

JANUARY 2026

# NEWSLETTER

WISCONSIN CHAPTER APWA



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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER



**Chapter President**  
**Rick Eilertson—AECOM**  
**Member since 2002**

As my presidency has now reached its halfway point, I'm enjoying reflecting back on the wonderful activities that the Chapter has provided so far during my term:

- 6th Annual Brewers/Cubs Game (July 30)
- APWA WI 2025 Summer Scholarship Golf Outing (Aug. 12) raised \$4,200 for scholarships
- APWA WI Snow Plow Roadeo (Aug. 14)
- Snow Plow Roadeo Community Engagement Event (Shovel More, Salt Less) (Aug. 14)
- Free bus tickets for front line PW staff to attend PWX in Chicago (Aug. 18)
- Sponsorship of Happy Hour Event at PWX (Aug. 18)
- Chapter Dinner Banquet (Aug. 19)
- APWA WI Chapter receives the 2025 Presidential Acknowledgement for Chapter Excellence (PACE) (Aug. 20)
- Truck 'N Treat Event (Oct. 29) including 12 booths with volunteers handing out candy and stickers to over 200 children and their parents/guardians.



*Rick Eilertson handing out candy and Public Works stickers on Oct. 29<sup>th</sup>*

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER (Continued from Page 1)

- Fall 2025 APWA WI Conference in Platteville (Oct. 29-31)
- Scholarships Awarded to 13 Students (Oct. 30)
- Notified 4 Wisconsin Awardees for winning the 2026 APWA WI Chapter Snow and Ice Control Awards. These applications were also sent to APWA for consideration in the International Award program.

### Community Engagement

Out of all of these activities, the three that stand out the most for me have been the Community Engagement Events:

1. The "Shovel More, Salt Less" Walking Tour with the Fox Valley Technical College Day Care Program at the APWA WI Snow Plow Rodeo in Appleton,
2. The Truck 'N Treat Event at the Fall 2025 APWA WI Conference in Platteville, and
3. The UW-Platteville Senior Design Capstone presentations.

It was wonderful seeing all the smiles from the children and college students at these events and witnessing all the Chapter members who volunteered their time to make these events successful in engaging young people in the Public Works profession.

Events like this give me hope that we in the Public Works sector can strive to be seen as a fun and integral part of our community fabric. I encourage everyone reading this newsletter to think about ways you can integrate enthusiasm about the work you do in your community and share your stories with me and our Community Engagement Task Force/Committee members. I'd love us to be able to add content to our web site and/or future newsletters about the community activities that our Chapter members are engaging in throughout the state.

### Looking for the Helpers (Volunteerism and Member Award Nominations)

In the [July 2025 APWA WI Newsletter](#), I referred to the story that Fred Rogers (aka "Mr. Rogers") often told this story about when he was a boy and would see scary things on the news: "My mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.' To this day, especially in times of disaster, I remember my mother's words, and I am always comforted by realizing that there are still so many helpers — so many caring people in this world."

Having now served as either an APWA WI Chapter Committee Chair or Executive Committee member for the last 20 years, I've had the chance to witness numerous chapter members who've volunteered an inordinate amount of time and effort into making this Chapter so impactful and successful. I encourage you to consider the following ways that you can contribute to continuing this wonderful tradition:

Get involved with one or more of the [APWA Wisconsin Chapter Committees](#). This is a great way to build your resume, advance into Chapter leadership, and give back to the public works profession.

Provide suggestions to me and/or other Executive Committee members for up-and-coming members to serve as Chapter Leaders, and

Nominate a deserving member to receive one of the [APWA Wisconsin Chapter Member Awards](#) by the January 31, 2026 deadline.

### Thank you!

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for making it to the end of my third President's Corner message, and for being a valued APWA WI Chapter member. Thank you for your time, and for your service to the public works profession!

Sincerely,

Rick Eilertson, PE, ENV-SP  
608-402-5862  
[rick.eilertson@aecom.com](mailto:rick.eilertson@aecom.com)



*Jake Brunoehler (Spiderman), Nolan Halla (UW-Platteville student), Genevieve Stollenwerk, Caroline Burger and Bob Givens volunteering at the Oct. 29<sup>th</sup> APWA WI Truck 'N Treat Event*

## EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION: 2025 FALL CONFERENCE

### Platteville Engaged Students in Meaningful Ways

**Eric Dundee, Conference Planning Chair**



The APWA Wisconsin Chapter held its Fall Conference from Oct. 28-31 in Platteville on the historic UW-Platteville campus. This conference welcomed the return of many cherished conference traditions, featuring activities such as the Get Acquainted Party, Young Professionals event, educational sessions, and the banquet. There were also exciting new activities and educational sessions that brought fresh energy to the event, such as Truck 'n Treat - Promoting Public Works to Children and engaging educational sessions. Truck 'n Treat was a huge success with more than one hundred participants! The conference drew 60 students and faculty from UW-Platteville (UWP), who attended, presented, volunteered, and received scholarships (13 recipients is a record!) throughout the event. The success of this year's conference would not have been possible without the excellent working relationship and shared passion for public works from the UWP faculty and City of Platteville staff. The partnership played a crucial role in creating an engaging and memorable experience that featured over 200 professionals on campus for two days, culminating in a Thursday lunchtime general session where senior design engineering students delivered brief presentations on their projects. The conference also provided volunteer opportunities for students to assist at the registration desk and serve as tour guides and moderators. It encouraged students to attend educational sessions that covered real-life topics and projects.

Please join me in extending sincere appreciation and thanks to Howard Crofoot, Director of Public Works, and his staff at the City of Platteville, as well as UWP faculty, Dr. Philip Parker, Dean of Engineering, Math and Science (EMS), Dr. Austin Polebitski, Department Chair and Professor of the UWP Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, and Dr. Mike Penn, Professor of the UWP Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. Reflecting on the highlights, we're already excited to build on this momentum and welcome attendees back for another outstanding conference next year!

