

# Brighton Water Treatment Plant awarded for providing quality water

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Staff Reporter

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. — During the Seneca Nation of Indians third annual Tribal Utility Summit, the Brighton Reservation received second place in a drinking water contest held at the Seneca Niagara Casino and Hotel from May 15-17.

The summit – a collaborative effort between United South and Eastern Tribes

(USET), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Nashville Area Indian Health Services – is an annual training and networking opportunity for Tribal water, wastewater and solid waste professionals.

This year, the USET Certification Board for Water and Wastewater Operators and Laboratory Analysts hosted the second annual Tribal Drinking Water Contest for USET member facilities. Ten Tribal facilities participated in the contest,

including Tribes from as far north as New York, and the Brighton Reservation was awarded second place. To enter the contest, each Tribe had to submit water samples, which a panel of judges ranked on a scale of one to 10 based on clarity, odor and taste.

Being able to compete with northern states is an accomplishment in itself because of all the challenges Florida faces with their drinking water, said Emran Rahaman, special projects administrator for the Tribe's Public Works Department.

Having top licensed operators, many with 10-plus years of service in the water and wastewater industries dedicated to providing quality water to all Tribal reservations, helped Brighton receive the honor.

"It's the day-to-day operators who take pride in their job to make clean, drinking potable water to provide to their Tribal communities," Rahaman said.

All agreed that the combined efforts within the Tribe's Public Works Department and the Brighton Water Treatment facility operators contributed to the Brighton water facility producing quality water to achieve the recognition.

"Placing second in the USET Drinking Water Contest was a great accomplishment personally, as an operator, and for our entire department," said Rudy Garcia, Brighton Water Plant operator, in an email. "As water operators within the Public Works Department, this is the type of publicity that [rewards] us and we strive for. This accomplishment was only achievable because of our great teamwork and networking within the organization. We look forward to continually providing safe, great-tasting drinking water for the communities we serve."



Photo courtesy of Rudy Garcia

Seminole Tribe of Florida Public Works Department staff accept an award for second place in the annual Tribal Drinking Water Contest. From left, Public Works supervisor Keith Thomas, USET coordinator Scott Williams, Brighton Water Plant operator Rudy Garcia, EPA representative Brian Smith, plant operations manager Juan Mata and special projects administrator Emran Rahaman.