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PRESIDENT'S CORNER: WINTER EDITION

Shelly Billingsley

As winter grips our communities, Public Works departments take center stage, tirelessly working to keep roads clear, utilities functional, and neighborhoods safe. Winter maintenance is no small feat, involving snow plowing, salting, equipment upkeep and emergency responses to winter storms. At the same time, there is an undercurrent of preparation for the spring construction season – a demanding cycle that requires detailed planning, resource allocation and a commitment to our communities.

Winter maintenance is an essential operation that often goes unnoticed until a storm hits, or the roads become treacherous. Teams work around the clock to plow streets, apply de-icing treatments, and repair damage caused by freezing temperatures. The work is relentless, and the conditions are often harsh with freezing winds, long hours, and ever-present risk of equipment breakdowns.

Yet the commitment of Public Works teams to ensure that schools can open, businesses can operate, and emergency services can reach those in need is remarkable. This level of dedication deserves recognition, as it underscores the importance of the work these teams perform to keep our communities functioning.

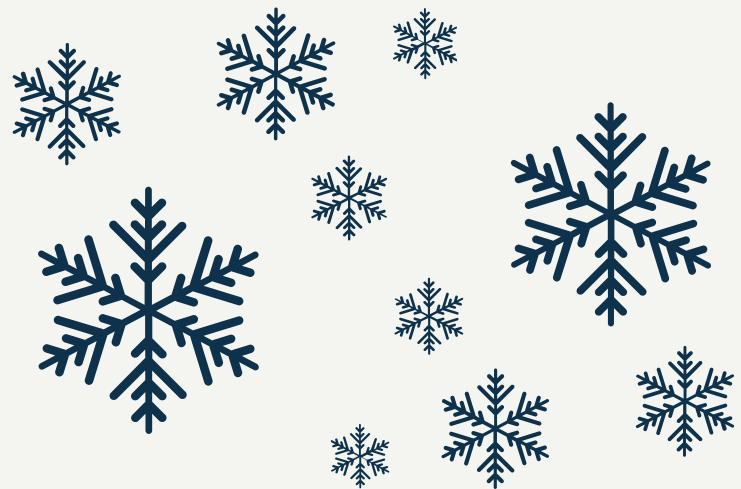
Even as the snow falls, planning for spring construction is already underway. With project prioritization, budget allocations, logistics and staffing all being performed. This forward-thinking approach ensures that once the snow melts, the groundwork is laid for a productive construction season.

The transition between winter maintenance and spring construction is more than just a logistical challenge, it's a test of resilience and morale. The physical and emotional toll of winter operations can lead to burnout, making it crucial for teams to recharge and reset. Positivity and renewed energy can make all the difference. So, we all need to remember to celebrate the small wins, encourage rest and recovery, foster team spirit and engage the community.

Public Works is a cornerstone of community well-being, but its success relies on collaboration with the public. This year my hope for all of Wisconsin Chapter APWA communities is to have residents that drive cautiously during winter storms and in construction zones, report issues like potholes and blocked drains to help us prioritize repairs and support our Public Works teams with patience and gratitude.

As we move forward into another year, let's remember the value of Public Works and the dedication of those who keep our communities running smoothly. With a little effort, energy, and optimism we can tackle winter's challenges & spring's opportunities together. Hope to see you at the Spring Conference for more collaboration and networking.

Hope you all had a Great Holiday Season and a Great New Year!



SAVE THE DATE: 2025 SPRING CONFERENCE

Eric Dundee

Mark your calendars for the APWA Wisconsin Chapter Spring Conference! Hosted in collaboration with the Stevens Point Public Works & Engineering department, we expect to see a great turnout between vendors, speakers, and attendees.

When: April 30th - May 2nd

Where: Sentry World, Stevens Point

What to expect: Equipment Rodeo, golf outing, educational sessions, the annual awards banquet, & more!

View the entire [conference program](#) and [register online](#) using the Whova website. **Early bird registration** ends at midnight on Friday, April 18th, so be sure to register soon!

