

# Alternative Applications

By Adam Kropp

In my previous article, “Ultrafiltration: A Business Growth Opportunity” (September 2013), I referenced a 2010 BBC research report stating that “the U.S. market for ultrafiltration (UF) technologies was worth \$940 million in 2010. It is estimated to be valued at \$1.24 billion by 2015.”<sup>1</sup> Simply put, the business opportunities for UF are growing rapidly, which could prove extremely profitable for the savvy professional water dealer.

The article also made reference to some of the better-known applications for this technology. These include private wells, surface water, boil alert responses, office buildings and specific applications in the food service industry. In this article, I will offer three less common applications that will help you further explore the business opportunities for entering the market with your own portfolio of UF products.

## Emergency Preparedness

Water is one of the key necessities distributed in response to a natural disaster. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommends that 1 gal of water per person per day be supplied for drinking and sanitization purposes, depending on a survivor’s age, physical condition, activity level, diet and climate.<sup>2</sup> However, providing a constant supply



UF systems can provide homeowners security in case of natural disaster, when municipal water sources may be compromised.

of bottled water to these areas over time can become expensive quickly.

After an initial period of governmental support, communities that have survived these tragedies might consider installing a series of UF systems with the capacity to supply a specified geographic region. This series would have the capacity to provide a continuous supply of clean water to the

whole community. In cases where there are power outages, there are some UF systems that can treat water without a power source for a short period of time (varying based on the quality of the feedwater), which will help maintain the much needed supply.

Furthermore, consumers in high-risk areas like the Gulf Coast may be interested in a UF system to help protect against the harmful viruses and bacteria that may contaminate a water source during and after a natural disaster, which also could prove to be a great opportunity for water dealers.

## Health Clubs & Spas

The human body is about 60% water. Blood is 92% water, the brain and muscles are 75% water, and bones are about 22% water.<sup>3</sup> A human can survive for a month or more without eating food, but only a week or so without drinking water. The necessity of water for human health is real. We simply cannot survive without it.

There also are tangible benefits for making water a priority as a part of one’s fitness routine. In her article, “Six Reasons to Drink Water,” Dr. Kathleen M. Zelman, MPH, RD, LD, noted that water should be regarded as a nutrient that helps to:

- Maintain the balance of body fluids;
- Control calories;
- Energize muscles;
- Keep skin looking good;
- Maintain kidney health; and
- Regulate bowel functions.<sup>4</sup>

Given water’s survival and health benefits, fitness clubs and spas can provide value to their patrons by installing a UF system that will supply bottled-quality water to every faucet.

There also is a natural symbiotic relationship between a health facility or spa and the products and services it offers. This can include a meal/nutrition plan that typically involves a recommended supply of eight glasses of water per day. The water dealer’s opportunity here is to help the fitness club or spa proprietor take this point of reference one step further by helping him or her to ensure that the water the facility supplies to its patrons is optimal.

Additionally, the fact that gym

memberships have increased considerably over the past 10 years—rising from 46.4 million in 2003 to more than 52.6 million in 2013—provides the dealer with another rich opportunity to offer UF as a point of differentiation to the fitness club owner.<sup>5</sup> Many consumers look to fitness clubs and spas as their healthy outlets, and this value-add can be a great selling point.

## Rainwater Harvesting

It is no secret that our society is more environmentally conscious than ever before. In fact, the Marist Poll of 2010 reported that more than three-quarters of U.S. residents are eco-friendly in one form or fashion.<sup>6</sup> Some traditional approaches to helping the environment include recycling cardboard, refilling plastic bottles and turning lights off when they are not in use.

There is a growing trend toward rainwater harvesting, however, born out of the need to reuse water in areas that have water usage restrictions due to shortages. This approach has traditionally found a home in the agricultural sector; however, more and more homeowners are installing rain barrels to harvest rainwater to be used for watering gardens, washing cars and more.

According to the American Rainwater Catchment Systems Assn., the average North American household uses approximately 101 gal of water per day for both indoor and outdoor uses.<sup>7</sup> With a proper water treatment system, including UF, this water can be used to help reduce municipal consumption,



UF systems are one method of treating collected rainwater for reuse.

Exploring non-traditional uses for UF technology



Health clubs and spas can benefit from installing UF systems to provide high-quality water to clients.

thereby conserving an otherwise limited resource. Local businesses also can take advantage of this sustainable practice for their everyday water needs. Thus, the dealer can look at UF as an add-on to rainwater reuse initiatives for residents and businesses alike.

### Conclusion

Whether water is necessary for survival, convenience, health or sustainability, the Earth's potable water is an irreplaceable resource. To effectively maintain water quality, a UF system is an ideal solution for both homeowners and businesses. As an alternative to point-of-use systems that can occupy limited space underneath the sink, in the refrigerator or on the countertop, or may require constant monitoring with frequent maintenance to deliver limited amounts of water, a point-of-entry UF system will supply bottled-quality water to every faucet in the building.

There also is a wealth of untapped applications that could provide profitable business opportunities to water dealers who are seeking to expand their businesses and differentiate themselves. With applications like disaster preparedness, health clubs and spas, and rainwater reuse come exciting new possibilities for dealers using UF. *wqp*

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