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**IWSH, UA Local 68 to Launch 'Safer Water for Nome' Pilot Project**

**Washington, D.C. (March 3, 2021)** — The International Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Foundation (IWSH) is excited to announce it will partner with UA Plumbers Local Union 68 in Houston this month to highlight and address water-quality issues in the city of Nome, Texas. The issues, which were aggravated by recent winter storm conditions, originated with damage to the city's water treatment plant during Hurricane Harvey in August 2017. This timely pilot project is inspired by a recent student leadership initiative at nearby Hardin-Jefferson High School that sought to identify local water-quality issues and potential community actions that could address them.

"Safer Water for Nome" will be a two-phase project. In Phase 1, slated to commence this month, 25 journeymen plumbers — nine of whom are contractors — will take training classes with the goal of becoming certified in ASSE 12060/12061: Professional Qualifications Standard for Water Management and Infection Control Risk Assessment for Building Systems. The Houston Area Plumbing Joint Apprenticeship Committee (HAPJAC) will host the training classes with a qualified instructor. Each participant will then take an ASSE International third party-administered certification examination.

In Phase 2, slated to begin next month, the newly certified participants will perform water-quality risk assessment for residents across Nome. Following the risk assessment results, IWSH and UA Local 68 intend to work together, planning and providing corrective measures for a contained group of homes and local public amenities.

"By educating and certifying our contractors and plumbers in water-quality risk-assessment programs, our contractors will lead the way in the southern industry," said Jeremy Pavlich, director of Marketing and Recruiting at Plumbers Local 68. "We can be the go-to option — and help lead the way — so that public, industrial and residential communities have good water-quality programs in place. This will give our area confidence that the plumbing industry is taking proactive measures to better their quality of life.

"IWSH is such a valuable part of this coalition, because of their influence on an international stage, and the attention and resources they can bring to our small community," Pavlich added.

Training Specialist Rich Benkowski and National Recruitment and Outreach Coordinator Laura Ceja, both with the UA Department of Education and Training, have also contributed to the project planning. "Behaviors and techniques learned through the ASSE 12000 certification process deliver a repeatable and reliable method of risk assessment of all piped systems," Ceja said. "This project illustrates a labor/management commitment of time and treasure to defend a community from unwelcome waterborne pathogens. We will also be coordinating tradeswomen and other diverse stakeholders and tradesworkers in the area, providing the expertise necessary to address any water-quality issues that arise."

Pavlich, Benkowski and Ceja will be joined — virtually and in person — by representatives from IWSH and IAPMO Field Services as the nominated group of Texas contractors begins training at HAPJAC. Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, all activities and individual participations will adhere to applicable health and safety protocols as the project progresses.



“Water quality is directly connected to quality of life,” said Jed Scheuermann, IWSH North American program director. “IWSH is thrilled to bring together our local Texas partners, including UA Plumbers Local 68 and Texas Women in Trades. They will be trained to the highest standards and equipped to address long-overlooked concerns, thus improving Nome residents’ water quality, making it better, cleaner and safer.”

Follow IWSH social media channels for updates from the “Safer Water for Nome” pilot project.

Visit [www.plu68.com](http://www.plu68.com) to learn more about UA Plumbers Local Union 68.

Visit [www.iwsh.org](http://www.iwsh.org) for more information on The International Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Foundation.