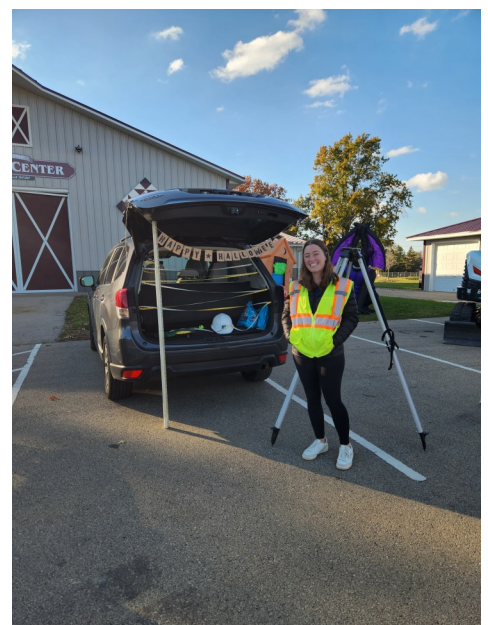
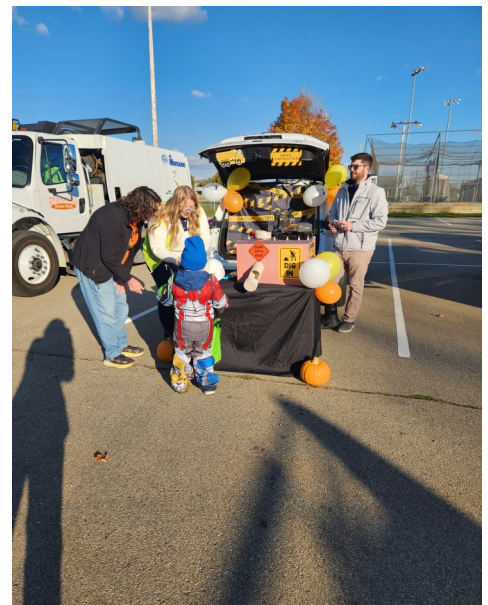
Some specific highlights of the conference in pictorial form.

- Truck N Treat & Get Acquainted Party
- Technical tour at A.Y. McDonald
- Thursday sessions including the senior design project presentations and UWP staff presentations
- Fire Station tour
- Friday sessions and UWP staff presentations





## 2025 FALL CONFERENCE—Truck and Treat In Photos





## 2025 FALL CONFERENCE





## 2025 Wisconsin Chapter Scholarship Awardees Announced

### Timothy Schleeper, Scholarship and Education Committee Chair

Each year at the Chapter Fall Banquet the Scholarship and Education Committee awards annual scholarships for 2- and 4-year students enrolled in engineering, public administration, and public works management degree programs. This year we received 13 scholarship applications. All applications were from four-year students seeking \$2,000 scholarships.

Joe Komorowski, chair of the Leadership and Management Committee, and I had the honor to review all the applications and were highly impressed with the letters of recommendation and accomplishments of all the applications. These scholarship applications were scored using eight criteria evaluating the strength of coursework, community involvement, and passion for public works. Ultimately, the executive committee recommended approving all thirteen scholarships totaling \$26,000.

The pool of applicants has developed insights and a passion for public works that are beyond their years. Without a doubt, our awardees will make excellent hires and make public works a stronger profession. Five awardees were able to attend the banquet to receive their award. Starting with those who could not attend, this year's awardees are:

A celebratory graphic for a scholarship winner. It features a dark blue background with gold confetti and streamers. In the center is a circular photo of a young woman with long brown hair, smiling. To the right of the photo is a gold star icon. Below the photo is a white speech bubble containing the name 'Carissa Ashman'. Above the photo, the words 'Scholarship WINNER' are written in a gold script font, with 'WINNER' in large white block letters. There are also two gold heart icons on the left side of the photo.

*Scholarship*  
**WINNER**

**Carissa Ashman**

**Carissa Ashman** is a Junior at the University of Wisconsin Green Bay and is sponsored by **Caroline Berger**. Carissa is majoring in Environmental Engineering with a Minor in Environmental Science and a Certificate in Geographic Information Systems. She is active in intramural soccer, volleyball, and chess club, and is a Research Assistant looking at Biochar/AMF colonization in alfalfa crops.



# Scholarship WINNER



**Jake Steger**

**Jake Steger** is a Junior at the University of Wisconsin and is sponsored by **Aaron Jahnke** from the Village of Waunakee. Jake is majoring in Environmental Engineering is the Industry Chair for the Engineering EXPO event held on the UW campus. Jake coordinates the event with Industry sponsors to provide immersive engineering experience with Madison area middle schoolers.

# Scholarship WINNER



**Jan Grzywacz**

**Jan Grzywacz** is a senior at UW Madison majoring in Environmental Engineering with an additional major in Jazz Studies. He was also sponsored by **Aaron Jahnke** and is Co-president of the Polish Student Association and a member of the Afro-Cuban ensemble, composers' ensemble, and UW Madison Jazz Orchestra.

# Scholarship WINNER



**Catherine Paulson**

**Catherine Paulson** is a Senior at UW Madison and is sponsored by **Mark Van Der Wegen** of raSmith. Catherine is majoring in Civil Engineering and is an active member of the Society of Women Engineers, Embark, and Letters of Love.

# Scholarship WINNER



**Claudia Hay**

**Claudia Hay** is a senior at UW Madison and is sponsored by **Jason Atchison** of Baxter & Woodman. Claudia is majoring in Civil Engineering with an emphasis in Transportation. She will also graduate with a Certificate in Architecture. She is active in the Letters of Love organization and campus Boxing Club.



# Scholarship WINNER



**Abbigail Shaver**

**Abbigail Shaver** is a Senior at UW Madison and is sponsored by **Cory Horton** of Ruekert & Mielke. Abbigail is majoring in Biological Systems Engineering with a specialization in Natural Resources and Environmental Engineering. She was also a member of the UW Marching Band from 2021 to 2025.

