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Cover photo: City of Grand Rapids



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dan Sorek, Prein&Newhof

Greetings! I'm truly honored and humbled to be writing my first message to the chapter's membership and I'm renewed and refreshed from one of the best Great Lakes Expos our chapter has ever had! Great fellowship, professionalism, learning experiences, and of course, attendance. I truly appreciate seeing so many familiar faces each year, while at the same time, seeing more and more new faces as our chapter grows with new people who bring their own unique experiences, diversities, challenges, solutions, and personal perspectives to share. Each one of our members brings an immense amount of value to the Michigan chapter making it as successful as it is today. Thank you for all you do and thank you for the honor to serve you over the next year.

Our chapter is in good hands and we are blessed with energetic and engaged Branch Leaders coupled with a Chapter Executive Committee who have built so many programs and opportunities for networking, training, exchanging ideas and professional growth.

There are some really exciting things coming our way for the Michigan chapter that I'm looking forward to assist in ushering them forward. Over just the last few years, our Young Professionals group have really embraced their roles in reaching out to our next generation of public works professionals and have developed a lot of fun and informative gatherings. These events build extremely important relationship bonds across many different sectors that serve our communities from material and equipment manufacturers and suppliers, vendors, engineers, consultants, supervisors and of course public works Directors. These relationships are fruitful in so many ways.

Our next step will be to cultivate interest in our field through engagement with the next generation through student chapters while still in college or technical training and then to reach even further into middle and high schools with information about careers in public works. Our passions to serve can be contagious and together we can show how rewarding a career in public works is and can be.

I look forward to working with our Executive Committee and all of our wonderful members in sharing the benefits of APWA membership with others through many upcoming events this fall either at the Michigan Public Service Institute (MPSI), a Detroit Tigers Game, MSU/UofM Football Game, Snow Plow Operator Training (SPOT), Snowplow Roadeo, Roads Scholar Program, or any Branch Event. Please see our events calendar and invite anyone who would benefit from these awesome events to come join us!

I appreciate each and every one of you,

-Dan



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JAMES HURT RECEIVES HAROLD M. HULTQUIST, P.E. AWARD

Kristen McCue, GCSI Association Services

With his usual good sense of humor, James Hurt, managing director for the City of Grand Rapids' Public Services Group, accepted the Harold M. Hultquist Award at GLX 2023 this past May.

Hultquist was a longtime secretary/treasurer of the Michigan Chapter of APWA, and through his many contributions was instrumental in growing the organization. In honor of his dedication, each year the executive committee of MI-APWA recognizes a member, or past member, who has displayed the ideals Hultquist so proudly held.

Recipients include past presidents, board members and vendors/sponsors, among others. And now, Hurt joins the list.

These recipients are known for their selfless giving of their time, energy and, in many cases, personal finances, to promote the Michigan Chapter.

Among his many accomplishments, Hurt is past president of MI-APWA and currently serves as chair of the GLX conference planning committee and the Past Presidents Council.

Hurt has served in numerous leadership positions throughout his tenure:

- Various roles on the Michigan Chapter board including president
- Trustee, vice president, president elect, president, past president, and treasurer of the Midwest Branch
- Member of the Public Works Academy planning team
- Member of the Midwest Branch Roadeo Committee
- Co-chair of the 2015 Snow Conference planning committee

Currently, Hurt is chair of the Kent County Waste to Energy Advisory Board and the Kent Regional Biosolids Advisory Board. In addition, he just ended his term on the Michigan Transportation Asset Management Council.



Hurt (second from right) receives his award with Past Chapter President Gary Mekjian, Chapter President Bob Belair, and Chapter Awards Chair Karen Mondora

Hurt started his career in public service as a city manager and has worked for the City of Grand Rapids for over 20 years, starting as an administrative analyst.

Through it all, Hurt's fun-loving personality has allowed him to maintain professional and personal relationships within the industry. One such relationship is with John Gorney, public works director for the City of Grand Rapids.

"Several years ago, James invited me to a meeting at the 'South Conference Room," Gorney said. "Not knowing where that was in Grand Rapids, I asked for the address. When I arrived, I found the 'South Conference Room' was actually Founders Brewing, which is indeed iust south of the Public Works Office."

As further evidence of the respect he's earned among his peers, Hurt's first time attending a Midwest Branch board meeting he shared his interest in serving on the board and was immediately voted in as vice president, Gorney

Years later, Hurt oversees the Grand Rapids Environmental Services Department, Public Works Department, and the water system for 200,000 citizens. The departments he leads have combined operating budgets of approximately \$150 million with an additional \$300 million in capital.





