



Gary R. McCarthy
Mayor

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****ATTACHED TESTIMONY EMBARGOED****
****UNTIL THURSDAY AT 11AM****

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PRESS ADVISORY

***Mayor Gary R. McCarthy To Testify Before
United States House of Representatives
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
Subcommittee on Water and the Environment***

WHEN: March 9, 2017

TIME: 10:00 AM

WHAT: Mayor McCarthy will testify before the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's Subcommittee on Water and the Environment. The topic of the hearing is "Building a 21st Century Infrastructure for America: The Role of Federal Agencies in Water Infrastructure." Mayor McCarthy will testify on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Mayors regarding challenges Schenectady and other cities face in modernizing infrastructure.

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**Written Testimony of Schenectady Mayor Gary McCarthy
For The U.S. Conference of Mayors
Before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
Subcommittee on Water and the Environment
Thursday, March 9, 2017**

“Building a 21st Century Infrastructure for America: The Role of Federal Agencies in Water Infrastructure”

INTRODUCTION

My name is Gary McCarthy, I am the Mayor of Schenectady, NY and have served as Mayor since 2011. Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I would like to officially submit my written testimony for the record.

I know the title of this hearing is “Building a 21st Century Infrastructure for America: The Role of Federal Agencies in Water Infrastructure” but I wanted to give a broader overview of the problems communities are facing and the solutions that are needed to move forward.

My city is not atypical of many cities throughout the United States. I have an older, industrial city that has aging and decaying infrastructure.

As a result, I am dealing with brownfield sites and costly consent decrees to deal with our combined and sanitary sewer overflows. And we are also trying to utilize new technology to reinvent and reinvigorate ourselves in order to provide economic and job opportunities for our current and future generations.

As a Mayor, I have to look at the big picture and take my limited budget and balance all the needs of my city including infrastructure, environment and public health, as well as economic development. And I’m here to tell you that it is possible but we need to be smarter in our priorities and investments. We need Congress and the Administration to not take a silo approach and instead, do what Mayors do every day – look at the big picture, figure out your resources, and implement your vision.

I know the T&I committee has jurisdiction over transportation, wastewater, brownfields, ports, and Army Corps issues and I can’t touch on all of these subjects in 5 minutes but I wanted to provide a little sampling of how I, as the Mayor of Schenectady, have had to deal with some of these issues, what my vision is for my city, and what you can do to help make all of our communities better.

History

Schenectady is a city on the rebound. During the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, Schenectady’s population reached approximately 95,000 powered by the growth of GE and of the American Locomotive Company and their

wartime production. But with the end of wartime production, followed by the onset of globalization came the decline of America's industrial centers. Like many industrial cities, Schenectady saw devastating job losses and population decline parallel by increases in poverty. A small city known for innovation saw 25,000 stable and well-paying industrial jobs eliminated and with that came a serious decline in both downtown and City neighborhoods. Today, the City has a third less population than it did at its height. The domino effect was seen everywhere. A bustling downtown known for iconic department stores hollowed out. Those with opportunity moved on either to a new region or to the suburbs, leaving behind the early-century neighborhoods built for multi-generational living. The City's tax base shrunk.

In the past fifteen years, we have stemmed that decline. Working regionally, we unified our economic development efforts and developed public-private partnerships to reinvigorate our downtown. We aggressively tackled our many brownfields to develop shovel ready sites for developers. This year celebrates the 125th anniversary of the founding of General Electric in Schenectady and our relationship with this major employer has never been stronger. The unified economic team has since generated almost \$1 billion of new countywide investment with a revived Arts and Entertainment District at the downtown core, enhanced "smart growth" streets and utilities, and a \$480 million riverfront development that will reopen the Mohawk River waterfront at the former American Locomotive facility where thousands of Schenectady citizens once built trains and tanks that won World War II. The former American Locomotive site was transformed from one of the nation's oldest brownfields into a nearly half a billion-dollar regional economic development project with over 1000 new jobs, in part through the support of the Federal Brownfield Program. This is one of thirteen brownfields throughout Schenectady County that was cleaned up to make way for new development.

