



great lakes REPORTER

A Publication of American Public Works Association - Michigan Chapter • Vol 125 • No. 3 • Fall/Winter 2023

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—
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In this Issue...

- 4** **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**
- 7** **GLX 2024 CALL FOR PRESENTERS**
- 9** **YOU ARE NOT TRAINING YOU!**
- 16** **YP COMMITTEE CONNECTS MEMBERS AT LAKE MICHIGAN WATER FILTRATION PLANT TOUR**
- 20** **2024 PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT OF THE YEAR AWARD** (*Submissions due January 12*)
- 22** **TOM TRICE: A MAN WITH A MISSION**
- 25** **HITTING CONES AND AVOIDING BARRELS: 2023 SNOWPLOW ROADEO**
- 28** **CHAPTER SPONSORS**
- 31** **BECOME A 2024 CHAPTER SPONSOR**
- 33** **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**
- 34** **THANK YOU ADVERTISERS**

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dan Sorek, Prein&Newhof

Remember that crisp, clean autumn air after a fresh snowfall, the kind that makes you want to crunch through leaves and savor a hot cup of cider? That's how I feel looking back on 2023 in Michigan's public works world. It's been a whirlwind, yes, but a crisp, satisfying one, leaving the scent of progress and resilience in its wake.

This year the association saw one of our best attended Great Lakes Expos to date. We celebrated some amazing public works projects with our annual awards program. **James Hurt** very deservedly received the Hal Hulquist Award. We put on great events with the help of our Young Professionals Committee and area branches – the Grand Rapids Water Plant tour and the Snowplow Roadeo featured in this issue being some of those highlights. Our own **Larry Hummel** was elected Region V Director. It was an incredible year.

Infrastructure investments have also ignited across the state, like that \$342 million facelift for our beloved Mackinac Bridge, a beacon of progress stretching through the heart of our Great Lakes. It's thrilling to see how these projects weave together, strengthening the arteries of our communities, from gleaming new roads to upgraded water systems that keep life flowing smoothly.

We've also faced the heat of workforce challenges, the chill of budget squeezes, and the unpredictable gusts of climate change. But that's where the real Michigan grit shines through. Our Young Professionals Committee tackled workforce needs with the infectious enthusiasm of a snowball fight, building bridges (metaphorically, of course) between seasoned pros and curious newcomers. We're reaching further now, planting seeds of passion in high school classrooms, showing kids the thrill of shaping a community from the ground up.

Because that's what it's all about, isn't it? Not just the nuts and bolts, but the heart and soul of what we do. We build more than roads and bridges; we build connections, resilience, and a future where every Michigander can thrive.

So, as the snow settles on 2023, let's raise a glass (or a hot chocolate mug, the weatherman dictates) to each other. To the tireless crews battling blizzards, the engineers dreaming of tomorrow's infrastructure marvels, and the students catching the spark of purpose. We are the Michigan public works family, and together, we'll keep this state humming like a well-oiled snowplow, ready for whatever the next season throws our way.

Here's to a 2024 filled with innovation, grit, and that unique brand of Michigan magic that keeps us pushing forward. I appreciate you!

May you have Safe and Happy Holidays,

Dan

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Topics are being requested for the following categories:

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- Roads, Streets, Bridges (pavement, performance, work zone safety, snow and ice control, etc.)
- Traffic Engineering (street and intersection design, traffic calming, community mobility issues, etc.)
- Right-of-Way Issues
- Solid Waste Management Issues
- Engineering and Technology (emerging design and technology trends)
- Emergency Management/Preparedness and Infrastructure Security Issues
- Fleet Services and Management (maintenance and replacement practices, green fleet issues, emissions reduction, customer service, shop and parts management, etc.)
- Facilities Management (inventory systems, condition assessments, green design, LEED certification, public works yard management, etc.)
- Urban Forestry (sidewalk issues, tree replacement programs, recycling green waste, etc.)
- Construction Management (project management, project delivery systems, bidding, contracting)
- Stormwater and Flood Control
- Water and Wastewater