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IS STRATEGIC PLANNING RIGHT FOR YOUR PUBLIC **WORKS OPERATION?**

Lewis G. Bender, Ph.D.

In the last four and one-half decades, I have observed several key changes impacting municipal and county public works operations. Some of those changes include the following:

- Public and government officials' demands on public works continue to rise.
- Accessibility to public works leaders and staff through cell phones, public access software packages, e-mail, websites, and other means continues to increase.
- Many communities are grappling with aging in-ground and above-ground infrastructure that require significant staff attention and money.
- Initial time-consuming technological upgrades require more technically proficient staff.
- Licensing for water, wastewater, arborists CDLs, and other specialties continue to expand and are more demanding in terms of time and expertise.

And with all of these changes, staffing levels continue to drop, and filling existing staff positions has become quite problematic. The result is that most public works leaders drive to work thinking that they will do "A, B, and C" today and twelve hours later drive home without even having the chance to think about-let alone do-A, B, and C. Most public works leaders and operations are in daily high-reactive mode. Indeed, living in this reactive work world leaves leaders exhausted by the end of the week and, at the same time, wondering what they accomplished during that time.

Essentially, strategic planning is a process focused on identifying an organization's internal and external assets and challenges and involving key stakeholders such as staff, customers, and organizational leaders in identifying future goals and objectives. The focus is often a three-to-five-year horizon in which the organization dedicates time and

resources to accomplish agreed-upon goals and objectives.

So, how and why does strategic planning make sense within the constantly reactive world of public works? It might not. This article focuses on two key questions:

- Should your public works operation conduct a strategic planning process? Why not? Why?
- 2. If yes. What process makes the most sense for your organization?

There is no pretense that all the questions and factors involved in strategic planning are covered in this brief discussion. Rather, the focus is on key questions and factors that public works leaders might consider in their decision-making related to strategic planning. Similarly, numerous reasons and factors can influence you on whether or not to move forward with a strategic planning process. Some of the top reasons to go or not go forward include the following.

Should your public works operation conduct a strategic planning process? Reasons why not. Reasons why.

SOME REASONS WHY YOU MIGHT **NOT DO STRATEGIC PLANNING:**

Dysfunctional Team. Suppose you are dealing with a highly dysfunctional team in which people engage in back-stabbing and personal attacks. In that case, you should avoid attempting to bring them together through a strategic planning process. Your issue is probably not shared goals as much as a shared set of rules and expectations. It is not unusual to have dysfunctional teams to use strategic planning as another platform for divisiveness, backstabbing, and "gotcha" games. Fix the team and individual behaviors before creating a shared strategic plan. Note that respectful and honest disagreement between team members is not dysfunctional.

STRATEGIC PLANNING CONTINUED

Significant Leadership Changes. One of the keys to a successful strategic plan is buy-in or shared ownership. A new leader may have different ideas and goals than the current or previous leader. She may wish to address different challenges. It is usually advisable to hold off on the process until the new leader(s) can participate. This is also true if the organization is about to engage in a restructuring process.

No Chance for Change. This rarely happens. But if irreversible decisions have already been made and the direction and destiny of the DPW have already been determined, asking people to invest in a strategic planning process is a mistake. It will only undermine your credibility and create unnecessary angst within the organization.

SOME REASONS WHY YOU MIGHT DO STRATEGIC PLANNING.

Past, Current, or Impending Changes. The world of public works continues to change on virtually all fronts. From the public to newly



elected leaders to technological changes, the demands on public works operations can become overwhelming. Similarly, doing things the "way we have always done them" guarantees failure in a changing environment. A well-conceived strategic planning process can open eyes to new ideas and approaches and create a pathway for successful organizational change.

"They don't understand what we do and the resources we need." Many elected leaders don't have a clue regarding the extent of most public works operations or the challenges in maintaining complex and extensive infrastructures. Like the public, they only know what they see. Or, more notably, they react when the toilet doesn't flush or when a pothole appears. The strategic planning process often serves as an opportunity for people at all levels to learn about the work and the challenges of public works. The process can help elected, and appointed policymakers become more understanding of the nature and type of resources needed to support a successful public works operation.

Frustration quickly appears when policymakers and administrators fail to understand the challenges or do not share the same goals. We need to get on the same page. Good people can and often do disagree. A strategic planning process can be very useful for an organization constantly debating goals and priorities, and the bigger picture is unclear or well-defined. In a city for example, it is essential that the city council, city manager and public works director are all working from the same sheet of music. Minimally, a successful strategic planning effort can reveal where awareness of issues and challenges must be increased.