Despite these major advancements, we face the continuing challenges of aging infrastructure and regulations that fail to account for our daily progress and changes in situation.

Water and Sewer Infrastructure

The City of Schenectady sewer system dates back over 100 years and until 2014 was considered a combined sewer system that consists of over 320 miles of public storm and sanitary infrastructure with a permitted Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) and 18.5 mgd wastewater treatment plant which services multiple municipalities.

Since 2011, the City has undertaken large amounts of borrowing to upgrade its sewer and water system. From City Fiscal Year (CFY) 2011-2017, the City has borrowed collectively \$42.9 million for sewer and \$9.8 million for water, respectively. The City's sewer debt alone has quadrupled in the past seven years. The total borrowing for the City over seven years for both sewer and water was estimated at \$52.8 million^[1]. A majority of the borrowing went to upgrading the City's sewer and water system pipes, replacing aging and outdated equipment, and rehabilitating our water plant.

A large percentage of the borrowing for sewer—48.0%—came in CFY 2017 where the city recently borrowed approximately \$20.7 million, with majority of the funds going to the city's Waste Water Treatment Plant due to the agreement with the New York State Department of Environment Conservation. Additionally, the city plans to rehabilitate and reconstruct the city's North Ferry Street Pump Station, with an estimated budget of \$6.25 million. Of which, \$3.25 will be financed from city borrowing and \$3.0 million will be awarded from a Community Development Block Grant-DR grant.

During the mid to late 90's, the City of Schenectady embarked on a proactive approach to reduce Inflow/Infiltration (I/I) from within its sanitary sewer collection system to reduce sewage flows being treated at its wastewater treatment plant. As a result of reducing flows from within the sanitary sewer system the City's permitted Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) was re-designated to a Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO). Accordingly, the City was issued an Order on Consent by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and a compliance schedule was negotiated between both parties to eliminate any future discharges of combined overflows from within the system.

In 2017, the City is embarking on a multi-year SSO mitigation project program including \$24 million to eliminate sanitary sewer overflows to the Mohawk River and increase collection system and treatment plant capacity and \$6 million to improve system resiliency to future Mohawk River flooding. This program has the dual benefit of protecting the environment and fostering economic development in a two county area. The City of Schenectady wastewater collection and treatment system serves a regional benefit, providing wastewater services to the City, Village of Scotia, Town of Glenville, portions of the Town of Niskayuna and Rotterdam and the Hamlet of Alplaus Schenectady County and portions of Rexford and Burnt Hills in southwest Saratoga County. This truly regional sewer system crosses multiple municipal boundaries to provide a central wastewater solution that maximizes shared services. This effort also creates the possibility for further consolidation of services and eliminates the need for the other municipalities that are serviced to create their own treatment plant. Many of the upgrades will be at the City's 18.5 million gallon per day (MGD) wastewater treatment plant and will improve operating efficiencies and reduce energy. The upgrades will also result in significant environmental benefits. The project will result in the mitigation of 20 million gallons of annual sanitary sewer overflows to the Mohawk River, elimination of wastewater collection system surcharging and overflows in the vicinity of Erie Boulevard and the Mohawk Harbor Development Site, increased resilience to future Mohawk River flooding, North Ferry Street Pump Station relocation, and a reduction of our electrical consumption and carbon footprint.

This builds on Schenectady's previous efforts, including the installation of a new 711 Kw solar array at the City's reservoir and the construction of a cogeneration plant at the Waste Water Treatment Plant. The 3,029-panel solar array is expected to save the City an estimated \$840,000 over the life of the system, can produce 840,000 kilowatt hours of electricity annually. Additionally, the City's Combined Heat and Power or Cogeneration project was designed to recover heat generated from the engine exhaust and jacket water through a glycol/water plate and frame heat exchanger. The recovered heat provides heat for digester operations as well as building heat resulting in a \$350,000 annual savings and the elimination of 1,883,000 lbs. CO² annually.

