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American Society of  
Plumbing Engineers™

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## MEETING FORMAT

6:00 – 6:30	Social
6:30 – 6:45	Announcements & Table Tops
6:45	Dinner Served
7:00 – 8:00	Presentation

DATE: February 18, 2026

TIME: 6:00pm to 8:00pm

PLACE: [Little Havana](#)

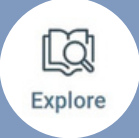


TOPIC: Rainwater Harvesting

SPEAKER: Dejan Tadic, Rainwater Harvesting Enthusiast and Director of Plumbing & Fire Protection Engineering at Setty & Associates

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Chuck Swope, PE, CPD, LEED AP BD+C  
Chapter President

This newsletter is late, entirely due to my fault. I always struggle to find the right words, even though there is amazing things happening in our little chapter. We're gearing up towards the end of the season (already!) and there's still great things to come. But first, let's address the elephant in the room. I deeply apologize for not holding our January meeting as scheduled. Many gatherings and events were cancelled due to the entirely expected, yet difficult to manage Super Duper, Son of the Snowpocalypse that happened just days before the meeting. In fact, I am astonished that there is still snow on the ground almost three weeks later. Fear not, the precipitation predicted this Sunday is only working in our favor, although it may not seem that way to our friends in low lying areas.

Our Industry Night is only postponed, to still address said elephant, not forgotten. In fact, we are full steam ahead and rescheduled to host it in March. All purchased tickets will be honored and I will be reaching out to all registrants for the new logistics. For most of you, there will be nothing for you to do, just show up and be your genuine self. For those that are unable to make it, we can make other arrangements. More details to follow, so be sure to check your inboxes.

On to more fun things! I'm sure Julian's article will address the technical topic but let me speak about our presenter a little bit. I had the great pleasure of spending a week with Dejan during a factory tour last year. He is currently the Director of Plumbing and Fire Protection with Setty & Associates and holds his CPD as an ASPE DC member. I was amazed at his appreciation of world culture and readiness as we traveled between Denmark and Hungary. Here I was, a fish out of water, and it was Dejan's second nature to jump on a foreign subway or hold conversation with our hosts. As much as he is a seasoned traveler, his expertise is well appreciated here in Baltimore as we continue our engineer led technical program.

Let's not forget our other long-standing traditions of giving back to the community. We will not only be hosting our annual Engineer's Week presentation this February, but we'll be also kicking it off on the first day. Every year, we partner with Discover-E and bring high school students to the Engineer's Club in the Garret Jacobs Mansion in Mount Vernon. There we will explore engineering and give a glimpse into what we do and how it affects their world. It is easy to take for granted of how important plumbing engineering is to public safety. As a young chap myself (no comments, please) even though you can point out how things work, it's not always clear who is responsible for putting it together. After all, if we've done our jobs well, no one knows we've done anything at all. If you asked teenage me, I would've said it was the architect's job. If you ask me today, I can tell you that I am glad that the architects call on us to help. After all, we wouldn't want to do the work twice, would we?

PS to any architects out there reading this, I'm glad that you all have a great sense of humor.

Your Chapter President,  
Chuck Swope

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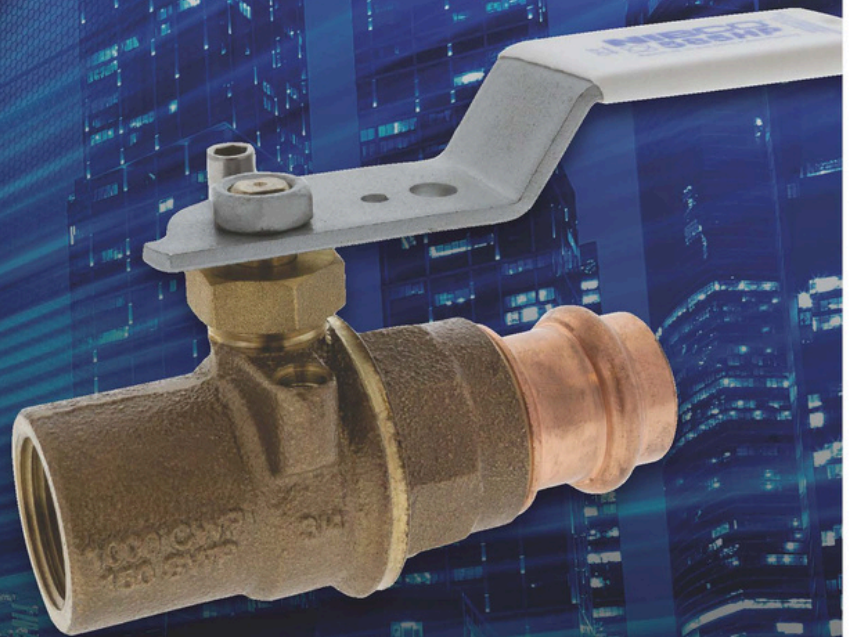