WHAT PROCESS SHOULD YOU USE?

If you have decided that developing a public works strategic plan makes sense, you now face several inter-connected questions. Some of the top questions include:

- Why do we think it makes sense to do a strategic plan?
- What major questions and outcomes do we think need to be addressed?
- How much time and resources are we willing to dedicate to a strategic planning process?

- Who should be involved in the process?
- Do we need an outside the organization facilitator?

These can be challenging questions for any leader. Most of the questions can be successfully addressed by using the following steps.

Step 1. Create a Planning to Plan Task Group.

This does not need to be a large group. It involves getting two to four other key leaders and organizational stakeholders together and discussing several of the most important questions. Often, those involved might be the DPW Director, municipal manager or her representative, a union leader, or other representatives. Perhaps the two most important questions the task group must answer are:

How big should the process be? If this is the first time the organization has done strategic planning, the answer should probably be-not big. In this facilitator's experience, creating extensive processes involving numerous groups the first time only creates failure and headaches. The very process of involving people in a strategic planning

process raises expectations of outcomes by the people involved. Don't create failure by initiating a process that raises unreasonable expectations among multiple groups. It may be enough to get key leaders on the same page with the initial strategic planning effort. On the other hand, if you have experience with strategic planning and the leadership team is generally in concert with each other, a larger process might be appropriate.

Who should be included in the process? More to the point: who is essential to the success of this planning effort? The people, or their representatives, who are essential to implementing the plan constitute the smaller strategic planning effort. As noted previously, for a DPW operation, the internal stakeholders might include representatives from throughout the DPW, unions, and leaders. The management team and operations staff. A larger effort involving external stakeholders might include the City Council, City Manager, other department heads, citizens, and vendors.

Should we bring in an outside facilitator? This facilitator has a biased view of this question.







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STRATEGIC PLANNING CONTINUED

Nonetheless, the central question is whether stakeholders will feel free and comfortable discussing the DPW challenges if anyone from that agency facilitates the discussions. Rather than hire an outside facilitator, a useful approach may be to ask another department head or fellow professional to facilitate the discussions. Whether she comes from the outside or inside, it is important that the facilitator is seen as unbiased and that she knows how to bring discussions to successful conclusions.

Step 2. Create a SWOC. Internal organizational Strengths and Weaknesses and external Opportunities and Challenges (SWOC) are important components of a strategic planning process. SWOCs appear in two forms: Factual and Perceptual. The facts regarding the work of a DPW operation may be miles apart from internal and external stakeholders' perceptions regarding the organization.

Fact-Based SWOC. Create a data-based fact sheet outlining the DPW's internal strengths and weaknesses and external to the DPW opportunities and challenges. This SWOC might include previous staffing levels, equipment age and repair histories, and significant changes in the services provided over time. Often it is best to share this after

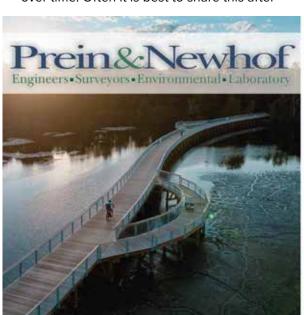
engaging in the Perception-Based SWOC. It can be a useful tool for educating internal and external stakeholders on the realities of the DPW.

Perception-Based SWOC. It can be very useful to a leadership team to know how internal and external stakeholders view the DPW. The responses to questions such as: What do you see as the internal strengths and weakness of the DPW? What are the external opportunities and challenges facing the DPW? It can be very useful in guiding decisions related to the goals and direction of the DPW.

Step 3. Create the Shared Vision, Goals, Key Objectives, and One-Year Tasks.

You can make this a simple or complex process. The simple approach involves getting everyone in a workshop to discuss what they see in a plenary discussion-as the SWOC. People are then divided into small groups with a flip chart and asked to identify their shared Vision for the DPW in three-to-five years. Rarely is there much difference between the small group's shared visions.

The workshop continues with the facilitator or DPW leader identifying the top three to five









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goal areas that can be extracted from the vision statements. Frequently identified goal areas may include: 1). Increased staffing and training, 2) Upgraded Equipment, 3) Improved or new facilities, 4) Educating policymakers and the public on DPW operations, etc. Participants are then re-mixed into groups and asked to identify key objectives in each goal area and one-year tasks that can be reasonably accomplished within the respective goal area. Avoid the rabbit hole of attempting to identify priorities. They don't work. Rather focus on what can be accomplished in the goal area in one year.