Schenectady does not contest the importance of environmental protection efforts and has significantly invested in these projects, but because of the change in our designation, in essence, Schenectady's forward thinking efforts to improve have forced the City to expend even more funds while we are still attempting to recover from the Great Recession and decades of population decline. Our strong local economic recovery has been placed in a precarious situation by this significant burden on the City.

In addition to the tax burden, the consent order required a four to one exchange for new connections. I want to emphasize this point – my city is not allowed to do a new hookup unless I remove four others. This critically limits economic development projects that create the tax base needed to fund such a major infrastructure project. It is totally counterproductive to what we are trying to accomplish of bringing in more jobs and more taxes which would actually help rebuild our older infrastructure.

Schenectady's Smart City Initiative

While we face the burden of traditional infrastructure, we are only scratching the surface of what is possible through smart city technology. Our partnerships with Cisco, GE, National Grid and others have allowed for the installation of roughly 200 smart lights throughout Schenectady. This project provides the opportunity for municipalities such as the City of Schenectady to reduce expenditures while embracing emerging technologies to improve delivery of several key services to our residents. The City of Schenectady has over 5100 HID street lights. Converting HID lighting to Wi-Fi enabled LED Smart Lighting will produce savings, improve maintenance, enhance public safety and public works, empower employees and conserve natural resources while fostering innovation in government and the community.

While one of the main objectives of this project is to reduce energy consumption, emerging technology allows us to use this project as a platform for real change. Data will be collected and disseminated to users allowing educated decisions to be made in countless areas. The savings to the City of Schenectady from pure energy costs can be over \$370,000 / year. Case studies show that other long term cost benefits can be achieved with this technology. We look to evaluate some of these opportunities and quantify the savings that can be derived from them.

The yearly energy savings with a switch to Smart LED is calculated at over 2 million kilowatt-hours of electricity. Greenhouse gas calculators from the EPA show this as a reduction of 1,546 tons of carbon dioxide, equivalent to over 3.3 million miles of passenger car travel saved every year when the entire project is completed. Since dimming is a built-in capability of the Smart Lighting, the potential exists to reduce usage during peak electric use times in order to help prevent brownouts.

Maintenance of lighting has always been performed on a reactive basis, waiting for someone to tell us that a street light is non-functioning. These systems will alert us automatically to a failure or even a knockdown reducing repair times. Video cameras included as part of our scope will allow us to collect analytic data for traffic and pedestrian volumes, vehicle speeds and delay, parking patterns and notifications of parking violators to public safety. Triggers can be set to notify our police department when a vehicle has not been moved for a pre-determined time indicting a disabled vehicle in a roadway or even an abandoned vehicle in our neighborhoods. Sensors will provide additional data on temperature and road conditions assisting our road crews with advance notice on trends most likely to affect our streets.

A Wi-Fi component already deployed on a small scale allows our police department to continuously download in-car video to our secure network reducing downtime of vehicles stagnant at their station. City personnel across several departments including our Code Enforcement staff will be able to access data in order to make informed decisions out in the field instead of wasting time returning to their offices. Police and Fire Department personnel will see housing and building data during emergencies without the need for intervention from others empowering them to respond intelligently to disasters.

Additionally, Internet Access is the primary requirement for connected devices. We would use this network to provide communications between our "Smart Devices" and an open source platform to collect data and perform predictive analytics. Smart Connected Street lighting would be the base plan for deployment as the projected energy savings would help fund some of this project while providing sustainability. Additional devices such as analytic cameras, temperature and motion sensors, traffic monitoring devices and the potential for interconnected health care and other life safety devices deployed on a network of over 5000 street lights provide opportunities to evaluate numerous core

challenges in an urban environment. When we couple this data with information from social service agencies, school district, medical and health care providers and other governmental sources, we can start to look for trends in blighted areas and respond in a proactive way to improve conditions. Having the ability to provide internet access to a segment of the population that currently does not have it would improve the social and economic development of the community.

