

## UF/TREEO Center's Training Specialist Team Wins National Award



UF/TREEO Training Specialists: Les O'Brien, CET; Ed Toby, CET and Larry Bäck.

The University of Florida TREEO Center's Training Specialist Team has won the National Environmental Training Association Trainer-of-the-Year Award, announced UF/TREEO Director William Engel, Ph.D, CET. Training Specialist Team members are Leslie (Les) F. O'Brien II, CET, Edward (Ed) M. Toby III, CET and J. Larry Bäck.

“At UF/TREEO, we've known for years that we have some of the best environmental trainers in the country and now they have the national recognition that they deserve,” said Engel, Ph.D. “The Senior Training Specialist Team is the key factor in UF/TREEO's ability to sustain its mission of providing excellence in environmental education and training.”

O'Brien has been instructing backflow prevention and cross-connection control courses in Florida since 1983 and has been responsible for training instructors of backflow prevention tester training programs worldwide in his position as senior training specialist at UF/TREEO. He is a past president of the American Backflow Prevention Association (ABPA) and currently a member of the association's training committee and the public education committee.

Toby has been responsible for the UF/TREEO water and wastewater program for 10 years. He is recognized as a national leader in water and wastewater continuing education training, having received first and second place in the U.S. EPA's nationwide Operations and Maintenance Excellence Award. He is the principle investigator for the U.S. EPA's Biosolids Data Management System training materials development and project manager for the Sequencing Batch Reactor Operations and Troubleshooting statewide training program.

Bäck is the lead instructor in the asbestos program and has been instrumental in the development and implementation of the asbestos and lead training programs at UF/TREEO. Bäck has specialized for the last 12 years in developing site-specific training for asbestos and lead worker activities for large industrial facilities. Bäck is currently president of the Florida Environmental Information Association and has been involved with the EIA since its inception in 1983 as the National Asbestos Council.

NETA is a non-profit international organization of environmental, health and safety, and other technical training professionals. NETA's educational services include support for trainer networking, professional development and competency certification for its members, environmental health and safety training information and programs for industry, and development of training competency standards.

UF/TREEO instructors have been members of NETA since its inception. UF/TREEO Director Bill Engel, Ph.D., CET is a past president of NETA.