# Scholarship WINNER



**Keegan Bell**

**Keegan Bell** is a Junior at UW Stevens Point majoring in Hydrology and is sponsored by **Lee Igl**, Village of McFarland Director of Public Works. Keegan is an Eagle Scout and has worked for the Village of McFarland Public Works Department for the last three summers as a seasonal employee assisting with stormwater basin maintenance, addressing erosion control issues, and responding to storm damage.

# Scholarship WINNER



**Amelia Thompson**

**Ameila Thompson** is a Senior at Iowa State University and is sponsored by Heidi Jeninga from Ruekert Mielke. Amelia is majoring in Civil Engineering with an emphasis in Water Resources. Amelia has an expansive list of community volunteering activities including park and roadside clean ups, working in food kitchens, organizing clothing drives, and participating in United Way Days of Caring activities.

# Scholarship WINNER



**Grayson Frost**

**Grayson Frost** is a Senior at UW Platteville and is sponsored by **Sean Gehin**, the Village of Allouez, Director of Public Works. Grayson is majoring in Civil Engineering with an emphasis on transportation. He is a member of Chi Epsilon and UW-Platteville's InterVarsity fellowship organization. As part of his involvement with Chi Epsilon he has helped run activities for public school students attending UW Platteville's STEM Expo.



# Scholarship WINNER



**Sophia Cotton**

**Sophia Cotton** is a Senior at UW Platteville and is sponsored by **Tim Voelker**, City of Fitchburg's Director of Public Works. Sophia is majoring in Environmental Engineering with a minor in Sustainability and Renewable Energy Systems. She is a member of WiSTEM, Chi Epsilon, and is the VP of Tau Beta Pi. She works with the Clean Lakes Alliance, Sustain Dane, and the Wisconsin Conservation Corps.

# Scholarship WINNER



**Madeline Orstad**

**Madeline Orstad** is a Junior at UW Madison and is sponsored by **Gary Blazek**, from Vierbicher. Maddie is majoring in Environmental Engineering and is active in Engineers for a Sustainable World, the Society of Women Engineers, and the University Treble Choir. She worked as an intern at Vierbicher in the Madison office. As part of her duties, she completed over 50 stormwater facility inspections and reports for a variety of public and private clients and collaborated on the design of site plan improvements using Civil3d.

# Scholarship WINNER



**Emma DeCoster**

**Emma DeCoster** is a junior at UW-Platteville and is sponsored by **Katelyn Seppanen**, from Westwood. Emma is majoring in Civil Engineering with an emphasis in transportation. She is a Math Club officer, promotions director for WSUP 90.5 FM, a member of the symphonic wind ensemble & symphony band, and volunteers for the UW Platteville food pantry. She interned for the Outagamie County Highway Dept. and most recently as an intern for Westwood working on multiple transportation projects.

# Scholarship WINNER



**Connor Meyer**

**Connor Meyer** is a junior at UW Platteville and is sponsored by **Jason Meyer**, director of Public Works at the City of New Holstein. Connor has seasonally worked in the City of New Holstein Public Works Dept. for 5 years and more recently with Corre working as a construction inspector on the reconstruction of CTH EE in Sheboygan.





# THANK YOU SPONSORS!

## 2025-26 APWA WI CHAPTER AND CONFERENCE SPONSORS



Thank you to all of our sponsors for supporting the  
Wisconsin Chapter !



## RICK EILERTSON

In the quaint surroundings of Baraboo, Wisconsin, a heartfelt journey began in July 1992. This narrative centers around a couple, Rick Eilertson and his partner, Yenti (Terry) Eilertson, who were introduced on a blind date while paddling along the Baraboo River. What started as a chance meeting blossomed into a lifelong commitment, culminating in their engagement in December 1994 and their marriage in September 1995. Their love story is enriched by their family, featuring two sons, Erik (25) and Evan (16). Both boys have played a pivotal role in their parent's life, often presenting "teachable moments" through their explorations in nature. This family dynamic fosters a shared vision of community collaboration aimed at nurturing healthy generations.

Outside the framework of work, Rick dedicates a significant portion of his time to volunteering with various non-profit organizations. At the forefront is the American Public Works Association (APWA), where he has contributed significantly over his 23 years of service. Additionally, Rick's involvement extends to influential boards such as Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy, Kiwanis Club of Baraboo, Powered Up Baraboo, and Friends of the Baraboo River. Through these engagements, he finds fulfillment in motivating and mentoring aspiring leaders, pushing towards positive community transformation year after year.

When it comes to entertainment, a favorite book stands out: "Jonathan Livingston Seagull" by Richard Bach. This poignant tale revolves around a young seagull's pursuit of flight, encapsulating themes of personal reflection, freedom, and self-realization that resonate deeply with his own journey. Likewise, his comedic palate is reflected in a love for the classic film "Monty Python and the Holy Grail." This 1975 British comedy, steeped in the humor of the Arthurian legend, entertains while also inviting introspection.

Continued on Page 19

# MEET THE PRESIDENT



## Enhancing Pedestrian Safety with Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons

### Mark Van Der Wegen - Transportation, Utilities and Right-of-Way (ROW) Committee

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) have gained popularity due to their effectiveness in improving pedestrian safety at uncontrolled, marked crosswalks, especially where visibility and driver yielding are concerns.

#### Common Locations for RRFB Implementation

RRFBs are commonly used at mid-block crossings, unsignalized intersections, school and trail crossings, and even roundabouts. RRFBs utilize high-intensity, rapid flashing yellow LED lights to capture driver attention when a pedestrian activates the system.



Research shows RRFBs can significantly increase driver yield rates compared to traditional active or passive yellow beacons and significantly reduce pedestrian crashes, with the greatest benefit on multi-lane roads with speed limits below 40 mph. RRFB devices are only installed where no stop or traffic signal controls exist, ensuring their conspicuous flash pattern is reserved for locations needing greater pedestrian protection. As more communities recognize their value, RRFBs continue to be implemented at a growing number of crossings to promote safer walking environments.

The US Department of Transportation's *Guide for Improving Pedestrian Safety at Uncontrolled Crossing Locations* helps state and local governments evaluate and implement a range of pedestrian safety countermeasures, including RRFBs. Table 1 in the guide provides a simple matrix to aid the practitioner in choosing appropriate countermeasures based on roadway type, traffic volumes and posted speeds.

