

## Optimism for 2012

The end of 2011 brought a mixed bag of responses about where the economy is headed. Some bean counters warned that Europe's continuing fiscal problems would contribute to a double-dip recession in the US, while others noted the lowering unemployment numbers as proof that things are getting better. But you've got to be the man on the street, not a government number cruncher, to know what is happening.

Dealers and manufacturers are finally seeing some small gains and many are hopeful signs of life in the industry are stirring anew. Products are again rolling out; research and development is picking up as well. Is it optimism or are people getting tired of being afraid that things will go south again?

Whatever the reason, the air of positive thinking is breathing over the industry. In one specific example, attendees at the recent NGWA exposition, which is reported in this issue, seemed more optimistic than in recent months. From contractors to well drillers to manufacturers, the sense that it's time to get to back to business is evident. Caution has been exercised to death and success comes with taking chances. With even small signs of a recovery in progress, now is the time to take a very careful look at what opportunities have been created.

Dealers should take note of the recent Christmas sales numbers, because consumers are again willing to spend. For the homeowners, making sure they have safe water for their families is key to their purchase decisions. The news about increased arsenic levels in areas previously not affected can be a prime lead generator, as much as every press release or news story that harps on the failures of US EPA to administer and oversee municipal water systems. Concern, not fear, is a powerful motivator to purchase a beneficial product, and the time is ripe to take advantage of these opportunities.

In this issue, membrane separation and filtration are both covered in Peter Cartwright's article about reverse osmosis membranes. It's informative and thorough and will be a good resource to have on hand for a long time to come. Manufacturers will benefit from Dr. Cang Li's insightful presentation on product certification requirements for the Chinese market. It's opening up rapidly and now's the time to take advantage of the opportunity. Jim Lauria talks about idea mapping, a tool that is gaining traction in many circles. Ideas usually herald innovation, and this article tells you how to manage those ideas more effectively. C.F. 'Chubb' Michaud rounds out the topics with an interesting take on the nature of soil, water and air in filtration processes.

We hope you enjoy this first new issue of the new year and find something you can keep for the future as a reminder or a reference. Remember that WQA Aquatech is approaching rapidly and we look forward to seeing you there!



Kurt C. Peterson  
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