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Julian Chiveral, PE, CPD, LEED AP BD+C  
Vice President- Technical & Education Chair

## Technical Report

Well Punxsutawney Phil awoke from his burrow on Gobbler's Knob and shared with us that we will receive no reprieve from this winter weather for six more weeks. For that reason, we are tentatively postponing Industry Night until March. Keep an eye out for an email once we have solidified a date. We want to ensure that we can provide a high quality and accessible event, unencumbered by snow delays and school closings. All previous registrations will be honored.

For February, we will be returning to Little Havana for an engineer-led presentation on rainwater harvesting (RWH) systems. We'll discuss the major system components, division 22 scope, when and where RWH makes sense, and loads more, all with the added benefit of keeping it tailored to designing in the DMV.

As for the engineer in question: Dejan Tadic, CPD is the Director of Plumbing/Fire Protection at SETTY is our expert presenter for the evening. With 18 years of experience and a CPD credential under his belt, this guy's someone worth listening to! Plus, as a self-described "rainwater harvesting enthusiast," I'm sure we'll all enjoy the opportunity to nerd out about a bit of cool tech within the industry. I look forward to seeing you at the meeting on February 18th!

P.S. For those who have expressed concern about Fire Protection February and worry that Baltimore ASPE is straying from our path, it is with great pleasure that I can inform you that Fire Protection February has been postponed to April this year. Fret not!



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Julian Chiveral, PE, CPD, LEED AP BD+C  
Vice President- Technical & Education Chair

## Education Report

### **What are you doing for others?**

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. describes this as life's most persistent and urgent question and it's perhaps a question we do not ask ourselves frequently enough. Between family obligations, client expectations, schedule aberrations, other obfuscations, the ceaseless trepidation of possible defenestration(?!) how is one ever meant to find the time to give to others?

If you're looking for an engaging opportunity to engage with the next generation of engineers, I have the perfect opportunity for you. On Monday, February 23rd, we are taking over the Engineer's Club in Mount Vernon, Baltimore for a day of plumbing engineering education and entertainment. We are hosting about 100 local high school students for a short presentation on plumbing engineering, a hands-on plumbing design activity, and a mini trade show to introduce students to the different facets of plumbing engineering. This is a fun and super rewarding event that we put on each year and would love for you to be involved!

### **We are seeking plumbing designers and engineers who are brave enough to lead a group of 5-8 high school students through designing a residential plumbing system.**

We have materials prepared to help the students size and lay out both domestic and sanitary systems. Please reach out if you'd like to be involved. There is also a signup page on the Baltimore ASPE website.

### **What to expect:**

- 09:00AM Volunteers arrive for setup and planning
- 10:00AM Students arrive and take their seats in the drawing room
- 10:20AM Presentation - Introduction to Engineering
- 10:40AM Engineer Q&A
- 11:00AM Lunch with the students
- 12:00PM Small Groups Session 1 - Design Activity & Hands-on Demos
- 12:45PM Small Groups Session 2 - Hands-on Demos & Design Activity
- 01:30PM Quick team debrief, pat yourself on the back, and head home!



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**Nikita Patel, PE**  
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**01**

### **Growing Healthcare Industry**

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**02**

### **Code Requirements**

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**03**

### **Engaging the Facility AHJ**

As Designers and Engineers, I'm sure you've been asked to make decisions for a project that are the responsibility of the owner. This course helps you navigate those conversations to avoid bearing that responsibility as the designer.

**04**

### **Professional Growth**

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**05**

### **Class + Credential**

Unlike other companies hosting this course, this class hosted by Sherman Engineering will include both the course led by Mark Allen, as well as the course exam, proctored by MGTC.

**REGISTER**

## Water is Sticky

*Technical Article (from Plumbing Engineer, a PHCP Publication)*

*March 1, 2018*

*By Max Rohr*

At one point I was a chemistry major in college, and at no point in my school career was I good at chemistry. I always thought the subject was interesting, but I wasn't great at math or balancing equations; two pretty vital skills if one plans to pursue this field. I revisited my chemistry past recently when I was asked a question about freeze-breaks in plumbing systems: What happens at the molecular level inside a pipe filled with water? At the atomic level, water is a sticky thing, which can wreak havoc on your plumbing system.