[https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/innovation/everydaycounts/edc\\_5/docs/STEP-guide-improving-ped-safety.pdf](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/innovation/everydaycounts/edc_5/docs/STEP-guide-improving-ped-safety.pdf)

#### Supplemental Measures with RRFBs: Enhancing Pedestrian Safety

When implementing RRFBs, supplemental features can significantly enhance pedestrian safety and improve driver compliance, especially at uncontrolled crossings. Several features are recommended to work in tandem with RRFBs. These include curb extensions, which shorten crossing distances and improve pedestrian visibility; pedestrian refuge islands, which provide a safe waiting space on multi-lane roads; and raised crosswalks, which improve visibility and naturally calm traffic by elevating the crossing zone. High-visibility crosswalk markings (e.g., ladder patterns style) also enhance driver awareness, while advance warning signs—sometimes with additional RRFB units—are encouraged where sight distance is limited due to curves or obstructions. Street lighting at crosswalks, specifically contrast lighting that illuminates the upstream side of the pedestrian, can reduce pedestrian crashes by up to 42%.



Physical improvements should follow Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility standards and consider surrounding roadway geometry, volumes, and speeds. Proper lighting, overhead RRFB placement (where appropriate),

and public education or enforcement programs can further reinforce yielding behavior. Used together, these tools not only align with MUTCD guidance but also create a layered safety approach that maximizes the effectiveness of RRFB installations in diverse roadway environments.

### **Understanding the Evolution of RRFBs: From IA-21 to the 11th Edition MUTCD**

The journey of RRFBs in traffic control began with the issuance of Interim Approval 21 (IA-21) by the Federal Highway Administration in 2014. This interim approval allowed for limited, experimental use of RRFBs at pedestrian crossings, particularly in areas where traditional signage and signals were insufficient. IA-21 provided flexibility for early adopters, permitting both push-button activation and presence-based detection methods.

However, as the effectiveness of RRFBs was demonstrated through ongoing research and pilot programs, the MUTCD incorporated these devices as a fully standard safety tool in its 11th edition, published in 2024. The updated MUTCD sets forth comprehensive guidelines for the placement, operation, signage, maintenance, and accessibility of RRFBs, ensuring their safe and consistent deployment across jurisdictions.

Compared to the flexible, experimental approach under IA-21, the MUTCD now emphasizes precise standards, recommended spacing, and clear operational modes. It also underlines the importance of standardized signage and consistent maintenance practices—elements that are vital for realizing the full safety benefits of RRFBs.

### **The Role of PROWAG in Accessible Pedestrian Design**

Alongside MUTCD standards, the Public ROW Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) play a critical role in ensuring RRFB-equipped crossings are accessible to all users, including individuals with disabilities. Developed by the U.S. Access Board, PROWAG outlines design criteria for elements such as curb ramps, pushbuttons, and detectable warnings. Compliance ensures features such as accessible pedestrian signals, proper button placement, and tactile/audible cues are integrated into each installation. By adhering to both MUTCD and PROWAG, agencies deliver pedestrian crossings that are not only highly visible and effective in improving safety but also inclusive and usable for everyone, in line with ADA obligations.



### **Final Thoughts**

The transition from IA-21 to the current MUTCD standards underscores the importance of standardized, proven traffic control devices like RRFBs. Proper implementation based on current guidelines can dramatically reduce pedestrian accidents and improve overall road safety.



# BURNOUT

## FACING BURNOUT IN PUBLIC WORKS: A SHARED CHALLENGE ACROSS SECTORS

**Mark Van Der Wegen—Leadership and Management**

As public works professionals, we pride ourselves on being the backbone of our communities—keeping infrastructure safe, essential services running, and responding when emergencies strike. Nevertheless, behind the dedication and long hours, there's a growing challenge that affects both public and private sector teams: burnout.

Whether you're leading municipal operations or supporting communities through consulting work, the pressures you face are very real—and often deeply felt. Tight budgets, aging infrastructure, staffing shortages, growing workloads, and rising public expectations can place a heavy burden on even the most dedicated professionals—often stretching our capacity beyond what's sustainable. When you add the unpredictability of severe weather, emergency responses, and the constant need to adapt to changing conditions, it becomes clear how easily burnout can begin to take hold.

### Recognizing the Signs

Burnout doesn't always appear as physical exhaustion—it can be subtle and gradual. Recognizing the

early signs is key to addressing it before it becomes overwhelming. Some common indicators include:

- Reduced motivation or engagement: Tasks that once felt meaningful may start to feel routine or draining.

- Difficulty concentrating: Mental fatigue can make it harder to stay focused or make decisions.
- Increased irritability or frustration: Small challenges may feel disproportionately stressful.
- Feeling disconnected from the impact of your work: A sense of detachment or questioning the value of your efforts.

In addition to these, some professionals may experience:

- Sleep disturbances or chronic fatigue.
- Withdrawal from team interactions or meetings
- A decline in productivity or quality of work
- Physical symptoms like headaches or muscle tension

It's important to remember that burnout affects everyone differently. What matters most is creating a culture where these signs are acknowledged without judgment—and where support is readily available.

### Bridging the Public-Private Divide

One of the strengths of the public works profession is the collaboration between public agencies and private consultants. While the day-to-day environments may differ, the challenges—tight timelines, high expectations, and resource constraints—are often shared.

This partnership works best when built on open communication, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to serving communities. By recognizing the pressures each side faces and approaching projects with empathy and teamwork, we can ease the burden and foster a healthier, more sustainable working relationship.

In times of stress, it's not just the infrastructure that needs support—it's the people behind it. Whether you're in the field, at the desk, or managing from behind the scenes, we're all part of the same mission.

### **Supporting Resilience: Tips to Prevent Burnout**

Burnout can't always be avoided—but it can be managed, and even prevented, when we take intentional steps to care for ourselves and each other. Here are some ways public works professionals can build resilience and foster a healthier work environment:

#### **1. Making a Priority**

Recovery isn't optional—it's essential. Encourage regular breaks and time off, especially after high-stress periods or emergency responses. A well-rested team is a more effective one.