A more complex approach involves doing this process with multiple meetings involving different groups over an extended time. Consultants prefer this approach because it costs much more than a simple, straightforward process.

This input should then go to the DPW leadership team to create the final draft of the strategic plan.

Step 4. Share and Monitor the Plan. The leadership team needs to actively share the final plan and continue to share progress in implementation of the plan with key stakeholders. You may have wasted your time if you don't actively do this. Strategic plans are action-oriented documents. They are designed to be flexible and to encourage "buy-in" by key people. This step increased the likely hood of success in implementing your strategic plan.

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APWA MICHIGAN ROADS SCHOLAR PROGRAM

AN INVESTMENT IN YOUR TEAMMATES AND YOUR COMMUNITY

Steve Ludwig, Ludwig Speaks, LLC

In a day and age when great teammates are getting more difficult to find, we need to find better ways to recruit and retain our talent. Teammates are looking for all kinds of different things, one of which is a future that includes support from the management team and an opportunity for personal growth. The APWA Michigan Chapter has been meeting this need for many years via the Michigan Roads Scholar Program. The program is designed for front line road right of way teammates and meets the needs of many other teammates within public works teams as well. Over three successive years, participants attend a week long course each fall that exposes them to many different aspects of road right of way maintenance policies, processes, procedures, and techniques.

Last year the committee made a wonderful observation on opening night. We have created a program where teammates from communities all over the state come together, network, build relationships, and are ready to discuss the challenges and topics that face them all. This networking is unheard of at the front-line level. We could not be happier to provide a program where our teammates get the front line and technical expertise they require while forming career long relationships, friendships, coaches, and mentors.

This past year we had over 80 attendees and graduated an amazing third-year class. Class sessions this year included personality temperament exercises, pesticide training and testing, chainsaw maintenance, first aid, salt spreader use and calibration, and a great session on self-care called, I Am The Machine. We also had an engaging rotating stations day which included training and practical application sessions on ropes and knots, trailers, ratchet straps and binder straps, chainsaw maintenance, and construction zone set up.

Again, today, when teammates are demanding training and other opportunities, how can we not afford to invest in them? What better way to show them what a great organization they work for than to send them to the APWA Michigan Roads Scholar Program? We would be grateful to serve you and your teams. Please let us know if you have any questions. You can reach us at steve@ludwigspeaks.com, find us online at www.apwamrsp.com, or scan

the QR code.











2023 GREAT LAKE EXPO YP COMMITTEE RECAP

Rachel Jackson, OHM Advisors

The MI-APWA Young Professional (YP) Committee's favorite time of the year has come and gone again - the Great Lakes Expo (GLX)! This year's conference was hosted at Grand Traverse Resort and Spa May 23rd-25th and had comprehensive presentations that covered management, fleet, and operations for public works. The YP Committee spent the time attending colleagues' and friends' technical presentations, roaming the exhibit floor, and attending extracurricular events outside the set conference schedule. The GLX conference is a highlight of the year because it provides an opportunity to connect with other industry professionals who we may not typically have access to throughout the year. The GLX conference allows us to further our mission "to grow, connect, and expand the network of young professionals within the public work's community". Starting on Monday evening, the YP Committee hosted a "Meet and Greet" casual event at McGee's 72 that allowed fellow APWA members to get to know the committee, what their roles are, and share what they would like to gain from their membership as a young professional in APWA. We encouraged all APWA members to join us and we received incredible support from our mentors within the organization. Consultants, municipalities, and product suppliers were among those who attended this informal networking event. The YPs enjoyed this low-key event so much we hope to keep it on the calendar for years to come!

The YP Committee had simultaneous events on the first day of the conference that included the golf outing and wine tasting tour. Both events had a great turn out; the wineries in Traverse City are arguably the best in the state. We appreciate everyone at the golf outing who participated at the "Challenge Hole" and supported the YP Committee in raising funds to aid in future YP events! The YP Committee came together in the evening to host our annual Welcome Event. This year's theme was the "Kentucky Derby" and MI-APWA went all out





YP members at the Welcome Reception

with fancy hats and good spirits. Congratulations to our outfit winners: James Hurt for best men's outfit, Nancy Kolinski for best female outfit, and Rebecca Kritzman who won best hat. The YP Committee has the most fun hosting the Welcome Event for the annual conference; a lot of effort is put into making it a grand event for all attendees and we're confident that's how it's received.