Water will freeze below 32 F at the range of pressures you are likely to experience on earth. Hard stop. (Side note: If you plan on building a house near the planet Jupiter, the freeze temperature may deviate from 32 F, because the pressure is much different.) Regardless of the vessel holding the water, H<sub>2</sub>O will transition from a liquid to a solid state below freezing. Insulation around a pipe may buy you some time before the water cools and freezes, but it doesn't prevent freezing. You could have R-50 insulation around a pipe, and it would eventually freeze if you left it stagnant in sub-freezing conditions. Insulation is a thick jacket; it isn't magic.

Your options to prevent freezing are fairly simple: keep the pipe warm, keep displacing cold water with warmer water or drain the pipes. Beyond that, if you can find a piping material that can expand 10 percent without breaking, you might be okay freezing. Where does the 10 percent number come from? This is where the molecular plot thickens.

As water molecules cool down, they begin to shrink, just like you might do when you are watching a football game in the bleachers of a cold stadium. Oddly, at 39 F, the water molecule gets larger again. Picture it curling up into a ball, then springing out into a jumping-jack position. (This expanded molecule shape causes ice to float in liquid water instead of sinking to the bottom.) By the time it completely freezes, it is 9 percent bigger than when it is a liquid at ambient temperature and pressure. That is why, when frozen, water might break out of your metallic pipes like the Kool-Aid man.

A stretchy material, like a water balloon, may be able to withstand a freeze, because the material is elastic enough to expand with the water. In some cases, flexible materials like PEX pipe can survive a freeze, where copper may not. That doesn't make PEX freeze-proof, however. Generally, rigid fittings are the limiting point. The PEX might expand with the ice, while the fittings might not. Reducing the amount of fittings you use adjacent to outside walls with PEX piping might help survive a brief freeze, but the only sure-fire way to avoid a break is to avoid dipping below 32 F.

Solid water isn't a single molecular shape. The ice you have dropped into a drink and seen floating down to the ground as a snowflake are both classified as Ice I. At extreme pressures and temperatures, such as in outer space or in laboratory experiments, water molecules can form different solid molecular structures. Scientists know of or have predicted the shape of 17 different molecular ice arrangements, classified by roman numerals. Ice on a planet far away could be 500 F, but still form a solid because the pressure is so high that the molecule is crushed into a cube.

Why is water considered sticky? Water molecules are polar, like a magnet. The oxygen side of the molecule has a negative charge, and the side with the pair of hydrogen atoms has a positive charge. If you put a drop of water on a piece of wax paper, the water will hold on to the other water molecules around it, forming a bead. A non-polar molecule example is gasoline, which disperses instead of beading.

# Water is Sticky

I listened to a podcast episode of BBC In Our Time on the topic of water. They gathered three water experts and had them nerd out about H<sub>2</sub>O. This is where I heard the 'water is sticky' phrase: "Water is sticky toward all kinds of other materials ... When your finger touches a table, it turns out that it is not actually your finger touching the table, but it is the water molecules on your finger, which are touching the water molecules on the table." Water is stuck to everything.

This polar stickiness, by way of hydrogen bonding between water molecules, also gives water surface tension. Surface tension allows a lizard or a water bug to run across a lake without falling in. It also increases the boiling point of water. This high boiling point makes water a great molecule to use for hydronics. Water stays in its liquid form over a large temperature range, so it can carry BTUs without hitting a phase change and flashing to steam. It would be hard to operate a boiler system with hydrogen sulfide, even though the molecular structure is similar to water. The H<sub>2</sub>O reset curve would have to be somewhere in the range of -115 F and -75 F to keep the molecules in a liquid state.

The term universal solvent is another nickname given to water. A USGS article describes the way water can dissolve molecules like sodium chloride:

The positively-charged side of the water molecules are attracted to the negatively-charged chloride ions, and the negatively-charged side of the water molecules are attracted to the positively-charged sodium ions. Essentially, a tug-of-war ensues with the water molecules winning the match. Water molecules pull the sodium and chloride ions apart, breaking the ionic bond that held them together. After the salt compounds are pulled apart, the sodium and chloride atoms are surrounded by water molecules.