#### **2. Set Boundaries That Protect Well-Being**

The "always-on" mindset can be draining. Define clear work hours and respect personal time to help maintain energy and focus over the long haul. This is often the most difficult one to achieve, because as public work professionals, we are so dedicated to the community or organization that we are a part of.

#### **3. Create a Culture of Support**

Foster an environment where people feel safe discussing stress, asking for help, and supporting one another. Psychological safety is key to long-term team health.

#### **4. Recognize the Effort Behind the Work**

A simple thank-you or public acknowledgment can go a long way. Recognition reminds people that their work matters—and that they're seen.

#### **5. Invest in Growth and Renewal**

Encourage professional development, training and participation in industry events. Learning something new can reignite passion and purpose.

#### **6. Promote Access to Wellness Resources**

Make sure your team knows what support is available—whether it's an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), mental health services, or well initiatives.

#### **7. Stay Connected to the Bigger Picture**

Engage with professional networks like APWA to share experiences, find encouragement, and remember that no one is in this alone.

### **PWX 2025 Insight: Reimagining Workforce Wellness**

At the 2025 Public Works Expo (PWX) in Chicago, keynote speaker Dr. Jody Carrington reminded attendees that leadership plays a critical role in preventing burnout.

*"Burnout isn't a sign of weakness—it's a signal that something needs attention. When leaders show up with empathy and clarity, they create space for resilience to grow."*

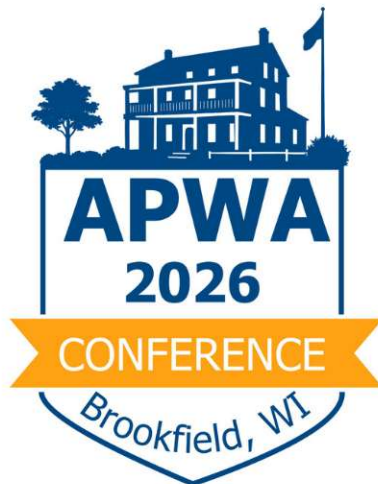
Her message resonated across both public and private sectors, reinforcing the importance of emotional awareness, intentional leadership, and creating a culture where people feel seen and supported.

As we move through another busy season, let's remember that taking care of our people is just as important as taking care of our infrastructure. Burnout is real—but with awareness and support, it doesn't have to define our profession.



# 2026 SPRING CONFERENCE

## AND VENDOR SHOW



APRIL 22-24,  
2026



BROOKFIELD  
CONFERENCE CENTER

HOSTS: BROOKFIELD, WAUWATOSA AND  
WAUKESHA COUNTY

The APWA Wisconsin Chapter will hold the Spring Conference in Brookfield this year on April 22-24. This conference will be a full conference program with educational sessions and indoor and outdoor vendor floors. It is early in the planning process but expect golf, biking, a technical tour, the Get Acquainted Party, vendor session, an Equipment Roadeo, and more!

Hotel rooms at the Hilton Garden Inn Brookfield have been reserved for attendees. For further information on the conference, registration, or to reserve a room, visit the Wisconsin APWA website. The Wisconsin Chapter goes to great lengths to ensure our conferences are of high quality and affordable. We are looking forward to seeing you all there.

[Click Here to Visit Our Website](#)



# FACILITIES & GROUNDS

Well-maintained public facilities and grounds keep communities safe, efficient, and welcoming. From municipal buildings to parks and public works areas, proactive management reduces hazards, prevents costly repairs, and supports sustainable, resilient infrastructure.

The APWA Wisconsin Chapter Facilities and Grounds Committee brings together professionals passionate about improving public spaces. Members share best practices, tackle challenges in maintenance and sustainability, and collaborate to enhance the quality of services delivered across Wisconsin.

By joining, you gain networking opportunities, professional development, and a platform to make a tangible impact on your community. Help shape policies, implement innovative solutions, and ensure public spaces remain safe, efficient, and inviting for everyone.

Be part of a team that keeps Wisconsin's public spaces running smoothly—one facility, one park, one project at a time.

If you have an interest in joining the Wisconsin Chapter Facilities and Grounds Committee, we have room for you! Our current membership includes:

Chair	Peter Nilles, Milwaukee County
Members	Paul Van Treeck, Marquette County
	Chris Pirlot, City of Green Bay
	Scott Prochaska, Safe Step LLC
	Norman Barrientos, Barrientos Design

If you are interested in joining, please contact Peter at [peter.nilles@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:peter.nilles@milwaukeecountywi.gov). Peter will be scheduling a committee meeting in the near future to continue discussing how the committee can best serve the Chapter and provide value to the Chapter members.



## MEET THE PRESIDENT.... Continued from Page 14

When asked what historical figures Rick's reply was to a guiding hero - Martin Luther King Jr. His leadership during the Civil Rights Movement, characterized by nonviolent advocacy for racial equality, inspires many. Dr. King's influential "I Have a Dream" speech remains a cornerstone of activism, promoting a vision where individuals are valued for their character above all else.

In the realm of professional achievement, prior to his current role, Rick served as the City of Fitchburg's Environmental Engineer from November 2006 to January 2017, specializing in solid waste management and sustainability, which further his passion for environmental stewardship.

With a commitment to the future of the Wisconsin Chapter of APWA, Rick's goals encompass continuing the impactful legacy left by past leaders while encouraging a collaborative spirit among the Executive Committee and Committee Chairs. His personal ethic, is simply stated "Be Kind," serves as a powerful reminder of the profound impact kindness can have on others, especially given the struggles many face in their daily lives.

Among Rick's proudest accomplishments, achieving the 2013 APWA National Community Involvement Award represents a career highlight. However, rising above personal challenges — particularly overcoming a failed suicide attempt and using that experience to advocate for mental health awareness — stands as his most significant achievement, highlighting resilience and a commitment to helping others.

In essence, this individual embodies a narrative driven by familial love, community engagement, and an unwavering commitment to kindness, all while harnessing his personal experiences to foster a more compassionate world.