CURRENT AND EMERGING TRENDS

- Economic, societal, technology, and demographic trends and their impact on public works services
- Sustainable public works design and operations, smart growth, low impact development, climate change impacts on infrastructure planning, renewable energy
- Workforce issues, emerging technologies and new use for current technologies
- The business side of public works
- Public/private partnerships
- Financing public projects and the impact of federal economic stimulus program
- Budgeting
- Communicating with elected officials, residents and employees
- Media relations and public/community involvement

PUBLIC WORKS LEADERSHIP

- Core values and competencies of the best public works leaders
- Critical issues facing public works today and visions for the future
- Human resources issues (employee recruitment, retention, motivation, etc.)
- Systems thinking related to public works services and infrastructure planning

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Session Length: Please indicate the expected length of your presentation (30, 50, 75 minutes). APWA will try to allocate your requested number of minutes; however, due to space limitations and time constraints, we may be asking you to shorten your presentation or perhaps to combine your presentation with similar-themed submissions into a longer time block.

Scheduling: We are unable to accommodate specific date and time requests. Speakers should be available to present on any day and time beginning at 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, May 22, 2024 and through the late afternoon of Thursday, May 23, 2024.

No Sales-Pitches Please: Direct promotions of products, services, or monetary self-interest are not appropriate education sessions.

Registration and Travel Expenses: Speakers at the Michigan Chapter – APWA's Annual Conference are also considered attendees of the event and are expected to pay their own travel expenses and the appropriate registration fee. Speakers that plan to attend only on the day of their presentation may be eligible for a complimentary single-day registration.

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YOU ARE NOT TRAINING YOU!

THE CHALLENGES OF TRAINING A NEW AND DIFFERENT GENERATION OF LEARNERS

Lewis G. Bender, Ph.D.

We hear it frequently. "They have no attention span. They just don't listen. They think they know more than I do." It is not uncommon to hear "seasoned" supervisors complaining about new young employees and their apparent inability to learn, let alone retain, key elements of the job.

If you are in your mid-to-late 30s or older, numerous things have changed that directly impact how you learn compared to younger learners. Clearly, we are not talking about every one of the approximately 83 million people between 16 and 35 years of age. Indeed, in my research, I have concluded that the topic of generational change and its impacts on learners is not about how old you happen to be. Rather, it is about how you were raised and the challenges you did or did not face in your



Training across generations requires an understanding of generational differences.

childhood. This discussion is about significant trends and changes that have directly impacted many people in the 16-35 cohort and their predisposition to learning.

So, what are some of those changes, and how do they affect many young learners? And finally, what are some of the things that YOU as a teacher can do to reach and teach this group?

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES AND TRENDS THAT HAVE IMPACTED YOUNG ADULT LEARNERS

> Problem-Solving. Or the lack of it. Supervisors and trainers consistently complain about the lack of problem-solving skills of many younger workers. "They couldn't work their way out of a wet paper bag." "They are constantly asking me: What do I do next?" Leaders are often placed in a position where they must do their own jobs and do all the thinking for their younger staff. This is not about intelligence. Rather, it is about skill sets acquired

“ THE DAYS OF HAPHAZARD NON-PLANNED TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ARE LONG GONE. ”

TRAINING CONTINUED

or not acquired during childhood socialization. Yes, we were all young and dumb in the early stages of our lives.

