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September 24, 2018

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SUBJECT: Emerging Public Works Leaders Program: 2018 PWX Conference Letter

Dear Members of the Executive Committee:

I want to first and foremost thank you for the opportunity to attend the 2018 PXW National Conference in Kansas City! I first joined the Wisconsin APWA Chapter in the fall of 2016, when I attended my first chapter conference. Since then, I have attended all of the chapter conferences and any additional events that I have had the ability to participate in. Following a few conferences, my mentor, Jeff Mazanec, first encouraged me to consider the APWA Emerging Leaders Program. Being new to the chapter, as well as just trying to understand the dynamic of the chapter and members, I postponed applying to the Emerging Leaders Program. While at the 2018 Spring APWA conference in Green Bay, WI, Jeff once again encouraged me to take a look into the program.

With a better idea of the Wisconsin APWA Chapter dynamic, I found myself growing within the Wisconsin Chapter. I continued meeting so many new individuals and developing professional and personal relationships with numerous people. As my interest in the Wisconsin APWA Chapter grew, I decided I was going to research the Emerging Leaders Program, apply, and continue to grow within this APWA organization.

When I found out I was selected to attend the 2018 PWX National Conference as part of the Emerging Leaders Program, I was ecstatic! Prior to departing for the National conference, I heard nothing but good things about the conference and picked up as many pointers and tricks as possible before I departed. After attending and experiencing the 2018 PWX National Conference, I found the event itself was nothing short of spectacular. The organization was amazing. The City was beautiful and the events and entertainment it provided were jaw dropping. The topics covered at the conference were intriguing and current with today's thoughts, issues, and goals. Below are some of my favorite topics and events from the 2018 PWX National Conference.

Opening and Closing Sessions:

Prior to attending the conference, my mentor, Jeff Mazanec, had informed me of the opening sessions and how powerful they have been in the past. The opening presentation by Thom Singer, now past President Bo Mills, and now current President David Lawry was amazing. Thom was an excellent keynote speaker and I enjoyed his

upbeat personality. I enjoyed his craft so much, that I attended two of his general session presentations. At Thom’s presentations, I was able to detach and reflect on my current leadership managing skills. It was amazing to see how a slight change in a leadership approach would have a cascade of positive growth within an organization and team members. I was able to focus more on what I enjoyed about respected leaders within our industry. I have begun to implement some of those thoughts or ideas in my own leadership approach.

The opening and closing presentations were some of my favorite events at the conference. I attended “The Power of Purpose”, “Cleared Hot! You Have Permission to Engage”, and “The One & the Nine” presentations. All three sessions were amazing and powerful. I found myself completely engaged and inspired by the end of each one.

Each session gave me the ability to really think about myself and my current position professionally and personally. I found myself questioning how we could collaborate as consultants, clients, and contractors within the industry to help improve each other and then provide the very best for the public. I am still working on that answer, but I found myself open to various questions, similar to that.

General Session Experience

This was the tough part of the conference. There were so many interesting sessions that it was almost impossible to have a time slot down to just two sessions to choose from. I found myself selecting two or more sessions that I was interested in, which overlapped each other. More often than not, I was making a last minute decision on which session I would attend. Based on my experience, I chose all the sessions that I really wanted to see. I have already taken some key notes back to the office and I have started using techniques in my current projects.

The technical presentations were all different and covered various topics that I got the most out of. My favorite technical topic was about sanitary and storm sewer systems and how flow monitoring can be a huge asset in understanding flooding and backup issues in a sewer system, as well as helping provide an efficient and effective design solution to these issues. However, the leadership sessions, were the most compelling when thinking of the basic general sessions.

I really enjoyed the panel discussion session with leaders like now past President Bo Mills, Elizabeth Treadway, Diane Linderman, Risha Rushton, and James Patterson. The session was more of a question and answer approach. I liked the laid back methodology and hearing the success and issues of individuals all over the world. It was great to hear about their leadership experience and very interesting as each would address past leadership issues. It was also great to hear the mindset from a male and female point of view. It always is amazing how one leadership approach can work with a certain

mindset, while that same approach will cripple a team with a completely different mindset.

I was impressed with all the topics presented at the conference. I thought that each topic expressed the challenges and concerns of today's world and it was wonderful to see how others are approaching the situation.

Exposition Experience

The exposition was wonderful. At the opening session, Bo Mills mentioned the Expo setup and how fantastic it was. After seeing it with my own eyes, I could not agree with more. I was blown away by all the vendors and exhibits. I attended as many Expo sessions as my schedule allowed. I enjoyed the brief presentation of the Expo exhibits on various products and tools, which helped change the pace around from some of the longer general sessions. I even took some of that knowledge and experience back to some of our municipal clients to see if they could benefit from some of the asset management software and products.

