

## Little-known but essential: holiday water workers

CAPE GIRARDEAU, MO — A newspaper in this community focused this year on people in water and wastewater-related jobs to remind readers about those who must work on Christmas and other holidays to keep society's essential systems running.

In a December 24 article, the *Southeast Missourian* interviewed employees of Cape Girardeau's wastewater and water treatment plants and noted that, while their jobs were essential to the community, those jobs typically are "far less visible" than police officers, firefighters, physicians and others who also work on holidays.

Jim Baylor, a Cape Girardeau wastewater plant employee, said in the story that working on Christmas is "not really too bad," and is actually gratifying because he's "keeping the environment safe."

The newspaper said water treatment plant operator Greg Kile would work 12 hours on Christmas Day, testing Mississippi River water coming into the plant and adjusting controls on treatment equipment. The prospect of working on Christmas doesn't bother Kile that much because he is single and has no children, he told a reporter. He took a certain low-key pride in what he does: "When nobody's going to the hospital having a waterborne sickness, that's because I'm doing my job."