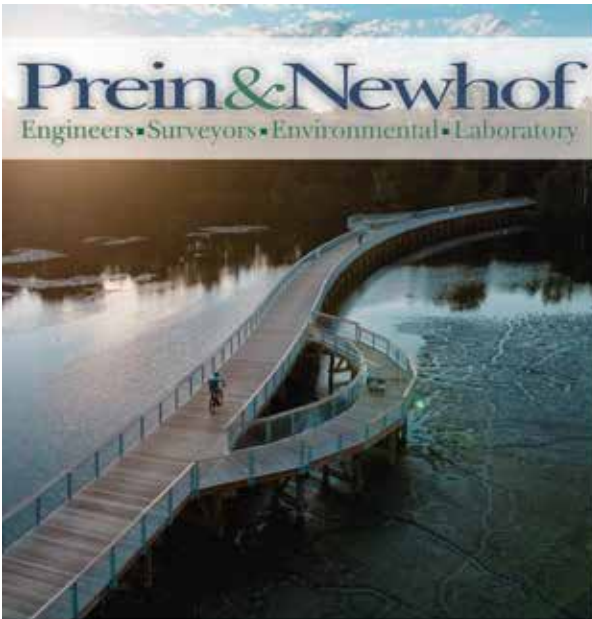
It's about how you played as a child and how young people tend to play today. When you were a kid, you typically escaped your home, found friends, and played. Your momma might have said, "Come home when the streetlights come on." The rest of the time, you and your friends "owned" whatever play you did. You might have played baseball, football, skating, hopscotch, or built a fort. There was no adult to tell you what to do or how to do it. You had to communicate with your friends, determine what you wanted to do, figure out how to do it, and hold each other accountable for doing your fair share of the "work." Indeed, how many times did you play baseball with fewer than nine players on each side? In your play, you problem-solved the issue(s) and created and enforced the rules. No adults and no umpires. Think about what you learned.

You learned problem-solving, self-directed play, how to play/work with others, and how to anticipate and be proactive in problem-solving.

Well, what is play like today? The way you may have played, free-range play, is much less

prevalent today. Sociologists talk about two dominant forms: Adult Supervised Play and Digital Play. Both forms have had significant impacts on problem-solving skills in young people. In adult-supervised play, the coach and the referee are the primary "owners" of the play. Clearly, adult-supervised play is a good thing. But not when it almost totally replaces free-range play. When adults determine the strategies, rules, processes, and outcomes of play they become the owners. Children in adult-directed play are often told what to do and are not challenged to grapple with the tensions of making important decisions in a low-risk environment. They become renters, not owners of the decision.

Similarly, in digital play games, the successful gamer moves into a "reactive" mode instead of a proactive approach. Speed is an essential component of many digital games. If you are fast and react quickly, you will get more armies, weapons, points, etc. Your focus becomes much more immediate and less oriented to figuring out the larger goal than how to respond to the stimuli that the device presents at that moment. The rules, structure, game processes, and sanctions and rewards are presented as fixed. The gamer must react to the realities created



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for them. Decision-making, working with others in person, and coordinating multiple factors—like building a fort—are often lost in the digital world of play. This change impacts the roles of learners. Rather than figure it out, they become passive receptors of information and not active participants in the teaching-learning process.

Inter-Personal Communication. So, when you were young and walked down the street, your eyes were level, and you were expected to acknowledge—even engage—other people as you encountered them. As with your play, you needed to talk to others and deal with various personalities. You learned how to read body language, voice tone and deal with harmony and conflict in an interpersonal setting. You may have also learned tolerance and flexibility. You might have been viewed as odd or stand-offish if you didn't engage with others.

So, walk down the street or a busy hallway or a store today. The odds are that young and old faces are looking down at digital devices and are not aware of—let alone communicating—with others. For younger learners, this means they may not develop interpersonal communication skills that may help them learn and develop. In some cases, the young learner disguises the

inability to communicate with a negative attitude. "Whatever" they may say while rolling their eyes and sending closed body language signals. Communication skills have also been impacted by the changing nature of families and other social settings. We don't eat dinner together and talk to each other anymore. Screens and digital play often become replacements for interpersonal communication.

False Sense of High Self-Esteem. How many trophies did you receive as a child? Were they for being successful and for the hard work that it took to be successful? How many did you get for just showing up? Everybody gets a trophy for being there. We have seen this change evolve over the last several decades. Don't let a child ever fail. Reduce recognition to a zero-sum game in which we don't want to recognize the child who meritoriously succeeded because it will make the other children feel bad. We don't keep score when we play competitive games because we don't want the losers to feel bad.

Frequently, this often well-intended approach to children can have some very negative impacts. It goes to motivation and self-awareness.



