer, Regulator/Compliance Monitor, Installer, Installer/Pumper, Land Application, Manufacturer/Supplier, Portable Sanitation, Pumper, Soil Scientist)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CHOOSE A MEMBER TYPE	GOWA MEMBER TYPE	DESCRIPTION	ANNUAL DUES
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