JUST ANNOUNCED

**2029**

**NORTH AMERICAN  
SNOW CONFERENCE**

COMING TO

**MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN**

APWA  
NORTH AMERICAN  
**SNOW**  
CONFERENCE

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



ADA.gov  
US Department of Justice  
Civil Rights Division



**IMPORTANT  
ANNOUNCEMENT**

In 2024, Department of Justice published a rule updating regulations for Title II of the ADA making sure websites and mobile apps are accessible by 2026 or 2027. Check the website to see if or how your website may be affected.

[READ MORE](#)



[www.ada.gov/title-ii-web-rule/](http://www.ada.gov/title-ii-web-rule/)

**WI CHAPTER SPONSORING  
THE BEST WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING AWARD  
AND IS THE SILVER SPONSOR OF THE EVENT**

## FUTURE CITY STATEWIDE COMPETITION

**FARM-TO-TABLE**



[twolf@stemforward.org](mailto:twolf@stemforward.org)



[www.futurecity.org](http://www.futurecity.org)

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

MSOE Kern Center  
1245 N Broadway / Milwaukee, WI  
Saturday, January 17, 2026  
7:30AM - 4:00PM





## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## National Engineers Week

February 16-22

**National Engineers Week** recognizes the engineers whose creativity, problem-solving, and technical expertise help design, build, and maintain the infrastructure we rely on every day. From roads and bridges to buildings, utilities, and technology systems, their work supports public safety, economic growth, and quality of life in our community. Engineers combine innovation with practicality, using science, mathematics, and emerging technology to develop solutions that keep our world moving forward. Their contributions are not always visible and often happen behind the scenes, but the impact is felt by every resident who benefits from reliable services, safe travel, and modern public facilities.

We thank our engineers for turning complex challenges into lasting solutions and for their dedication to improving the spaces where we live, work, and play. National Engineers Week is an opportunity to celebrate their achievements, highlight the importance of the engineering profession, and inspire the next generation to explore careers in this vital field. To every engineer who applies skill, passion, and resilience to shape stronger communities—thank you for the work you do today and the legacy you build for tomorrow.

[#NationalEngineersWeek](#)

[#EngineersWeek](#)



## Women In Construction

March 2—8

**Women in Construction Week** recognizes and celebrates the women who help build, maintain, and improve our communities through skill, leadership, and innovation. From the field to the office, women in construction play a vital role in delivering safe, reliable infrastructure and public facilities. Their expertise spans project management, engineering, skilled trades, design, estimating, safety, and countless other roles that ensure our buildings, roads, parks, and critical systems serve the public well. Every project is strengthened by their perspectives, dedication, and talent, and our communities are better because of their contributions.

This week, we thank them for their impact and reaffirm our commitment to creating pathways that support and empower women in construction. By encouraging professional development, workplace equity, mentorship, and inclusive opportunities, we not only recognize those who are leading today but also help build a foundation for the future. Women in Construction Week is an invitation to celebrate achievements, elevate voices, and inspire the next generation to explore and pursue careers in this essential field.

[#WICWeek](#)

[#WomenInConstructionWeek](#)



# Membership Report

Chapter Membership: Chapter Membership stands at 744.

**25**  
YEARS

- Robert Carr—Retired
- Jim Hessling—McFarland (retired)
- Tom Grisa—Brookfield (retired)
- Mike Payne—Janesville

**20**  
YEARS

- C. Jarrod Holter—Onalaska
- Chuck Boehm—Brown and Caldwell
- Ahnaray Bizjak—Janesville
- Robert Bauman—Milwaukee
- Mary Dziewiontkoski—Milwaukee (retired)

**15**  
YEARS

- Tim Barbeau—raSmith (retired)
- Daniel Koski—Manitowoc
- Michael Calkins—Snyder
- Karissa Chapman—Janesville
- Bruce Brazee—Appleton
- Nate Loper—Appleton
- Tony Fietzer—DePere
- Sheli Schroeder—Racine
- Tony Bausha—Mailhot Industries
- Chris Kapke—FORCE
- Eric Dundee—Madison MSD
- Gary Blazek—Vierbicher



**30**  
YEARS

## Life Time Members

Randy Kerkman—Village of Bristol

Christine Walsh—Beloit (retired)

Peter Nilles—Milwaukee County



# 10 YEARS

- Lawrence Ratayczak—Main Line Sewer
- Matthew Maederer—Brown Deer
- Chris Tippery—CDM Smith
- Ryan Schmidt—Caledonia
- Scott Ahles—Mead Hunt
- Lisa Wolf—Janesville
- Dennis Friedrich—Brookfield
- Adam Schmitt—Fond Du Lac
- Cory Horton—Ruekert—Mielke
- Chuck Schumacher—Milwaukee
- Thomas Woznick—Milwaukee
- Timothy North—Cretex
- Luke Kronstedt—Stevens Point
- Phil Gaebler—Madison
- Joel Bublitz—Cedarburg
- James Brunette—Green Bay
- Matthew Stevens—Pewaukee
- Magdelene Wagner—Pewaukee

- Richard Wirtz—Pewaukee
- M. Scott Hart—Appleton
- Eric Lindman—Wausau
- Tim Schleeper—Vierbicher
- Ronald Bittner—Mukwonago
- Joel Kolste—Sheboygan
- Kurt Davidsen—Pleasant Prairie
- Brad Reents—Janesville
- Eric Hjellen—Madison MSD
- Justin Berrens—Waupaca
- Bill Pinnow—MSA

# 5 YEARS

- Mitch Vis—North Fond Du Lac
- Michael Aiken—Pleasant Prairie
- Brian Leightner—Pewaukee
- Trista Hobbs—Green Bay
- Justin Linzmeier—Green Bay
- M. Thompson-Eagan—Green Bay
- Heidi Jeninga—Ruekert—Mielke