The conference was easily navigable using the mobile app; attendees could even connect with other attendees through the messenger feature. Checking in and out of the technical sessions on Wednesday and Thursday was made easy through QR codes posted on the doors of the rooms. The YPs are impressed with the technology GLX 2023 had available; it sets this conference apart from other professional events we've attended. Furthermore, the exhibit space was large enough for all the exhibitor booths in addition to maintenance vehicles that were out for display. We appreciated the networking time programmed between technical sessions on the exhibit floor throughout the conference.

While we all had different schedules throughout the conference, we managed to come together in the evenings to enjoy the social activities with colleagues and friends. Undoubtedly the most memorable evening is the Awards Ceremony and casino night that wrapped up the conference on Thursday. The ladies of APWA had a fashion theme of "animal print" and they showed out! Congratulations to all the Project of the Year awardees, and the runners-up! Not to mention the winners at the casino night who took home baskets. It was a great change of pace to enjoy the casino games with fellow APWA members; we made new connections with some friendly competition.

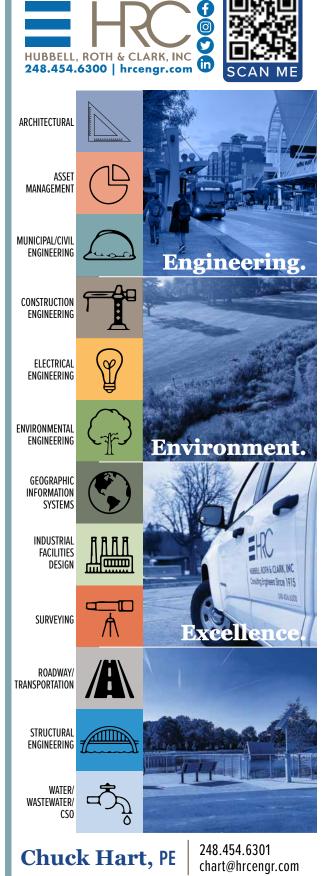


Winners of the Kentucky Derby welcome event costume contest.

The YP Committee would like to thank everyone who worked, volunteered, presented, sponsored, and attended the 2023 Great Lakes Expo – it's because of all of you that the conference was such a success! We are already planning the next Welcome Event theme for GLX 2024! Please feel free to email ypcommittee@ apwamichigan.com to connect with us and keep a look out for YP Committee hosted events that will be coming to a chapter near you!



YP members at GLX Casino Night





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2023 PROJECT OF THE YEAR **AWARDS**

At GLX this past May we recognized our 2023 Project of the Year Awards. The APWA Michigan Chapter Public Works Project of the Year Award was established to promote excellence in the management and administration of public works projects by recognizing the alliance between the managing agency, the consultant/architect/engineer, and the contractor who, working together, complete public works projects.



ROUGE RIVER AOC - WAYNE COUNTY PARKS HABITAT RESTORATION

Category: Environment — \$1 million to \$5 million

Agencies: Wayne County Parks & Alliance of Rouge Communities

Contractor: Anglin Civil, LLC

Consultant: Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc.



MARKET AVE SEWER RELOCATION

Category: Environment — \$5 million to \$25 million

Agency: City of Grand Rapids

Contractor: Kamminga and Roodvoets Inc. Consultants: Progressive AE & Fishbeck



CLINTON TOWNSHIP SSO ELIMINATION PROJECTS

Category: Environment — \$25 million to \$75 million

Agency: Charter Township of Clinton Contractor: Applied Science, Inc.

Consultant: Anderson, Eckstein & Westrick, Inc.



CITY OF KALAMAZOO FARMERS MARKET

Category: Quality of Life — \$1 million to \$5 million

Agency: City of Kalamazoo Parks & Recreation

Contractor: Miller-Davis Company

Consultant: Prein & Newhof



CHARLES & LYNN ZHANG PORTAGE COMMUNITY SENIOR CENTER

Category: Quality of Life — \$5 million to \$25 million

Agency: City of Portage

Contractors: AVB & USA Earthworks

Consultants: Hurley & Stewart & Byce & Associates, Inc.

2023 AWARDS CONTINUED



FARMINGTON HILLS HERITAGE PARK BRIDGE

Category: Structures — Less than \$1 million

Agency: City of Farmington Hills Contractor: L.J. Construction, Inc.

Consultant: Hubbell, Roth and Clark, Inc.



MANISTEE SHORELINE PROTECTION

Category: Structures — \$1 million to \$5 million

Agency: City of Manistee

Contractor: Swidorski Brothers Excavating LLC

Consultant: Spicer Group Inc.