If water wasn't so good at dissolving salts, scale wouldn't be as much of a problem in a plumbing system. Because water breaks apart salt molecules containing sodium or calcium so well, it transports them into your house, and they come out of solution, adhering to hot electrical elements, heat exchangers or the walls of metal pipes. Hard water slowly paints the inside of your plumbing components with salts that might have come from an aquifer below your neighborhood years before.

The stickiness of water is a blessing and a curse. With our current knowledge of this interesting little molecule, we can minimize scale and freezing risks but not stop them completely. The properties of water that make this planet livable are also the same forces that can ruin your plumbing system.

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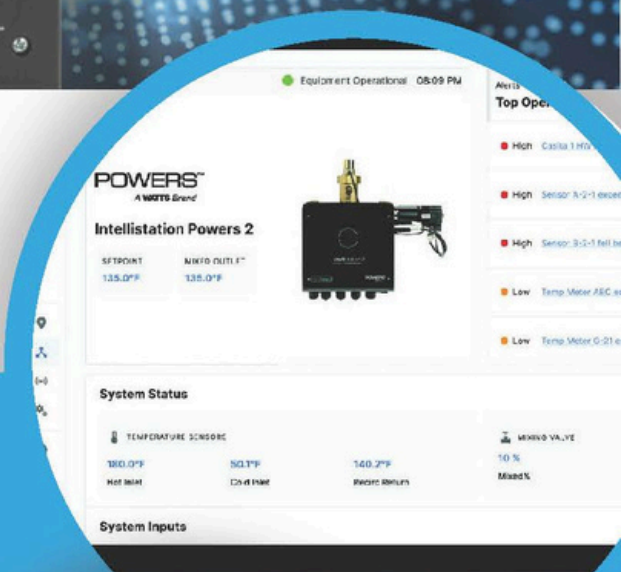
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Nicole Murphy  
Vice President- Membership

## **Membership Report**

Please join us in welcoming our newest members to the Baltimore Chapter!

***Andrew Lloyd Davies***  
***Jose Reyes Hernandez***  
***Michael Witzak***

As we move further into 2026, we're excited about the momentum building within our Chapter—even as Maryland kicked off the year with plenty of snow! Despite the winter weather, our energy and engagement remain strong.

We're proud to share that we began the year with 138 members and have already grown to 142 members in just the first few weeks of 2026. With your continued support, we look forward to even more growth and collaboration in the months ahead. The strength of our Chapter comes from each of you—your participation, enthusiasm, and commitment truly make a difference, snow days and all.

Thank you to everyone who joined us in January—we had a fantastic start to the year! We look forward to seeing you at our February meeting (hopefully with clear roads and a little less snow!) as we continue building connections and momentum together.

Warm regards,  
Nicole Murphy



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Plumbing Plans Reviewer's Corner  
By: David Bailey

Last month's review involves adding a breakroom sink to an existing warehouse space. The faucet specified has a 1.75 GPM flow rate per drawing note, or 1.80 GPM per on-line manufacturer's spec sheet. The problem was two-fold. The water heater kW was too low, and the flow rate of faucet was too high. The quick solution from a Plumbing Designer's point-of-view would be specifying a CM-40I-277 tankless water heater and a 1.0 GPM rated faucet. Also, since the faucet desired is a pull-down spray type, remember to equip the supplies with ASSE 1024 BFPs. Since the delta T has a potential of 76 degrees F, the water heater's thermostatic feature comes into play.