Consider joining some of the special event offerings while you're at the conference! Some notable happenings include:

Wednesday, April 30th: Golf outing at Indianhead Golf Course in Mosinee, bike ride, technical tour, & get acquainted party

Thursday, May 1st: Exhibitor show & rodeo, educational sessions, & awards banquet

Friday, May 3: More educational sessions, chapter business meeting, lunch, & door prize drawing

A big thanks to conference chairs Chris Johnson, Eric Dundee, and Rick Eilertson for pulling together what is sure to be a fun, informative, and all around great time!

For more information, contact Eric Dundee by phone at 608-709-1867 or by email at ericd@madsewer.org.



SAVE THE DATE: YOUNG PROFESSIONALS EVENING SOCIAL

Join the Wisconsin chapter's young professionals club at the Milwaukee Admirals hockey game on March 7! The evening is being held in collaboration with the Chicago chapter, so it's sure to be an evening filled with great conversation and some fun networking!

More information to come soon. Be sure to check the [APWA website](#) for more details and ticketing information!

2024 EMERGING LEADERS CLASS & THEIR TIME AT PWX

Christian Moring, Project Manager at Stantec Consulting Services in Cottage Grove, and Heidi Jeninga, Project Engineer with Ruekert-Mielke in Madison, were both selected to represent the Wisconsin Chapter for the 2024 Emerging Leaders Program.

Both Christian and Heidi attended the 2024 PWX in Atlanta, Georgia and participated in a variety of activities like networking and educational sessions, all while meeting other public works professionals around the country.

Christian and Heidi both attended the young professionals summit, where they were given the opportunity to learn from struggles and successes in the field and meet other professionals from the Midwest.

Overall, Christian and Heidi both learned so much from their first time at PWX, and they can't wait to go back! Thanks to members of the Wisconsin chapter for giving them this amazing opportunity!

A TRIBUTE TO NANCY CAVANAUGH

Scott Brandmeier & Rick Eilertson

This past November, we learned that Nancy Cavanaugh, former newsletter editor for the APWA Wisconsin Chapter, had passed away in October.

Nancy Cavanaugh (1948-2024) was born in DeKalb, Illinois and raised in Racine, Wisconsin. After graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee with a B.S. in Secondary Education (magna cum laude) and an M.S. in History (cum laude), she answered the “call of the wild entrepreneur” and started her business, Cavanaugh Ink, in 1982.



Nancy Cavanaugh, 2010

Many of you will remember Nancy as the Chapter's newsletter editor, who served in that role from 1997-2023, for a total of 26 years. In our various interactions with

Nancy, we learned that she became aware of the newsletter editor role through a former APWA Wisconsin Chapter president, John Curtis, whom she met while doing newsletter work for their church.

Nancy willingly took on the role of newsletter editor for the organization and was a voracious advocate for all things public works. Bill Kappel, former Chapter President and Director of Public Works for the City of Wauwatosa, summarized Nancy's work beautifully:

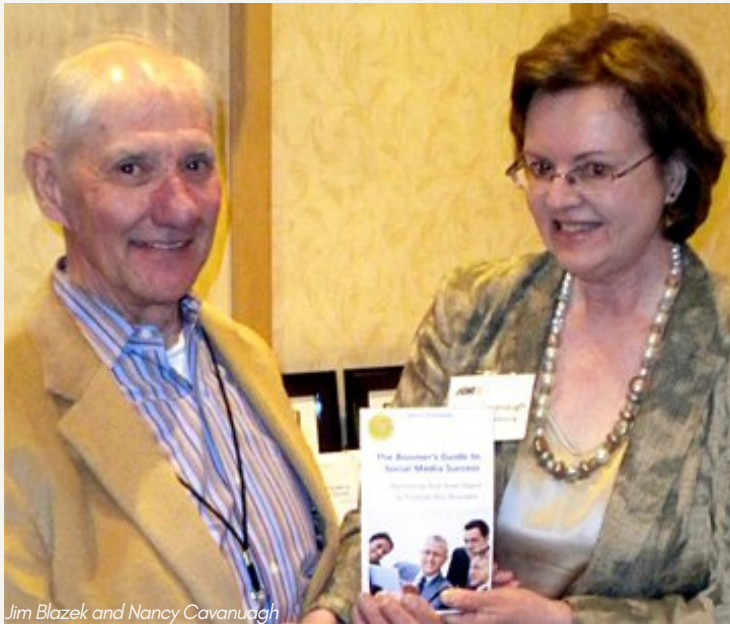
“She brought us from a black and white paper edition all the way to today's full color web version. While not the only newsletter she worked on, the Wisconsin Chapter's newsletter was one she spent a lot of time and effort on, and always got it right.”