US-131/M-179 INTERCHANGE

Category: Structures — \$5 million to \$25 million

Agencies: Gun Lake Tribe & MDOT

Contractors: Kamminga & Roodvoets & Anlaan

Consultant: Fleis & VandenBrink



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PEDESTRIAN CROSSING ENHANCEMENTS

Category: Transportation — Less than \$1 million

Agencies: City of Grand Rapids & Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.

Contractor: Nagel Construction, Inc. Consultant: Hubbell, Roth & Clark, Inc.



SEMINOLE ROAD RECONSTRUCTION & STREETSCAPE

Category: Transportation — \$1 million to \$5 million

Agency: City of Norton Shores

Contractors: Brenner Excavating, Inc. & Kamminga & Roodvoets, Inc.

Consultant: Eng., Inc.



AVON ROAD AT DEQUINDRE ROAD, BRIDGE, AND **ROUNDABOUT**

Category: Transportation — \$5 million to \$25 million

Agency: Road Commission for Oakland County

Contractor: Z Contractors Consultant: OHM Advisors



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2023 AWARDS CONTINUED



BEAR CREEK SINKHOLE & SPRAY LINING

Category: Emergency Response — Less than \$1 million

Agency: Macomb County Public Works Contractor: Oscar Renda Contracting Consultant: FK Engineering Associates



120-INCH WATER TRANSMISSION MAIN BREAK

Category: Emergency Response — \$1 million to \$5 million

Agency: Great Lakes Water Authority Contractor: Ric-Man Construction, Inc.

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2023 ROD KORHORN MEMORIAL GOLF OUTING

FUTURE ENGINEER RECEIVES MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Kristen McCue, GCSI Association Services

On a perfect summer day in July, overlooking one of west Michigan's most beautiful golf courses – Saskatoon Golf Club – Andrew Thompson, a promising engineering student, received the Rod Korhorn Memorial Scholarship.

Every year since 2015, the Midwest Michigan Branch of APWA has awarded the \$1.200 scholarship to a student in honor of Rod Korhorn. The annual Rod Korhorn Memorial Scholarship Golf Outing raises funds for the scholarship. This year, a record 160 golfers participated in the fundraiser, which also raised an unprecedented amount in sponsorships.

Korhorn died suddenly and unexpectedly from cardiac arrest on December 21, 2014. He left behind his wife, Karen, to whom he was married almost 13 years, and four children: Rachel, Evan, Kathleen, and Kimberly.



Rod Korhon's family, from left: Dean, Barry, Evan, and Lance.

Korhorn, a civil engineer, worked for Prein&Newhof after graduating from Michigan Tech, and then spent a short time with Nathan Vriesman when they opened their own business, Vriesman and Korhorn.

"Rod loved working with the townships and had a knack for building working relationships in the area community," Karen Korhorn said. "We



Andrew (left) shaking hands with John Gorney, City of Grand Rapids.

miss him dearly. Thank you for your generosity by remembering him through the APWA scholarship. He was a humble man, and this would have touched him greatly."

It's especially fitting that this year's recipient is a fellow Michigan Tech student.

A 2023 graduate of Grand Haven High School, Thompson will attend Michigan Tech to study civil engineering, with a minor in municipal engineering. During high school he enjoyed architecture and physics, so civil engineering was a natural draw.

Thompson has worked for the City of Grand Haven the last two summers, most recently serving as a shift leader on the waterfront crew. He plans to work for the city throughout college, hopefully returning to work in his community after graduation.

"Working for the city has given me many experiences of what kind of promising career lies ahead for me," Thompson said. "Whenever I am working around town, I am always thinking of things that could be revitalized in future projects that I'll hopefully be part of one day."

TEACHING THE NEXT GENERATION:

WATER CAREERS CAMP FOR 6TH-9TH GRADERS

Hillary Caron, Water Education & Programs Coordinator, City of Grand Rapids Water System

For two consecutive summers, the City of Grand Rapids has seized a remarkable opportunity by partnering with Grand Rapids Community College to organize a highly impactful threeday summer camp. This exceptional program delves into the diverse and gratifying careers in Water, Wastewater, and Public Works. The camp's unique approach combines placebased, student-centered learning, creating an immersive and educational experience that ensures the participants have a blast too!