- Jamie Hassemer—La Crosse
- Nathan Beth—Waukesha
- Randy Krouse—Milwaukee
- Kevin O'Brien—Milwaukee County
- David Tapia—Milwaukee
- Tom Wangerin—Milwaukee
- Joseph Dex—Greenfield
- Randy Esch—Greenfield
- Steven Prokop—Greenfield
- Christien Huppert—Altoona
- Franklin Seilheimer
- Issac Dolan—Weston
- Brad Abraham—
- Wayne Edwards—Williams Bay
- Matt Wittum—Town of Linn
- Genevieve Stollenwerk—South Milwaukee
- Donald Hefty—Burlington
- Emily Roen—Beloit
- Ben Habanek—Shorewood
- Clifton Janssen—Milwaukee County

# WELCOME

## NEW MEMBERS

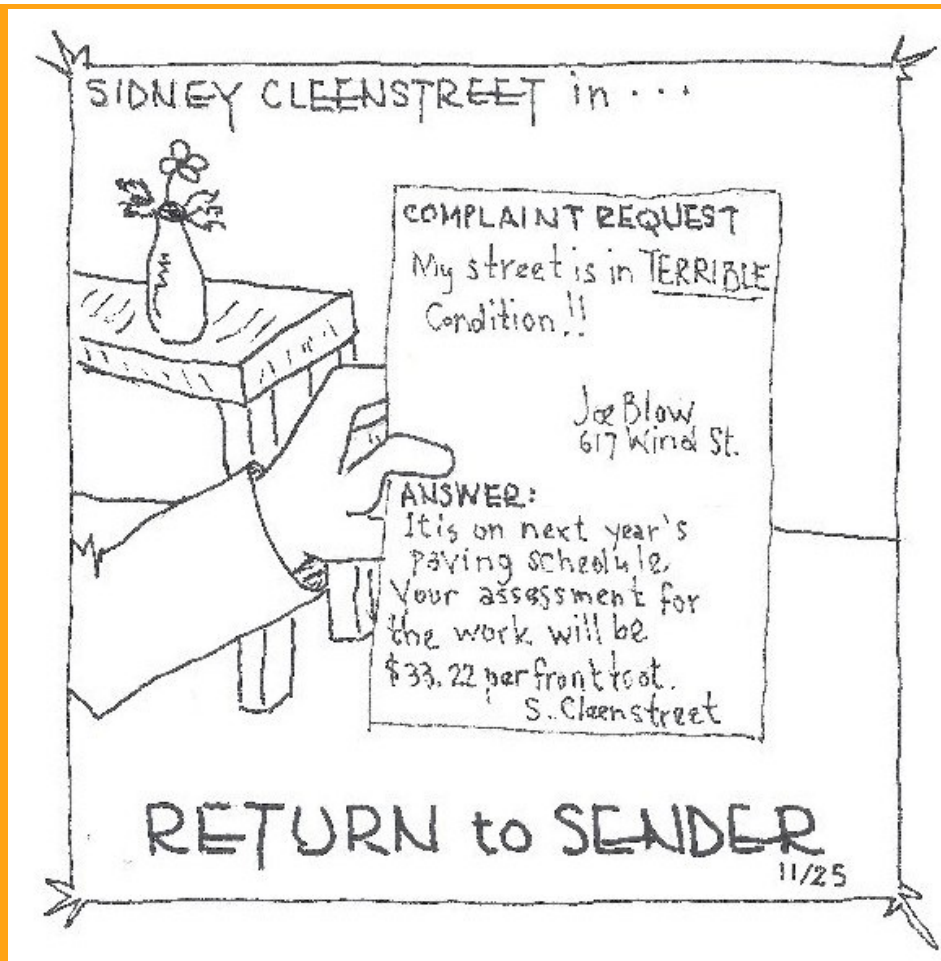
- Cassey Anstett—Baraboo
- Kevin Berg—
- Steven Brueggeman—Greenville
- Daron Cross—Milwaukee
- Dustin DeFlice—Bolton & Menk
- Mike Franen—Open Gov
- Tony Gilman—Baraboo
- Casey Groessl—Algoma
- Eric Grosz—Big Ben
- Jacob Hanson—
- Elijah Henriksen
- Jeremy Hinds—
- Joe Hoechst—Fox Crossing
- Chris Holt—Walworth
- Johnny Jennings—Milwaukee
- Carley Jones—AECOM
- Jeff Laufenberg—Milwaukee
- Ryan Lemke—Oshkosh
- Joseph Leuzinger—Traffic Control Corp
- Kevin Mouradian—Milwaukee
- Zach Navin—Fort Atkinson
- Richard Neth—Alt Savvy Solutions
- Dan Perry—Vierbicher
- Joe Post-
- Josh Radomski—Brown & Caldwell
- Dylan Rollo—Oshkosh
- Dawn Schmidt—Milwaukee
- Paul Seefeldt—Mosinee
- Josh Sheaffer—Traffic Control Products
- Secret Strobl—Sussex
- Eric Toombs
- Harry Tran—EMCS
- Boris Veleusic—Wauwatosa
- Carlos Villarreal—County Materials
- Robert Wagner
- Andrew Wild—Multitek
- Dawonn Averhart—Milwaukee County
- Ian Badzinski—Milwaukee County
- Marc Bedillion—Tenco
- Danielle Block—Kimberly
- Laura Braatz—Little Chute
- Josh Braun—Grand Chute
- Wayne Brown—Madison
- Donna Brown-Martin—Milwaukee County
- Cameron Camacho—Bellevue
- Miles Carper—Lacrosse
- Rebecca Cole—Eau Claire
- Kyle Collins—De Pere
- Andrew Constant—Strand
- Mickey Critton—Milwaukee County
- Rachal Darken—Madison
- Durrell Davis—Raine
- Jacob Dewart—Kenosha County
- Alec Dix—Appleton
- Robert Doemel—Winnebago County
- Peter Eggert—Racine
- Wayne Engen—Beloit
- Makayla Erdmann—Westwood
- Dylan Ferron—Green Bay
- Brennen Fischer—Ruckert Mielke
- Jeremy Flasch—FORCE
- Matthew Flynn—Milwaukee County
- Brian Folta—Delve Underground
- Richard Frazier—Racine
- Mario Galindez—Madison
- Mindy Gardner—Graef
- Bil Glatz Jr—Fahrner Asphalt Sealers
- Jacob Gostisha—Appleton
- Derek Greebon—La Crosse
- Chad Grundemann—MSA
- Orlando Gutierrez—Kenosha
- Jake Hainzlsperger—Plover
- Logan Hansen—Vierbicher
- Michelle Harvey—Eau Claire
- Ryan Helton—Kenosha
- Trace Hubbard—Ayres Associate