This 21st Century infrastructure cannot be ignored while we bear the burden of investment in the more traditional infrastructure such as pipes and streets. To do so would be at the City's and nation's long-term peril as we would miss this critical opportunity for economic growth, improved educational outcomes, and long-term efficiency. We find ourselves being passed by other cities throughout the world that are making these investments. To invest in our current infrastructure needs without making these critical advancements dooms cities to long term inefficient maintenance and a continuing cycle of overly burdening taxpayers and stagnating growth.

What Congress Can Do to Help

Of course, we need more resources and tools. Right now, cities spend \$115 billion per year on water and wastewater operations and infrastructure while Congress provides around \$2 billion. We would like Congress to step forward and do more to assist us by increasing the SRF program and making sure the states provide more money in the form of low-interest and zero-interest loans. We also need more tools such as grants, funding under WIFIA, removal of Private Activity Bonds from the state volume cap, and protecting our municipal bonds. Other, more non-traditional ways, that you can help include the following:

1) Pass Integrated Planning/Affordability Legislation (HR 465)

I want to thank Mr. Gibbs and Mr. Chabot for listening to the Mayors' concerns regarding unfunded mandates and affordability concerns and introducing HR 465, The Water Quality Improvement Act of 2017.

I have a letter, signed by the Leadership of the Conference of Mayors, asking for members to cosponsor and pass HR 465 that I've attached to my testimony.

HR 465 would allow local governments, if the affordability levels are triggered, to work with the EPA to develop plans where we can comprehensively deal with the biggest environmental and public health needs first and do it in a way that is more affordable to our citizens.

In my case, my state is the one who I have a consent decree with, and it would be my hope that if Congress would pass this bill, the EPA would start implementing it, and the states would follow suit. If this law was in place, this could potentially help us to develop a plan to address our combined and sanitary sewer systems but do it in a way that wouldn't put as high of a financial burden on low, moderate, and fixed income citizens.

We also may not have had to agree to shut off four hook ups for every new one. We need to work with our federal and state agencies and look at the situation comprehensively. It makes more sense to try to grow our economy and increase our tax base to help pay for the repair work to be done. Because now, we are potentially at a competitive disadvantage when we are competing with other communities to try to attract businesses and new residents.

2) Reauthorize the Brownfields Law

You may ask why reauthorizing and fully funding the Brownfields Law would be listed in a hearing about Building a 21st Century, but the fact is that brownfields are a problem in almost every community in the United States and we should be reusing these properties that already has existing infrastructure in place. By reutilizing and rebuilding these properties, we are recycling and reusing land and hopefully also upgrading existing infrastructure as opposed to continuously building additional infrastructure that also has been maintained.

In addition, some communities are using brownfields redevelopment as a means of creating more green infrastructure in order to help with their stormwater controls. For example, in Philadelphia, they have a comprehensive plan of placing a garden or park within 15 minutes of every household. In some cases, they have redeveloped brownfields to make this a reality. The side benefit is that by creating green spaces throughout the city, they have also created a means of naturally collecting rainwater that doesn't end up in the storm drains thereby decreasing the chances of a sewer overflow. So not only are you beautifying a neighborhood and creating gardens, you are also solving another environmental problem in a more cost effective and sustainable way.

The Conference of Mayors is asking Congress to pass a new brownfields law that contains the following: **Full Funding of the Brownfields Program** –At the current funding levels, EPA only funds (roughly 30 percent) of the applications that make it to headquarters. This program should be fully funded \$250 million or more.

Creation of a Multi-Purpose Grant –The Conference of Mayors would like to see the establishment of a multi-purpose grant. We believe by giving us that flexibility it will make the program even more useful to not only us but our business community as well.

Increase Cleanup Grant Amounts –The Conference of Mayors would like an increase in the funding ceiling for cleanup grants to be \$1 million and in special circumstances, \$2 million.