Driving this initiative is Hillary Caron, the Water Education and Programs Coordinator at the City of Grand Rapids, who not only spearheaded the design and implementation but also facilitated the camp. The success of the endeavor was a collaborative effort involving more than 40 City staff members, four community partner organizations, and multiple City Departments. Their combined efforts resulted in an unforgettable experience for all campers, generating awareness and excitement for rewarding careers in Public Works. What is even more remarkable is that the camp came at no cost to the participants, thanks to strategic funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the generosity of the Eric Scott Memorial Scholarship Fund.

The Water Career Camp is founded upon the Urban/Human Water Cycle, offering an engaging exploration of each step in the cycle every day. On the first day, the campers discovered their roles as water users and gained insights into the infrastructure and the dedicated people behind the delivery of clean drinking water to their homes. Additionally, they learned about various Public Works careers, indirectly related to water but crucial for maintaining the cleanliness of our waterways and cities.

The second day of the camp was dedicated to understanding the origins of drinking water and its treatment process. Students visited Lake



Camper opening a valve to check whether the water main repair was successful.

Michigan, where they engaged in hands-on water quality testing. The Grand Rapids Park Department contributed to the excitement, emphasizing the significance of water filtration during recreational activities. At the Grand Rapids Lake Michigan Filtration Plant, campers interacted with informative stations to explore careers in drinking water while learning about the treatment process.

On the final day, participants delved into the journey of water after it is used and its return to the environment. Visiting the Grand Rapids Water Resource Recovery Facility, campers learned about sewer maintenance and the wide array of tools employed in the process. The facility tour culminated in a captivating career showcase, where enthusiastic staff members passionately shared their love for their jobs, including operators, electricians, mechanics, instrument technicians, and storekeepers. In the afternoon, the campers visited a local park





Campers work together to decide what materials to use in their filter.

to study river water quality and the various methods used to test the health of natural waters. They even donned waders to sample macroinvertebrates in the Grand River and explored the careers of stormwater engineers, understanding the importance of natural buffers to maintain water purity.

The camp's success can be attributed to a combination of field trips, hands-on water quality testing, expert guidance, team challenges, and inspiring guest speakers. As a result, the next generation of Public Works professionals is undoubtedly on the rise, fueled by the passion and knowledge imparted during this transformative experience.

If interested in learning more or how to incorporate components of the camps, reach out to Hillary Caron at hcaron@grcity.us or 616-456-3930.



Camper and Grand Rapids Industrial Pretreatment Program Inspector collecting Grand River water quality samples.



Camper uses his dip net to catch macroinvertebrates!

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OPEN TO BUSINESS:

GROWING A SMALL PROJECT INTO A BIG COMMUNITY BENEFIT

Danell Smith, P.E., Fleis & VandenBrink Engineering

The City of Norton Shores has worked over the past couple of years to make improvements to their water and sewer system. What started off as a water main replacement project has evolved to a larger water and sewer replacement project.

This water main replacement project includes replacing and upsizing 5,175 feet of 6-inch, 8-inch and 10-inch water main throughout the city's system. The project also includes lead service line replacement where needed throughout the project area to comply with the Lead and Copper Rule requirements. With this big undertaking, the city recognized the recent supply chain challenges for pipe and fittings were going to impact the construction timeline. The city took the initiative to preorder the materials after the design was complete to keep the project moving ahead in a timely manner. This forward-thinking action by the city has led to reasonable project completion times in order to get roads back in working order for ease of residents and businesses in Norton Shores. Along with these supply chain challenges, the city also had to work through easement acquisition from four local businesses before they were able to obtain the necessary project permits. Some of these easements were required to reroute water lines, while the other easements were needed to eliminate dead-end segments within the system.

The sewer improvements portion of the project includes combining two failing lift stations on Henry Street and Sheffield Street into one new lift station by switching the direction of wastewater flow and obtaining an additional easement from a neighboring property. The city has worked over the past several years with these lift stations in poor conditions, taking many hours of manpower and funds to keep them running. Matt Anderson, Norton Shores' Water and Sewer Superintendent, shares his excitement for the project. "We were able to capitalize on an opportunity to address the

continued issues with two failing lift stations, all while having the benefits of eliminating one station from our system."



This slide rail shoring system was used to install the lift station wet well.

The city is also looking forward to upgrading to better technology for their lift stations. Over the past few years, they have been working to standardize their controls, alarms, and equipment at their 45 (soon to be 44) stations they operate and maintain. This new station is a submersible duplex lift station complete with the city's Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) monitoring system.