In fact, Nancy was quite persistent in reaching out to committee heads and members of the executive committee on a regular basis to obtain articles and made sure that each article was well written. If there weren't enough articles for the quarterly newsletter, Nancy would take it upon herself to write some; these would include topics such as recent legislation affecting public works or large construction projects that would have an impact on communities.

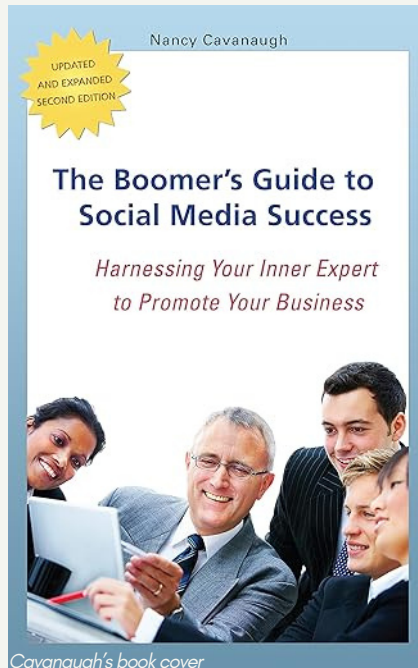
In 2010, Nancy wrote and published *The Boomer's Guide to Social Media Success: Harnessing Your Inner Expert to Promote Your Business*. She gave a presentation about the book at the Wisconsin Chapter's 2011 Spring Conference.

Nancy is pictured below with Jim Blazek, 1985 APWA Wisconsin Chapter President, retired City of Racine City Engineer, and creator of Sidney Cleenstreet. Nancy utilized numerous Sidney Cleenstreet cartoons during her time as editor.



Unfortunately, Nancy suffered a stroke a couple of years ago that began to affect her editing capabilities. In conversations with Nancy, she continued to have a deep and undying passion for our organization, but realized it was time to step away from her role to focus on her health.

It was refreshing to experience someone who, in spite of their failing health, sought to be the best for our organization. For this reason, and for her nearly 30 years of service to the organization, the chapter recognized her with the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2024.



We dare say that her dedication and passion to the public works profession was darn near second to none.

With deepest sympathies to her friends and family, we will miss you Nancy.

EXCELLENCE IN SNOW & ICE AWARD SPOTLIGHT

Jen Barlas

The APWA Wisconsin Chapter is pleased to announce the first awards for Excellence in Snow and Ice Control in many years. In collaboration with Allison Madison of Wisconsin Salt Wise, we developed a scoring rubric to match the National APWA awards criteria. She helped coordinate judges and compiled the scores. This would not have been a success without Allison's efforts!

The scoring was in Materials and Handling, Equipment, Training, Community Outreach, Technical, Environmental, Post-Storm Tracking and Evaluations, and Leadership. To recognize the differences between agencies, we categorized the applications based on population served: 0 – 10,000, 10,001 – 25,000, and 25,001 +.

We had a total of 5 submissions: 2 each in the lowest and highest population categories and one in the middle category.

TOWN OF LINN

The winner in the under 10,000 category was Town of Linn. Street Superintendent Matt Wittum has been a champion in Snow and Ice Control. Since 2018 he has converted his plows to liquid capability to pre-wet the salt. He has begun anti-icing programs and has improved the spinners to get a more even distribution of salt.

He has an extensive training program and community outreach. Prior to 2019, they would apply over 2,000 tons of material, but the last three years have averaged 680 tons or approximately 1/3 the material they used to use. He has also shared his experience with other communities by publishing articles in APWA Reporter and others.

