Form 1100-001N (Rev. 10/17)

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resources Board Agenda Item

Item No. 2.A.1.

SUBJECT: Presentation of the 2018 Laboratory of the Year

FOR: February 2018 Board meeting

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Steve Geis - Chief, Certification Services Section

SUMMARY:

The Department annually presents the registered Laboratory of the Year Award to Wisconsin's best registered laboratories for their outstanding commitment to producing high quality data. Registered laboratories perform testing solely on behalf of their own facility or municipality, or a subsidiary or corporation under common ownership or control. There are over 200 registered laboratories that were eligible to win the award this year.

The 2018 Registered Laboratory of the Year Award will be presented to Alliant Energy Edgewater Generating Station.

The nomination paper is included in the attached memorandum.

RECOMMENDATION: Information only

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS (check all that are applicable):

- ☐ Background memo
- ☐ Type name of attachment if applicable
- ☐ Type name of attachment if applicable
- ☐ Type name of attachment if applicable

Approved by	Signature	Date
David Siebert - Director, Environmental Analysis & Sustainability		1/18/18
for Joe Liebau, Acting Administrator		01-19-18
Daniel L. Meyer, Secretary		3-6-18

cc: Board Liaison – AD/8

2018 Wisconsin DNR Registered Laboratory of the Year Instruction and Nomination Forms

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is asking for nominations for registered laboratories that are worthy of receiving the prestigious "Registered Laboratory of the Year (LOY)" award. This award is presented annually* in order to recognize registered laboratories for their outstanding commitment to producing high quality data.

Notes:

- Nominees for the award must be registered laboratories located in the State of Wisconsin.
- Certified laboratories are not eligible and therefore will not be considered.
- Laboratories may be nominated multiple times and can win the award more than once.
- A LOY awards committee will choose the winner.
- Nominations can be made by anyone with the exception that laboratories may not nominate themselves.
- The audit report from the most recent WI DNR laboratory evaluation will be used as part of the nomination package.

Nominating a registered laboratory for the 2018 Laboratory of the Year Award:

1. Complete the Nomination Form presented on the next two pages of this document.
2. Write a summary describing the reasons why you are nominating the laboratory. In the summary, please address the questions asked. Answers to these questions will be used in choosing the winner. Each question may not apply to all labs. If a question does not apply then it does not need to be answered.
3. Please submit the completed Nomination Form to Steve Geis by **December 2, 2017** **to:**

By mail
Wisconsin DNR
Laboratory of the Year Award
c/o Steve Geis
101 S. Webster St.
Madison, WI 53707

By email steven.geis@wisconsin.gov

* The Laboratory Certification and Registration Program reserves the right to decide if awards will be issued or not.

2018 Wisconsin DNR Registered Laboratory of the Year Nomination Form – Lab Data Sheet

Due December 2, 2017

Name of Laboratory	**Alliant Energy Edgewater Generating Station**
Laboratory Manager	**Brian Gollhardt**
Key Laboratory Employees	**Keith DeBlaey, Paula Czekala, Chris Swoverland**
Laboratory Address	**3739 Lakeshore Drive Sheboygan, WI 53081**
Laboratory Phone Number	**920-459-6156**
Nominator (your name)	**Autumn Farrell**
Your Affiliation with Laboratory	**Lab Auditor**
Your Address	**1155 Pilgrim Road Plymouth, WI 53073**
Your Phone Number	**920-400-9191**
Your Email Address	**autumn.farrell@wisconsin.gov**
Is a 1-2 page summary attached that answers the questions asked on the next page?	**Yes**

Nomination Form – Question / Answer sheet for the WDNR 2018 Laboratory of the Year Award:

Please provide an answer for each one of the questions listed below (unless it is not applicable). Specific examples are always helpful.

Limit your reply to these questions to 2 pages

1. Does the lab have a strong, working quality system? [*Discuss what makes that system effective and stand out.*]

   The laboratory's quality system is robust. The lab's Quality Manual is very thorough and contains valuable information beyond the required elements. It allows for all analysts to get a more wholistic understanding of the quality system. The lab's Quality Manual has also allowed me, as an auditor, to gain more information prior to the audit leading to a more effective on-site audit.

   The staff strives to keep the lab clean and orderly at all times. Environmental controls are in place to maintain air quality and constant room temperature. All instruments and equipment were calibrated, all thermometers were traceable to NIST, and all necessary temperatures were logged.