Fleis & VandenBrink (F&V) has been assisting the city with design and construction of the project. During the predesign review process of the project site, F&V's Environmental team identified an area of potential soil contamination due to an old underground storage tank from an adjacent site. A FOIA request to EGLE was used to gather data on the contamination type and levels to properly account for the potential impact to the project. Stipulations were then

OPEN TO BUSINESS CONTINUED

included in the construction contract to allow for contaminated soils testing and non-hazardous contamination materials handling and disposal.

The new lift station is 8 feet in diameter and 24 feet deep and was installed utilizing a slide rail shoring system. The new force main was connected in Henry Street to the existing force main that was constructed in 2007. This connection required a temporary wye to be installed so the force main could be utilized for both the existing and new lift stations. During the temporary force main connection, the contractor had pump and haul services on standby for the existing lift station, and hydroexcavation was utilized to minimize the area disturbed. After the new lift station is completed and the sanitary sewer is constructed to switch the direction of the flow, both the existing lift stations can be decommissioned, and the force main connection point can be modified for a permanent connection.

One challenge of the project is constructing sewers approximately 10 feet deep through the easement of the local auto dealership's parking



The new, recently completed lift station.

lot while maintaining access to the dealership so they could continue to run their business. The contractor coordinated closely with the business to avoid disruption during one of the dealership's largest sales events as well as maintain access to their service garage and ensure safety of their customers.



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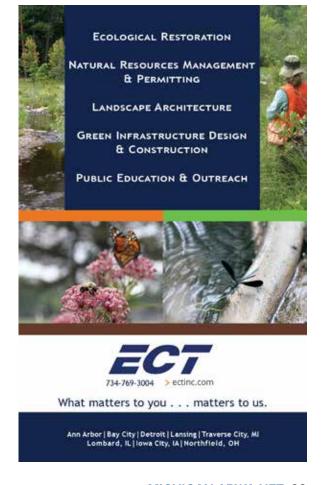
During the course of the project, the proposed pipes will cross the City of Muskegon Heights' 30-inch concrete transmission water main three times: once with the sanitary sewer and twice with the water main. During design, the city, with the assistance of F&V, used hydro-excavation to locate the water transmission main and obtain an elevation to determine if there was adequate clearance between this important main and the proposed pipes.

As this project surrounds major streets within the Norton Shores area, traffic control has been an important consideration from design through construction. An MDOT permit was needed for multiple detour routes over the duration of the project. As construction began to impact these major roads, the city, F&V, and the contractor have worked closely with local businesses and residents to continue access to surrounding areas. Assisting with access has included notifying the businesses and homeowners before construction began to explain the work happening and how we can work together to keep businesses going. "Open to Business" signs have been put up and temporary drives have been made off the perpendicular streets to allow safe access to those trying to get to the businesses within the construction zone.

Construction of the project started in May 2023 and is scheduled to be completed in October 2023. The city is excited that a project that was once a simple water main replacement has progressed into a years-long water and sewer replacement project that will benefit businesses and residents for years to come. The completion of this project now will allow them to spend their time and resources on other assets and provide a better service to their customers.



Maintaining access for residents and businesses and creating a safe construction site has been a priority from design through construction.



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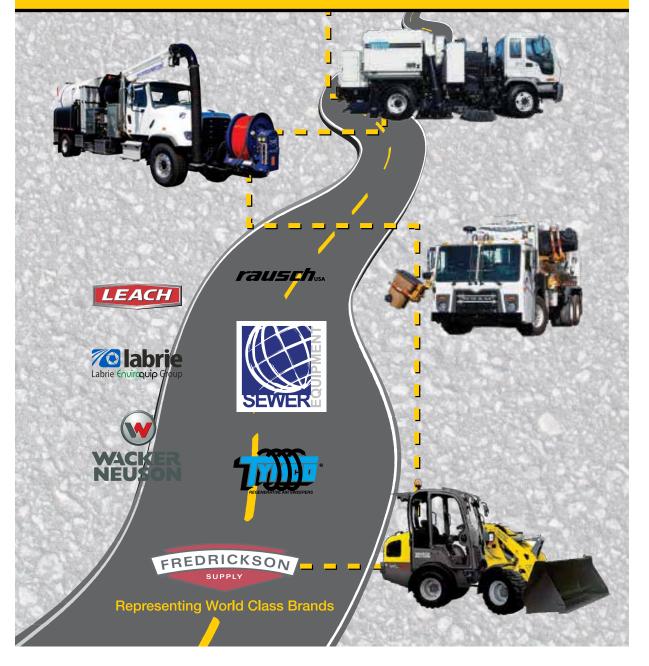




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