Allow Reasonable Administrative Costs - Brownfield grant recipients should be allowed to use a small portion of their grant to cover reasonable administrative costs.

Clarify Eligibility of Publicly-Owned Sites Acquired Before 2002 –As long as a local government did not cause or contribute to the contamination of the property but just happened to own the property prior to 2002, when the law was enacted, they should be allowed to apply for EPA funding for that property.

Remove Barriers to Local and State Governments Addressing Mothballed Sites – The Act should exempt local and state government from CERCLA liability if the government unit (a) owns a brownfield as defined by section 101(39); (b) did not cause or contribute to contamination on the property; and (c) exercises due care with regard to any known contamination at the site.

Encouraging Brownfield Cleanups by Good Samaritans – The Act should provide an owner-operator exemption from CERCLA liability for non-liable parties that take cleanup action or contribute funding or other substantial support to the cleanup of a brownfield, in conformance with a federal or state cleanup program, but do not take ownership of that site.

3) Encouraging /Funding New Technology - Digital Platforms

I've already mentioned how Schenectady is utilizing new technology for our above ground systems. However, there are also improvements that can be made below ground. There are some 16,000 sewer utilities, and over 53,000 water utilities in the United States that together serve over 250 million Americans. Three common challenges cities face in providing public water and sewer services include: infrastructure deterioration, sourcing financial support, and compliance issues.

Many communities trying to address one or more of these issues have made the hard choice to raise customer rates; but new information indicates that current water, sewer and flood control costs per household (the rate payer) in a growing number of communities is placing a disparate financial burden on low and middle income households. Thus, local utilities who are expected to provide uninterrupted service in compliance with a myriad of federal mandates are seeking ways to do more, often despite having an unfavorable balance sheet.

The alternatives to traditional utility investments and management have the potential to improve a local utility's financial sustainability. All utilities small and large can improve service through incorporation of modern technology specifically designed to increase efficiencies and reduce or avoid costs.

Yesterday's emerging technologies in municipal water and sewer utilities are now well demonstrated, and they have the potential to dramatically improve the current poor state of financial sustainability in a geographically diverse and fragmented inventory of plants and pipes in American communities.

For example, industry estimates suggest that water loss continues at rates that range between 15% and 30% percent: subsequently utility managers are losing customer revenues, wasting energy and generating collateral carbon dioxide emissions from treatment and distribution of water. One demonstrated technology application that provides managers with the means to correct these problems and leverage additional benefits from technology placement.

For example, medium and large facilities often install Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA systems). SCADA systems can be enhanced by migrating to a digital platform utilizing smart grid technology on a facility scale. Digital technology helps managers apply supporting technologies such as sonar capabilities to detect pipe leaks with great accuracy and lead to quick repairs. Digital systems also work well with automated metering; which, in turn, provides managers with a way to accurately bill for services, communicate such immediate information on water conservation and water safety alerts directly to customers.

Federal water policy can pivot from prosecutorial zeal to a productive partnership if Congress and the Administration take the direction that the federal government should be supporting the renewal of public water and sewer infrastructure in America through new technology. This can be accomplished by providing grants, no- or low-interest loans to economically distressed communities, and by providing more options and incentives for communities to increase private sector involvement.

Conclusion

There is much that Congress and the federal government can do to work in partnership with our nation's cities to upgrade our infrastructure and invest in our future. We need to end this silo approach of handling issues and do what I have to do as a Mayor every day – have a vision for my community and figure out how everything needs to come together in order to make that vision a reality. I thank the Committee for the time today to address you.



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Mayor of Newton
TODD WATSON, Director
DANNY WOLFE

March 3, 2017

The Honorable Bob Gibbs
Former Chairman, House Transportation and Infrastructure
Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC

Dear Former Chairman Gibbs and Members of the House:
We, the leadership of The U.S. Conference of Mayors, want to express our full endorsement and support for H.R. 465, which would codify EPA's Integrated Planning and Financial Capability initiatives, and we ask your House colleagues to join you in your efforts by becoming cosponsors of your bill.