VILLAGE OF PADDOCK LAKE

The Village of Paddock Lake was a close second in the under 10,000 category. Village Administrator Tim Popanda developed a Chloride Reduction Plan to reduce salt use and chloride infiltration into the lake and sanitary systems. They use recycled brine from the High School's water softener. All vehicles are equipped with pavement temperature sensors and ground speed control. 75% of the vehicles are liquid capable. They do extensive pre-season training with a mentoring process. The Village website and Newsletter are great tools for Community Outreach to reduce chlorides. They have reduced de-icing agents applied to south facing streets by 24%. They have been a local leader in snow and ice control sharing their chloride reduction techniques with many groups.

CITY OF WISCONSIN RAPIDS

The City of Wisconsin Rapids was the only submission in the 10,001 – 25,000 category. Public Works Supervisor Cody Knutson is the driver behind their success. In 2017 they purchased the first prewet system. In 2018 they equipped their supervisor vehicles with pavement temperature sensors. In 2023 they installed a liquid deicing system on one vehicle – spraying under 9,000 gallons of salt brine. They conduct training of crew members and send supervisors to Salt Wise and other training courses. They use their website and social media to keep the public informed and decorate equipment to ride in City parades.

WALWORTH COUNTY

Walworth County was the winner in the over 25,000 category. Deputy Highway Commissioner Parry Pierce provided a look into a model operation. In July 2023, Walworth County became an accredited agency with APWA. All 36 pieces of equipment are liquid capable and have pavement temperature sensors and ground speed control. Nearly 70% have brine tanks for spraying and the rest of the trucks have tanks for pre-wetting the salt before application. They have extensive pre-season training and host Salt Wise training for local agencies. They host quarterly meetings with municipal agencies for cross-training. They use cameras with sensors to determine conditions around the County. Over the past five years Walworth County has reduced salt usage by 40%.