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TRAINING CONTINUED

Suppose I am a winner without trying. Why try if I have been told I am wonderful regardless of what I do or don't do? Then why do? Now please, no one suggests that a child should ever be treated badly. They are at a precious time in their lives. Losing or failing is when they are the most capable of learning. During this time, they can learn from mistakes and failures in a positively reinforced environment. The worst time to lie to them is when they have failed or lost. Do not tell them that they succeeded when they didn't—or worse, when they didn't even try.

The false sense of self-esteem created in many young learners appears to have two negative consequences:

1. Their motivation levels to learn new and challenging things appears to be greatly reduced. They may not be accustomed to dealing with challenging things or challenging themselves.
2. Plate glass vs. Plexiglass. People who have done and accomplished things and dealt with failure are likelier to have an internal sense of confidence. Frequently, these individuals can sort through fact-based criticism vs. attack critiques and learn from the experiences. They are flexible. *They are Plexiglass.* People who have not done things and have not learned from mistakes and failures, and have been given trophies for not trying, do not have that internal sense of confidence. They often do not react well to even the slightest critique. *They are plate glass.* The slightest ding shatters them. They are very difficult to teach and tend to avoid learning challenges.

Numerous other changes have impacted younger learners compared to past generations. Divorce rates, changes in approaches to elementary and secondary education, views of authority, and the overall changing nature of families are some other factors impacting young people and the people expected to lead and teach them. So as a trainer and supervisor, what are some approaches for successfully addressing these changes regarding how you teach the younger cohort? How do you adjust to the reality that you are not training you?

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING YOUNGER LEARNERS

Teach By Question. Stop being the owner of the learning process. Help them to own problems, ideas, options, and solutions. So when there is an issue, you might ask them: "How are you going to handle this? What if this happens when you do that?" Or if it is a more complex problem/issue, ask them to come back in an hour with their idea of how to get it done. Learning requires ownership by the learner. It would help if you stopped owning it and solving their problem. Ask them to figure it out. After initial instruction, don't tell them how to do it.

Help Them to Fail (Safely). How many things did you learn from your mistakes? Many young learners are risk averse. They aren't accustomed to trial and error in a non-digital world. "Talk about it-do it-then talk about it" is a very effective methodology. Don't judge or be critical. Rather, de-brief and problem-solve. "So, Jane, what worked and what didn't? How would you do it differently next time?"

Use Scenarios. Scenarios are a great low-risk teaching tool for helping novice workers. One public works operation brought the supervisors together to identify likely situations that young workers would eventually encounter. They wrote up several one-page scenarios-each ending with three-to-five questions and used them as an instructional tool. The result was that younger workers were engaged in discussing and learning how to handle certain situations.

Touch it, Then Talk About it. Much of the work in public works or road commission operations involve heavy equipment and physical labor. Urban and suburban kids are not necessarily familiar with these things. Indeed, they may even be intimidated or overwhelmed by the nature of the machinery and the work. Ride-alongs and work alongs with supportive people can be very useful in breaking through the fears and lack of knowledge of many younger workers. Consider doing these things as part of the hiring process as well as part of the initial training period.

Supervisors and Trainers Get on the Same Page. The days of haphazard non-planned training and development are long gone. Supervisors and trainers must get on the same page and benchmark a young worker's skills in the first year. And then, the supervisory

team must provide consistent messages and techniques for developing the new employee's skills. The message starts with first-line supervisors identifying the skills that a person must have throughout their probationary period. What should they know/be able to do by months two, four, six, etc.? When a probationary employee starts, there should be consistent ongoing discussions about how they are doing and whether decisions need to be made about their further training or employment.

In my four-plus decades of working with public works operations, I have watched the demands of the public, elected leaders and state and federal agencies increase exponentially. I can't name any area where the demands are less now than in the past. Yet, human, financial, and other resources are flat or declining over the same period. With this reality, public works leaders cannot afford to treat training and development in an out-of-date or ineffective manner.