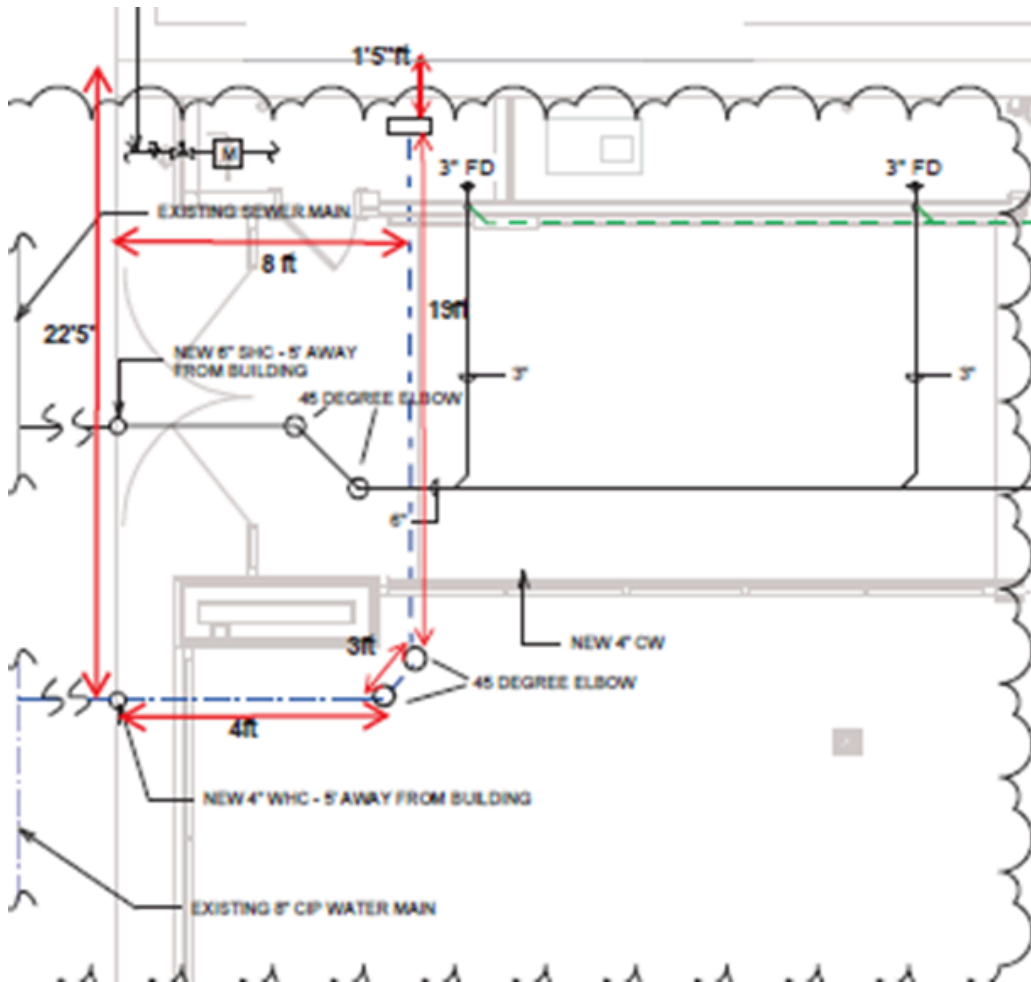
Again, WSSC Water has adopted the 2024 IPC, the 2024 IFGC, and the 2024 WSSC Water P&FGC effective December 1, 2025. All permit applications received by the Commission on or after that date shall result in the linked plan cases to be subjected to these new Codes. Please make sure that applicable drawing submissions are designed to meet or exceed these recent 2024 Code adoptions.

For this month's review, this is a result of an Inspector's citing, and a subsequent submission of a waiver request. As you can see (in the partial ground floor plan below), the combined water service proposed meanders over twenty-five feet underground within the structures envelope thereby exceeding the five-foot limit per Code. However, not just the 2021 WSSC Water P&FG Code, but the County's adoption of the NFPA.

Thus, WSSC Water is unable to consider approving the waiver request until the County, the AHJ regarding NFPA matters, takes a decision. So, how is it that this was not caught during the review? The probable reason is that the proposed water service was not shown on the ground floor plan until this waiver request submission. Instead, the reviewer may have totally relied on the notation presented on the basement floor plan referencing the Civil Site Plan per part plan (presented on the next page) and never followed up with obtaining the drawing(s). It is on the basement plan I have discovered another Code violation. Can you see what is at issue? There is a key word in the previous paragraph that may be of some assistance.