One exhibit that really caught my eye was the CASE Construction Equipment exhibit. They had a virtual reality Excavator that people could sit in and get a real life experience operating an Excavator. I have always wanted to operate an Excavator and thought that this virtual exhibit was definitely something I would love to do. Unfortunately, every time I stopped by the exhibit to see if I could harness my inner excavator, the display was occupied and I had to attend the next session. Hopefully next time I will get a chance!

First Timers Breakfast and Diversity Brunch

The First Timers Breakfast was so helpful. They introduced the PWX app feature, which made the entire experience enjoyable. The app eliminated any wasted time for a first timer. I was able to access the convention center exhibit map, which helped me find all the sessions I was interested in. I was able to keep my schedule set and modify on the fly if I so chose. The detailed information on each presentation was very helpful and allowed me to select which sessions I decided to attend. Lastly, the mobile feature for logging PDH's and being able to do mobile surveys was easy and efficient. At the First Timers Breakfast, I also enjoyed the small social participation events that were done to help break the ice with everyone and I also got to meet a good group of people.

The Diversity Brunch was also interesting and powerful. Sara Taylor presented at the Brunch, which covered the current culture we deal with and how individuals react and respond to questions and actions based on stereotypical culture, thoughts, and patterns. It was so amazing how culture can play a role in an individual's subconscious decision making skills. The examples and exercises we did during the presentation were wonderful and to the point. One example that really stood out was Sara's response that

a gentleman saw the Holocaust in a cartoon painting, which I could not imagine seeing in a million years. Sara explained that later in the presentation, the gentleman realized that he saw a note on his calendar indicating it was International Holocaust Remembrance Day in 3 weeks, which sparked his subconscious answer of what he saw in the painting and not even realizing where it came from.

I have taken pointers from Sara's presentation and try to understand the mindset of individuals prior to meetings, interviews, and any form of person to person contact. I have been successful at understanding how some individuals see decisions and results from their point of view based on stereotypical culture. Some do not even realize how their mindset of culture can affect them. This presentation has helped me professionally and personally.

Social Events

I attended the Get Acquainted Party and Wisconsin Chapter Dinner as part of the conference as well as the Young Professionals and other chapter parties. All events were well organized and fun! The Get Acquainted Party was really cool with the Power and Lights District. The live band was very good and the food was delicious. I enjoyed conversations with some fellow Wisconsin Chapter members at the Get Acquainted Party.

Following the Get Acquainted Party, we found ourselves attending numerous parties around the area. We attended the Young Professionals and Chicago Chapter's party. I got to meet now new President David Lawry and had a brief conversation with him. I also met the next Canadian (CPWA) president and his wife. I had a lengthy conversation with the both of them. The one thing that interested me about the CPWA future President was that he was a contractor in the profession. It was great hearing his thoughts and views as a contractor compared to my engineering point of view.

The Wisconsin Chapter dinner was fantastic! The company and food were amazing. I had the pleasure of meeting additional members from the Wisconsin Chapter, which I have only seen at past Chapter conferences, or met briefly. Following the Wisconsin Chapter dinner, I met up with some of the members from our table to continue our discussion and get to know each of them a little more.

Relationships

The PWX conference did a great job getting everyone to feel comfortable, whether someone was a first timer, or attending for their 20th year. All speakers really made it a point to understand that everyone is in the same boat and getting past those first initial sentences could result in a lifelong relationship. I felt welcomed the entire conference

and met a variety of people. Some I have already followed up with via email on specific topics we discussed at various general sessions.

PXW Conference Experience Overall

From start to finish, the 2018 PWX Conference was amazing! I truly enjoyed every second I had there. The opening and closing presentations were great. The session topics and involvement were eye opening. The social events were fantastic in getting everyone acquainted and having a great time.

I truly appreciate the opportunity I was given to attend the 2018 PWX Conference! I hope to be able to attend more PWX conferences in the future. I have nothing but praise for this association. This is the first association that I do not feel like just a number.

I have met so many individuals on a professional level, but also on a personal level. I truly enjoy the personal side of this association. To me, everyone in the association is not just another consultant, client, or contractor. They are a support system, mentor, and friend, which is how I have been treated since joining the Wisconsin Chapter. I appreciate everything this association has provide me with in the short amount of time I have been part of it and I look forward to future conferences and opportunities within the APWA association.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. M. Komorowski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Joseph M. Komorowski, P.E.
Project Engineer