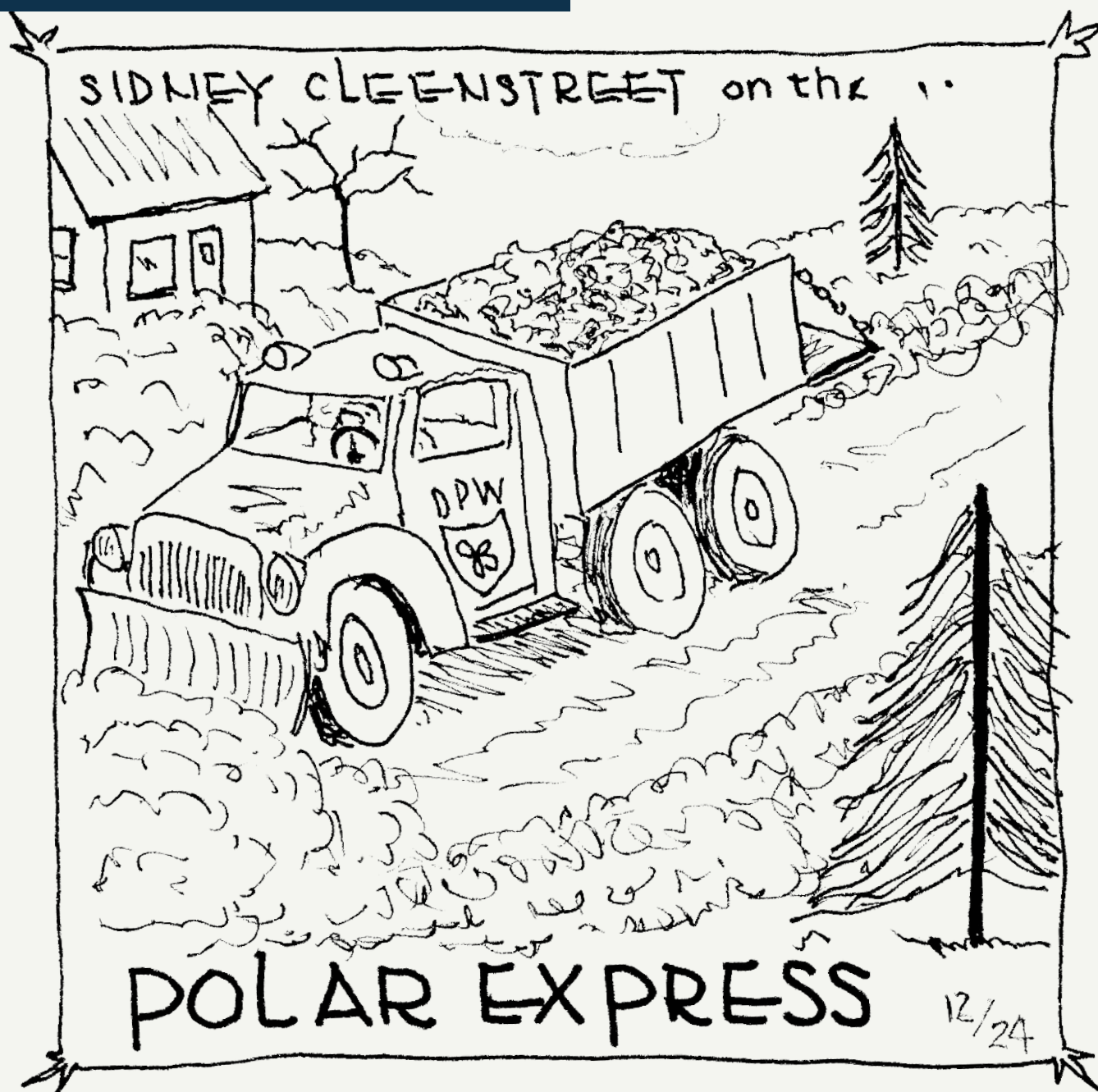
LA CROSSE COUNTY

La Crosse County came in a close second place in the over 25,000 category. Highway Commissioner Joe Langeberg told us of their efforts in Snow and Ice Control. They use 5 locations for their materials including salt, sand, brine and deicers. They have dedicated equipment for State roads and others for County roads. All have pavement temperature sensors and ground speed control. They also have AVL/GPS in all equipment. 50% have anti-icing capability. They have improved and standardized their training, including pre-season training. They use website and social media for outreach and attend many local events. They have been a regional resource for Counties and Municipalities, plus they hosted a Salt-Wise open house in fall 2024.

If you were a runner-up to this award, please consider submitting again in 2026! We look forward to continuing the tradition of this great award!

SIDNEY CLEENSTREET: THE POLAR EXPRESS

Jim Blazek



WISCONSIN SALT WISE & WINTER SALT WEEK 2025

January 27-31 is Winter Salt Awareness Week! It is a collaboration of both private and public organizations around the United States & Canada. The goal of this week-long event is to raise awareness about salt pollution & reduction solutions.

Winter salt use, while necessary, has the potential to damage infrastructure and threatens the health of fresh water sources like lakes, streams, and tap water.

Hosted by Wisconsin Salt Wise, Winter Salt Week partners with state and regional partners to present seminars, panels, and local events to promote the implementation of smart salting. Be sure to check out the [schedule of events!](#)

Additionally, Wisconsin Salt Wise continues to host its Wednesday webinars. These events happen via YouTube livestream and feature private contractors, facility managers, and more. Register in advance in order to receive more information about the event and a link directly to the livestream! Upcoming webinars include:

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE RESOURCES FEBRUARY 5TH

Everyone involved in winter snow-fighting understands the importance of a reliable forecast. Before and during events, Kurt and his team at the National Weather Service provide LIVE winter weather briefings that are an excellent (and free!) resource for Wisconsin municipalities. You can also sign up to get hazardous weather emails. Learn more about what's available and get your weather questions answered.

SALT WISE STORIES: CITY OF GLENDALE MARCH 12TH

Late 2021, the City of Glendale's Streets Department purchased a retired tanker truck from their fire department. With some trial and error, they converted it into a brine unit for anti-icing and direct liquid applications. Since then, they have continued to improve the system's performance in the winter months. In the summer, they rinse out the tank and utilize it to water municipal planters and newly planted trees. Ricky Neth, Glendale's mechanic, had the creative vision for this project and the know-how and persistence to see it through. Listen to his story and get inspired to take the next step at your agency.