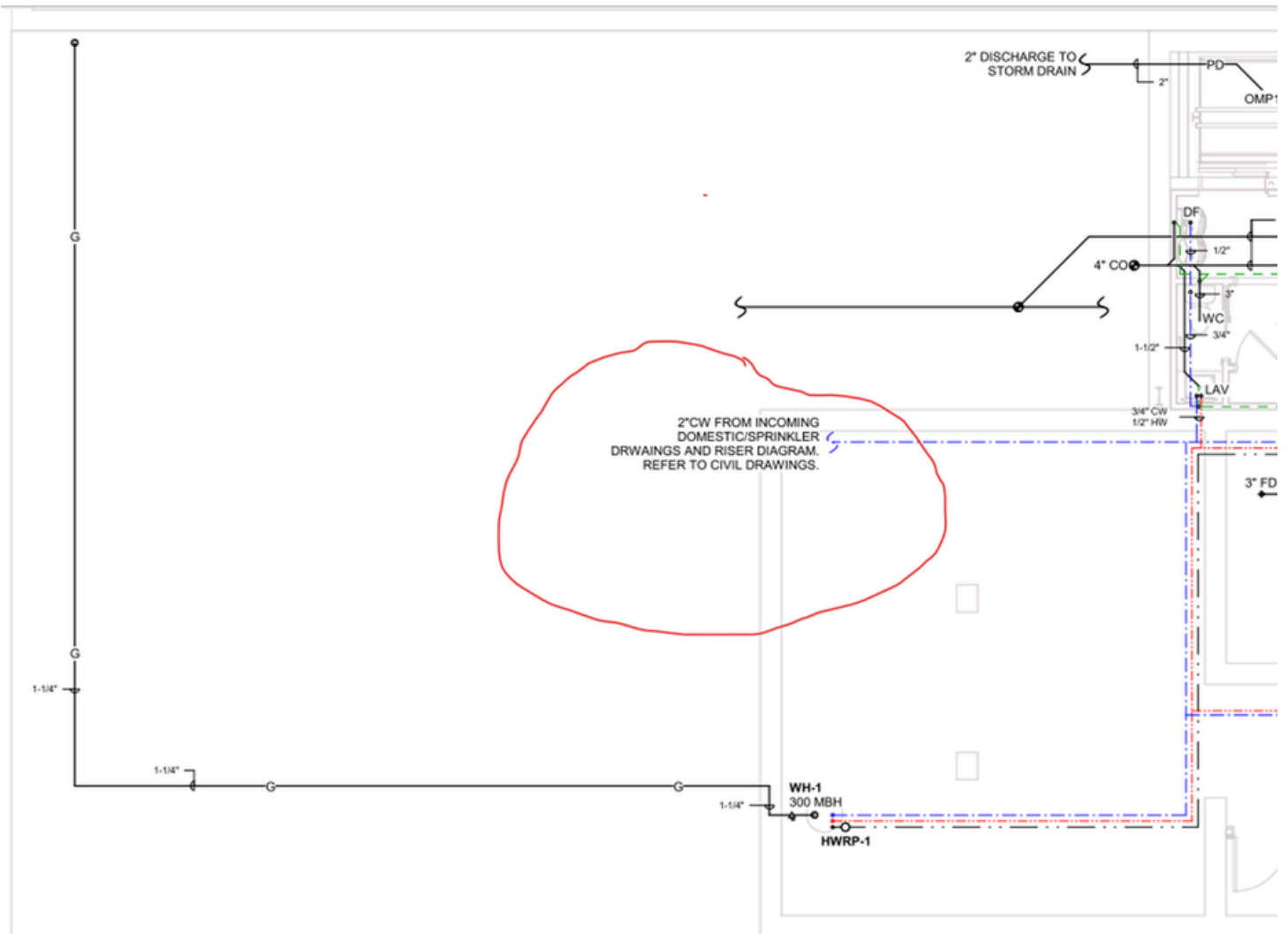


Plumbing Plans Reviewer's Corner  
By: David Bailey





Plumbing Plans Reviewer's Corner  
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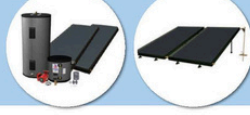
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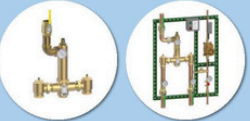
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# Schedule of Meetings

<b>DATE</b>	Topic	Speaker
<b>SEPT 17</b>	Engineering Ethics And Dispute Resolution	Rebecca Bowman
<b>OCT 15</b>	Medical Gas	Niki Patel
<b>NOV 19</b>	Hot Water Recirculation Systems	Engineer Presentation - Chuck Swope (Mueller)
<b>DEC 17</b>	Everything We Do Wrong	Panel – moderator, code reviewer, Contractor, Sr. Engineer
<b>JAN 28</b>	Industry Night	Local UA5
<b>FEB 18</b>	Rainwater Harvesting	Engineer Presentation - Dejan Tadic (Setty)
<b>MAR 11</b>	Communication Skills and Bridging Generational Gaps	Niki Patel and BJ Allen
<b>APR 22</b>	Fire Protection	Ken Isman
<b>MAY 20</b>	Topic TBD	Engineer Presentation - Joe Niedzielski (2RW)

*If you have a specific topic, speaker, or case study you would like to see included in our program, please let us know. Likewise, if you or your firm would be interested in presenting at one of our sessions, we encourage you to share your availability.*