



H.R. LaBounty Safety Awards Nomination Application

Nomination Deadlines

Spring Awards: February 2, 2026

Fall Awards: September 1, 2026

Agency Name: Walnut Valley Water District

Project/Initiative Title: Hydrant Buddy AMS Assist

Implementation Date: 8/29/2025

Cost to Implement: \$5800

Staff Time Required: 16 hours

Number of Employees/Facilities Impacted: 26

Employee/Department/Committee Nominated

Name(s): Andy Chan, John Shute

Job Title/Department: Andy - Construction Inspection Supervisor; John - Utility Service Lead

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Nomination Summary (Please use an additional page if necessary)

1. Write a brief summary of your project/initiative. Clearly state the problem/hazard recognized by the nominee and the specific reasons that they initiated corrective action (i.e. historical reasons for the problem/hazard).

Field crews can often encounter hard to operate 1.5" – 2" Angle meter stops (AMS), due to age, corrosion, or buildup. Especially when on-call when it is just you alone. When excessive force is applied by hand tools, operators risk personal injury such as shoulder, wrist, or back strain. In addition, applying too much torque can cause damage to the valve, service line, or customer meter connection. This can lead to costly repairs and service interruptions. The hazard was recognized by the nominee when being on-call and needed to operate a seized 2" AMS that needed to be turned off due to a serious water leak. While trying to operate this AMS with standard tools the nominee realized this was creating a musculoskeletal injury hazard for employees, and presents system integrity risk, by over stressing the AMS.

2. Describe the specific actions taken to resolve the problem(s) or challenge(s). Share the best practices that made this initiative successful for the agency and its impact.

To correct this hazard the nominee thought to use the Hydrant Buddy as an assistive device with a fabricated part that can attach to the Hydrant Buddy to operate the AMS. The fabricated portion was designed and built in-house for use with the Hydrant Buddy. This tool will provide controlled torque and leverage, allowing operators to open and close stubborn AMS valves more smoothly and with significantly less physical strain. By incorporating this equipment into field operations, the nominee improved employee safety, reduced the likelihood of equipment damage, and promoted a safer, more efficient method of working with aging infrastructure.

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3. State whether the hazard was reduced with engineering controls, introduced a new administrative or work procedure, or relied on personal protective equipment to solve the problem.

This was an engineering control by introducing mechanical assistance (Hydrant Buddy) to eliminate the need for excessive manual force. Using the part fabricated specifically for AMS manipulation directly addresses the root cause of strain and equipment damage by providing a safer, engineered solution.

4. Describe any extraordinary circumstances that made this nominee's safety accomplishments significant. Describe whether the nominee influenced safety in the workplace, encouraged employee participation in safety efforts, and obtained organizational "buy-in" to implement the solution.

By involving crew members in trials of the Hydrant Buddy and gathering their feedback, the nominee encouraged employees to actively participate in shaping safer work practices. Specific training was also provided for the equipment including use and safe operation.

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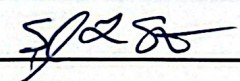
5. Describe whether the project/initiative addressed a hazard or exposure included in the JPIA's Commitment to Excellence Program.

This initiative addresses the Ergonomics/Falls Program. Specifically, the Ergonomics Operations Equipment and Ergonomic Training.

- Office/Field Ergonomics
- Vehicle Operations
- Slip/trip/falls – falls from heights.
- Emergency Readiness/Wildfire Prevention
- Other: _____

6. List and attach any supporting materials you feel are essential for the reviewers to gain a complete picture of the nomination—digital photos, supporting documentation, sample forms, etc.

Nominated by: Dave Rudy Date: 2-23-26

General Manager:  Date: 2/23/2026

Please email this form with supporting documents and digital photos (jpg) to tlofin@acwaipia.com.

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