

About the AwwaRF Identity Change

Over the past several months, Awwa Research Foundation (AwwaRF) has been exploring the advantages of an identity change. The change was prompted by the Foundation wanting to better serve subscribers and address challenges that have the ability to significantly impact the health and future of the Foundation.

The single most important factor driving the identity change evaluation was related to the organization's ability to secure funding. AwwaRF has not been granted millions of dollars in funding from the federal government because congressional leaders view the Foundation as the same entity as American Water Works Association (AWWA). One of AWWA's important functions is advocacy, but unfortunately policies and advocacy create political consequences that have cost the Foundation funding, limiting the amount of research we can conduct on behalf of our subscribers.

While AwwaRF is an independent entity from AWWA, the similarity in our names has created confusion, adding to the challenge of obtaining funding outside our subscriber base. Other barriers to outside funding have been that the AwwaRF acronym is unrecognizable to anyone outside the water industry, and the word "association" precludes some potential donors from issuing grants.

AwwaRF needs outside funding to maintain and increase our level of research and ensure the burden for all funding does not rest solely upon our subscribers. We are attempting to keep our subscribers' membership fees reasonable.

For these reasons, the AwwaRF Board of Trustees embarked on a strategic and deliberate evaluation process for an identity/name change. A Board committee made up of representatives from the organizations with which the majority of AwwaRF's subscribers are affiliated conducted and completed an evaluation of name alternatives. The committee made its recommendation to the AwwaRF Board in June 2008, and the Board agreed with the committee's recommendation to change the name of the Foundation to Water Research Foundation, to be formally introduced in 2009.

Not only will the new name help clearly differentiate the Foundation, it will also support the organization's goal of serving the entire water community. The Board believes Water Research Foundation clearly communicates and better describes the mission, vision, and purpose of our organization.

AwwaRF values its relationship with AWWA, AMWA, and NAWC and fully intends to continue collaboration with these organizations on research and the publication of research findings to benefit our subscribers and their customers. Through these strong alliances, we plan to maintain our position as the leading research foundation for the drinking water community. We believe this latest chapter in our history will provide value to our subscribers, regulators, academia, and others who rely upon research to ensure our water is safe.