- Anna Huber—Kimberly
- Kathy Hutter—Winnebago County
- Sheila Jackson—Milwaukee County
- Nicholas Jaeckels—Madison
- Noah Jiter—Kenosha
- Austin Johrendt—Ayres Associates
- Valerie Joosten—Green Bay
- Jeff Jergens—Brookfield
- Tracy Karnitz—Plover
- Derek Kelley—Madison
- Rachel Kelly—Madison
- Paul Keltner—Milwaukee
- Tori Kimbro—Columbus
- Peter Knox—Milwaukee
- Jessie Kreiling—Grand Chute
- Adam Krieger—Graef
- Amy Landis—Graef
- Curlie Ledin—Ashland
- Greg Lee—Viehbacher
- Ziaoyun Lu—Germantown
- Greg Luedtke—Waukesha County
- Kayla Lumaye—Biron
- Ryan McDonnell—Milwaukee County
- Michael Melstrom—La Crosse
- Duane Millard—Columbus
- Bill Miller—Racine
- Maxine Miller—Whitefish Bay
- Ross Milton—Milwaukee County
- Ara Molitor—Racine
- Ethan Moser—Waukesha County
- Benjamin Nauertz—Eau Claire
- Madison Olson—Fahrner Asphalt Sealers
- Jackson Overby—Lacrosse
- Jose Ponce—Milwaukee County
- Benji Potier—Sturgeon Bay
- Derwin Pottinger Jr.—Milwaukee County
- Derwin Pottinger Sr.—Milwaukee County
- Thomas Pritzlaff—Milwaukee County
- Ronald Pritzlaff—Racine
- Stephanie Ramsey—Ayres Associates
- Ryan Rasmussen—La Crosse
- Eric Rindfleisch—Pleasant Prairie
- Syed Rizvi—Milwaukee County
- John Rodgers—Milwaukee County
- Brandon Roffers—De Pere
- Phillip Roh—Madison
- Jim Romanik—HG Meigs LLC
- Evan Rothwell—La Crosse
- Katrina Running—Eau Claire
- Scott Salinas—Racine
- Derek Sadler—Milwaukee County
- Luke Schipper—La Crosse
- Eduardo Santiago—Milwaukee County
- Mathew Scamardo—Madison
- Robert Schmidt—Cudahy
- Greg Schnell—HG Meigs LLC
- Katelyn Seppanen—Westwood
- Marco Seymour—Kenosha
- Garth Shambeau—Ayres Associates
- Kevin Sieger—Milwaukee County
- Jessica Smith—Appleton
- Wade Smith—Howard
- Teal Spellman—Bellevue
- Alex Spitzer—Bellevue
- Timothy Stachowiak—Milwaukee County
- Caitlin Stokes—Madison
- Michael Tenpas—Janesville
- Grant Tullar—Janesville
- Ryan Ulrich—Madison
- Todd Verboomen—Little Chute
- Joshua Vining—Beloit
- Brett Wallace—Waukesha County
- Alexander Weislak—West Allis
- Jeremey Windt—Cudahy
- Eric Woodke—Bellevue
- Chris Young—Greenfield

If you think you have been missed please reach out to Caroline Burger who will be working with Nationals for any corrections:

[cburger@carollo.com](mailto:cburger@carollo.com)



## Call For Submissions

Share Your Story in Our Quarterly Publication



We're now accepting article submissions for the upcoming edition of our quarterly professional publication! This is your chance to showcase projects, share insights, highlight team achievements, or offer helpful tips and lessons learned in your area of expertise.

Whether you've recently completed a major project, launched a new initiative, or have a perspective that others in our field could benefit from—we want to hear from you. Articles can be brief or in-depth, and photos are always welcome.

Deadline for submission for next Newsletter: **March 4, 2026**  
Submit to: [newsletter@wisconsin.apwa.org](mailto:newsletter@wisconsin.apwa.org)

Help us continue to highlight the great work being done across our organization and profession. Your story could inspire and inform others—submit today!

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**NEWS THAT MATTERS ...**

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1919

This image captures a pivotal moment in South Australian history: Road construction near Gepps Cross, utilizing cutting-edge steam technology to tame the rugged landscape and pave the way for modern transport.

The steam engine was the work-horse of public works projects, capable of tasks previously reliant solely on manual labor and horsepower.



Image obtained from Pinterest

## HONORING OUR PAST...

### ON THE CALENDAR

January 9	Executive Committee Meeting	9:00am	Virtual
January 20	Accreditation Open Forum: Separating Myths from Reality	12:00pm	Virtual
January 22	Building a Responsible and Responsive Public Works Drone Prog.	12:00pm	Virtual
January 31	Deadline for Submitting Nominations for WI APWA Awards		
February 13	Executive and Technical Committee Meeting	9:00am	Virtual
February 19	Rain DROPs Keep Falling on My Head: Flood Resilience	12:00pm	Virtual
March 13	Executive Committee Meeting	9:00am	Virtual
March 19	Transforming the Future of Solid Waste through Intelligent Tech.	12:00pm	Virtual
March 31	Facilities and Grounds Management Certificate Program	12:00pm	Virtual
April 22	Executive and Technical Committee Meeting	3:30pm	Brookfield
April 22-24	2026 Spring Conference		Brookfield
April 26-29	APWA North American Snow Conference 2026		Cleveland, OH
May 8	Executive Committee	9:00am	Virtual
June 12	Executive and Technical Committee Meeting	9:00am	TBD
August 30—Sept 2	APWA PWX 2026		Houston, Texas



SHOWING THE POWER OF PUBLIC WORKS!



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[CONTACT ME](#)

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