   Another important aspect for this lab is training. For lab staff, initial training includes the completion of the one-year state indentured laboratory technician apprenticeship program. Continued education and training is also provided to ensure continued competence of analytical skills. In addition, one lab technician has attended vocational classes and holds wastewater operator certification with plans being formulated to have all technicians attain certification.

2. How does the lab respond to quality system "failures"? [*Discuss what triggers the lab to take action.*]

3. Does their corrective action program conform to the Plan-Do-Check-Act approach, or something else? [*Describe the lab's model for corrective action and whether it incorporates proactive checks, feeds back to the analysts, and results in continuous improvement.* Please provide an example.]

   If the situation requiring corrective action does not improve as expected, a new corrective action is undertaken and documented. This cycle repeats until the situation is resolved. The corrective action includes logging of previously related issues.

4. Does the quality system consider things beyond failure of quality control samples?

   The lab takes preventive action to avoid quality system issues. For example, the lab will be bringing in a new Oil and Grease manifold to replace their aging manifold and improve lab efficiency.

5. Do they have any unique practices to proactively avoid problems?

6. Do they have any innovative solutions to common lab problems?

   The Edgewater Laboratory has seen reductions in personnel over the last 20 years. In addition to environmental analysis and reporting responsibilities, laboratory personnel are also responsible for operation and maintenance of plant equipment related to boiler water chemistry. To stay proficient, technicians "rotate" through specific work areas on a weekly basis. Therefore, all technicians, at one time or another, face laboratory problems and, as a whole, are able to share methods of resolutions.

7. Is the lab successful because of a single (or small number of) analyst(s), or is it because of a corporate/municipal culture and support system?

When asked about the culture of the lab, the lab responded, "The lab is successful because of enthusiastic attitude, generated not only by genuine interest in the job, but by the support of upper management. It is recognized that work conducted by the laboratory is an integral part of the ability of the plant to operate at all. Technicians and management alike understand that without the ability to meet environmental reporting requirements, the plant will not operate which, in turn, affects the community and customers." During the on-site audit, the lab atmosphere did appear to be collaborative and supportive.

8. Describe the lab's training program for new staff. [*If there was a major staff changeover, is there a sufficient trail of bread crumbs to guide the replacements*?]

In addition to the training mentioned in paragraph 1, there are annual opportunities for the lab staff to attend offsite seminars and on-line webcasts (i.e. training on NR 149 revisions, offsite seminars, and research of latest lab equipment). In the event of a major staff changeover, there are work rules that prohibit a reduction in personnel without a 60-day notice. Also, subcontracts are in place with external certified laboratories which, in an emergency, can provide support.

9. Does the lab communicate with DNR staff when issues/questions arise? Give examples *(check with other LabCert staff members as they may have contact with the lab as well).*

The Master Laboratory Technician, Brian Gollhardt, has communicated with Tom Trainor, Rick Mealy, and myself. A recent example concerned the upcoming rewrite of NR 149 and associated LOD determination changes. Not only is the lab aware of the new MDL procedure, Brain has also traded a number of emails with Tom Trainor and shared a newly formulated spreadsheet (built by laboratory personnel) which satisfies the new requirements. Brian is proactive by contacting the auditors with any questions he has or for asking opinions.

10. Has the lab made significant strides since its last audit? [*Does the lab deserve special consideration for its efforts to improve or overcome difficult circumstances? Give examples.*]

The biggest improvement concerned the inability of maintaining the proper sample temperature in a composite sampler as noted in their 2014 audit report. After researching solutions, the laboratory worked with the plant Environmental Specialist, Management, and Purchasing to budget and procure a new refrigerated sampler and associated sample house. This project was completed within 6 months of the reported deficiency, and to date, no temperature issues have been observed. The lab also tries to incorporate any recommended practices offered by DNR staff.

11. What makes this lab stand out from others?

The lab analysts have combined experience of over 97 years. The ability for the laboratory to provide operational expertise as well as environmental knowledge allows other plant personnel to inquire and gain knowledge of how their daily functions affect the environment in which they live.

The laboratory is well organized and technicians pay careful attention to their work. During the on-site audit, all records and documents were quickly available and organized. The staff asked thoughtful questions and were very open to any required or recommended changes.

Brian has been exceptionally prompt. Communications with Brian have been excellent including responses to all emails within a day. Not only were the audit findings resolved quickly (7

days), he provided solid proof the findings were resolved completely. All previous audit findings were also fully and quickly resolved as mentioned in paragraph 10.

While this lab only performs HEM and TSS analysis for compliance, they meet or exceed all requirements and I am confident if they were to add all analyses that they perform (for internal control) they would still be able to maintain their high level of data quality.