Local governments are at a crossroads when it comes to water and wastewater infrastructure. We spend \$117 billion per year (\$320 million/day) to provide public water and wastewater services while Congress provides approximately \$2 billion per year. This is not nearly enough to maintain and replace our aging infrastructure and meet the numerous federal unfunded mandates that we face.

While we need more financial resources, we also need more common sense approaches. Your bill would allow local governments, who have households who are spending financially burdensome amounts on water and wastewater bills, to work with their state and EPA to implement comprehensive plans that sequence investments with environmental and health priorities.

Your bill would codify what EPA has sent forth in various memorandums and assure that it is a viable tool for local governments in the future. It is imperative that we spend our citizen's limited money resourcefully.

Thank you again for your leadership on this issue and we hope your colleagues join you for this much needed effort. If you have any questions, please contact Judy Sheahan of the Conference staff at [202-861-6775 \(jsheahan@usmayors.org\)](mailto:jsheahan@usmayors.org).

Sincerely,

Mick Cornett
President

Mitch Landrieu
Vice President

Steve Benjamin
2nd Vice-President

cc: Members of the House of Representatives

Paul Priddy
Mayor of Urbana, IL

Sally Burt
Mayor of EASTON PA

John L. Cole
Mayor of Tigard, OR

Tigard, OR
Mayor of

Scott Miller
Mayor of San Jacinto
CALIFORNIA

STOG
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Paula Zelenko
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John D.
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James McElwee
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Mark W. Mitchell
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Ed Rumbalski
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Joseph
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Paul R. Li
Mayor of MADISON, WI

Mark Stodala
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Alan Arakawa
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Chris Billings
Mayor of Elizabeth, NJ

James M. ...
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Frankie Davis
Mayor of Augusta, GA

Richard ...
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Mayor of ...

Karen Freeman-Wilk
Mayor of Gary, IN

...
Mayor of Kansas City, KS

Mh M
Mayor of Frisco, TX

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Mayor of Rochester Hills, MI

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Mayor of Hopedale, N.J.

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Mayor of Graham, OR

Denny Doyle
Mayor of Beaverton, OR

Deborah Johnston

Mayor of *Rialto, Calif.*

Mayor of

Brian C. Wable

Mayor of *Piscataway NJ*

Mayor of

Setti Warren

Mayor of *Newton MA*

Mayor of

Carla L. Pate

Mayor of *Burnsville*

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Don H. ...
Mayor of *Akron, Ohio*

Mayor of

Ray D. Beal
Mayor of *Dubuque, IA*

Mayor of

Alfred ...
Mayor of *Tena, Ohio*

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The following mayors also signed on in support.

Mayor Name	City, State
JEFF WILLIAMS	Arlington, TX
RICHARD KOS	Chicopee, MA
FRANK ORTIS	City of Pembroke Pines , FL
CAROLYN VAUGHN, MAYOR PRO TEM	Corpus Christi, TX
ROCHELLE ROBINSON	Douglasville, GA
CARLO DEMARIA	Everett, MA
LYDIA MIHALIK	Findlay, OH
DOUGLAS ATHAS	Garland, TX
ANDY HAFEN	Henderson, NV
SYLVESTER "SLY" JAMES, JR.	Kansas City, MO
KEN MIYAGISHIMA	Las Cruces, NM
CHRIS BEUTLER	Lincoln, NE
JOHN GILES	Mesa, AZ
GLENN LEWIS	Moore, OK
STEPHEN GAWRON	Muskegon , MI
JILL TECHEL	Napa, CA
CHRIS KOOS	Normal, IL
HARRY LAROSILIERE	Plano, TX
BILL GILLESPIE	Prattville, AL
GARY MCCARTHY	Schenectady, NY
DAVID CONDON	Spokane, WA
FRANCIS SLAY	St. Louis , MO
STEPHANIE MINER	Syracuse, NY
JERI MUOIO	West Palm Beach, FL