A blue rectangular graphic with a white border. At the top is the logo for Fleis & Vandenberg, which consists of a stylized square icon above the company name "FLEIS & VANDENBRINK" in a bold, sans-serif font. Below the name is the tagline "DESIGN. BUILD. OPERATE." in a smaller font. A horizontal line separates this from the main text below, which reads "INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR WHERE WE LIVE, WORK, AND PLAY" in a large, white, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the graphic, the contact information "800.494.5202 | www.fveng.com" is displayed in a smaller white font.

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YP Committee Connects Members at Lake Michigan Water Filtration Plant Tour

Zoe E. Wahr, EIT, Wade Trim

The APWA Michigan Chapter – Young Professionals Committee leads efforts to grow, connect, and expand the network of young professionals in public works year-round. Each month, the committee aims to host an educational or social networking event. Some events are co-hosted with other professional organizations, such as the Pistons game with the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). Other events are coordinated by the committee, like the Northern Concrete Pipe Plant tour on March 14, 2023, or the Warren Wastewater Treatment Plant tour on April 19, 2023. The committee's goals are: to provide a community for members, be a resource for



Grand Rapids Water Manhole Cover

growth and continued education, host an annual state-wide young professionals meeting to welcome new members, provide updates on events and opportunities, and connect members with industry leaders and peers.

For October 2023, the Young Professionals Committee worked with Hillary Caron, Water Education and Programs Coordinator for the City of Grand

Rapids, to host a tour of the Lake Michigan Water Filtration Plant. The tour started at the low lift pump station on the Lake Michigan shoreline and ended in the Filtration Plant, where participants viewed a cross section of the two filter profiles and underdrain technologies used for final particle removal. We also learned



Participants of the Grand Rapids Water Filtration Plant Tour took a short break for a group photo in front of the low lift pump station.

about the history of the Grand Rapids water system, which was planned in 1875. The Coldbrook Pumping Station was constructed in 1910 to pump filtered water upon completion of the Monroe Treatment Facility in 1912. In the 1940s, due to poor water quality in the Grand River, a raw water transmission main was constructed from Lake Michigan to the Monroe facility. Many participants were surprised to learn that in 1945, the City of Grand Rapids became the first drinking water system in the world to add fluoride to support dental health of its customers. In 1962, the Lake Michigan Water Filtration Plant was completed and was operated concurrent to the Monroe Treatment Facility until 1992 when the city moved all treatment operations to their current location on the Lake Michigan shoreline to meet increased capacity needs of 135 million gallons per day. This is approximately equal to filling the gross floor area of Van Andel Arena with 61 feet of water.



This piece of wooden water main was part of the feeder line at the Coldbrook Pump Station. It was installed in 1887 and removed in 1961.

The tour comprehensively walked us through the water treatment process, starting at the two intakes in Lake Michigan and ending at customer taps in the greater Grand Rapids area. The process is continuously monitored for safety and quality by state licensed operators, chemists, and water distribution technicians to ensure safe drinking water delivery. After raw water is pumped from Lake Michigan to the plant by the low service pumps, gravity is used to move it throughout, until treated drinking water is pumped over 25 miles to Grand Rapids. A high lift pump station is used to distribute water to roughly 320,000 customers across approximately 137 square miles. On average,



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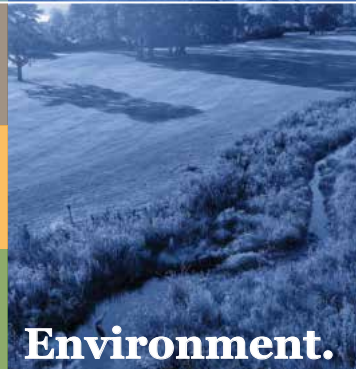
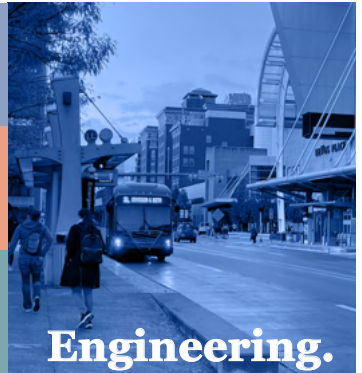
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WATER PLANT CONTINUED

the daily demand is 35 million gallons, with increases in the summer.

