

NSWRD Trustee Wins Statewide Award For Safeguarding Lake Michigan

Tom Swarthout's work on a sewage storage basin earned him recognition from the Illinois Association of Wastewater Agencies.



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Tom Swarthout, a trustee of the North Shore Water Reclamation District, received the IAWA Public Officials Award for his leadership on water protection projects, including a sewage basin to prevent overflows into Lake Michigan. (Courtesy NSWRD)

LAKE FOREST, IL — The Illinois Association of Wastewater Agencies recently recognized Tom Swarthout, a trustee with the North Shore Water Reclamation District, for his work to safeguard the local water supply.

Swarthout, who represents Lake Forest and Lake Bluff on the NSWRD board, was awarded the [IAWA Public Officials Award](#), which honors public servants for their contributions to water protection efforts.

Swarthout has been a trustee with the district since 2012 and has overseen several infrastructure projects, including a long-delayed raw sewage storage basin at Sunrise Beach in Lake Bluff.

The 1-million-gallon basin is designed to prevent sewage overflows into Lake Michigan during system failures or maintenance work. First proposed 20 years ago, the project was completed this fall after Swarthout pushed to keep it on track.

In addition to his work with the water district, Swarthout has previously served as an alderman in Lake Forest and as chairman of the board of directors at Lake Forest Hospital.

At the district, he advocated for financial responsibility and focused on keeping costs down for taxpayers, according to a release announcing the award.

The Illinois Association of Wastewater Agencies represents 57 wastewater agencies across the state responsible for treating more than 80 percent of Illinois' wastewater.

The association was formed 100 years ago as a forum for sanitary district trustees and has since expanded to address modern environmental challenges in wastewater treatment.

The NSWRD operates three major water reclamation facilities in Gurnee, Waukegan, and Highland Park, along with more than 100 miles of sewer lines and 10 pumping stations.

The district serves more than 300,000 people in eastern Lake County, treating wastewater and working to protect Lake Michigan and other local waterways.