Hope to see you soon at one (or more!) of these events! For general questions or more information, reach out directly via email at wisaltwise@gmail.com.

UPCOMING PUBLIC WORKS CLASSES

The Local Technical Assistance Program (formerly the Transportation Information Center) provides training, technical materials, and assistance to local agencies in Wisconsin and is part of the National Local Technical Assistance Program. LTAP is operated by the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is sponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.

PUBLIC WORKS SUPERVISORY ACADEMY CERTIFICATE (PWSA)

Offered in cooperation with APWA Wisconsin Chapter, this certificate is composed of 9, one day courses, for 54 class hours in total. By earning this certificate, you have the opportunity to learn more about and practice basic supervision and leadership skills in local public works organizations. You may enroll in individual classes without enrolling in the Academy or the Institute. Students may take Academy and Institute courses in any order, but the capstone course cannot be taken until all other courses have been completed. No academic experience is required to participate in either program.

PUBLIC WORKS MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE CERTIFICATE (PWMI)

This certificate is composed of 90 class hours total, including 9 PWSA courses plus an additional 36 class hours that focus on more advanced management-oriented courses. The PWMI is an APWA approved Public Works Institute. To enroll, or get additional details about these programs, visit [our website](#).

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

Basic Management for Public Works Supervisors

When: February 25

Where: Fond Du Lac, WI

(PWSA) Examine the supervisor's role in meeting safety compliance requirements, investigating and solving safety issues, and building a safety-conscious organization.

Improving Communication Skills

When: March 13

Where: Fond Du Lac, WI

(PWSA) Learn how to identify communication issues and their impact, how to conduct effective meetings, and write basic business memos, work orders, email messages, and reports.

Management Assessment for Personal Planning

When: March 19-20

Where: Online

(PWSA) This course uses the DiSC assessment to boost self awareness and explore how personality and behavior impact our interactions. Learn to see things from different perspectives and leverage these insights to create powerful synergies in your team.

Fundamentals of Public Works Operations

When: March 26 & April 2

Where: Fond Du Lac, WI

(PWMI) Focus on managing the range of services in a public works department, including current operational issues. Each student will make a short presentation and lead a relevant public works operations topic that they identify during the course.

Customer Service in Public Works

When: April 15-22

Where: Online

(PWSA) Learn how to listen and respond to provide better customer service and reduce unrealistic expectations. Learn effective ways to lead angry citizens away from confrontation towards cooperation.

Fearless Performance Management

When: April 25

Where: Online

(PWMI) Your company's success depends on the commitment of every member of your team. This class presents a model for managing employee performance and provides you with specific tools you can use to set goals, document and manage performance, maintain ongoing communication, conduct performance reviews, and develop improvement plans.

Human Resources Basics for the Non-HR Professional

When: April 29

Where: Madison, WI

(PWSA) This class provides an overview for business owners or managers of a small business without a dedicated human resources expert.

Budgeting for Public Works

When: May 8

Where: Fond Du Lac, WI

(PWMI) Learn to prepare and analyze an operating budget and explore several alternative budget formats and their respective strengths and weaknesses. Review capital fund budgeting, including asset leasing and purchasing pools.

Municipal Engineering Fundamentals for Non-Engineers

When: May 20-21
Where: Madison, WI

(PWMI) In this course, you will learn about key municipal engineering systems and about the concepts and methods used to design, operate, and maintain streets, water supply, sanitary sewer, and storm drainage systems. You will also get the answers to some essential questions you must ask yourself and your team prior to designing any municipal system.

Earn Continuing Education Credit

By participating in spring 2025 courses, you can earn up to 6 professional development hours or 0.6 continuing education units per course!

BY THE WAY... MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE 2025 FALL CONFERENCE!
Eric Dundee

Where: University of Wisconsin-Platteville!
When: October 29-October 31, 2025

This conference will take us back to UW-Platteville after a successful conference a few years ago. We will again emphasize student and faculty interaction.

**APWA WISCONSIN CHAPTER
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JULY 2024 - JUNE 2025

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