During the tour, we also learned about the internship program related to the Water Career Program hosted at the Lake Michigan Filtration Plant and Water Resource Recovery Facility. The program is designed for those interested in the water and wastewater industry, made up of six individuals per cohort. Each individual works 24 hours a week for 52 weeks as Utility Aide Interns in their area of interest in addition to completing online coursework through the Bay College Water Resource Management Program, which is funded by a federal grant as part of the internship program. For more information about this program, reach out to waterprogram@grcity.us.

Following the tour, all participants and speakers were invited to Odd Side Ales in Grand Haven for a social hour generously sponsored by Wade Trim. Attendees were encouraged to network and make new connections. In total, 21 individuals took part in the tour. Of those

that attended, six were registered young professionals members, four general members and 11 non-members. During the networking portion of the event, the Young Professionals Committee obtained feedback from all participants.



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Whether it be an idea for an event, a way to improve registration, or an interest in getting involved with APWA in general, the committee is continuously looking for ways to better serve its members.

The Young Professionals Committee is always looking for new members. The ideal committee member is (or will be) an active member of a Michigan APWA Branch, aged 35 or younger, with the desire to create opportunities for themselves and peers to enhance their careers and broaden their professional network. If you are interested in learning more, have an idea for an event, or want to chat with a committee member about their role, please reach out to the committee at ypcommittee@apwamichigan.com.



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2024 PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT OF THE YEAR AWARDS

NOMINATIONS DUE JANUARY 12, 2024

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.

Public works is defined as the physical structures and facilities that are developed, owned, and maintained by public agencies to house governmental functions and provide water, power, waste disposal, transportation, and similar public services in accordance with established public policy.

To be eligible for nomination, a project must have been “substantially completed” and available for public and/or agency use within two calendar years prior to nomination. If a project has multiple phases or segments, then “substantially completed” will be construed as that point when the final phase or segment is 90% completed and available for public and/or agency use.

A project may only be nominated once for recognition as “Project of the Year” under any category. Contact William Fisher, PE, APWA Michigan Chapter Awards Chairperson, with questions at William.Fisher@wsp.com or (313) 363-0532.

PROJECT CATEGORIES

Disaster or Emergency Construction/Repair - to include techniques and timing for safety, community relations, environmental protection, adverse conditions and additional considerations.

Environment - to include treatment and recycling facilities, landfill reclamation projects, sewer projects, etc.

Government Cooperation - to include multiple community ventures or cost sharing means. (No cost divisions for this category. Capital projects are not eligible.)

Historical Restoration/Preservation - to include historical restoration, preservation and adaptive reuse of existing buildings, structures, and facilities, etc.

Quality of Life - to include parks, monuments, community planning, urban renewal and streetscape.

Structures - to include public structure preservation/rehabilitation, municipal buildings, parks, etc.

Transportation - to include roads, bridges, mass transit, etc.

NOMINATION FORM >>



FILE UPLOADS >>



Please address each of the following areas in your nomination, adhering to the sequence below when possible.

1. Use of good construction management techniques and completion of the project on schedule.
2. Safety performance and demonstrated awareness of the need for a good overall safety program during construction, where applicable.
3. Community relations as evidenced by efforts to minimize public inconvenience due to construction, safety precautions to protect public lives and property, provision of observation areas, guided tours, or other means of improving relations between agency and the public.
4. Demonstrated awareness for the need to protect the environment. This includes any special considerations given to particular environmental concerns raised during the course of the project.
5. Unusual accomplishments under adverse conditions including, but not limited to, age

or condition of the facility, adverse weather, soil or other site conditions over which there is no control.

6. Additional conditions deemed of importance to the public works agency, such as exceptional efforts to maintain quality control and, if value engineering is used, construction innovations as evidenced by time and/or money saving techniques developed and/or successfully utilized.
7. Use of alternative materials, practices or funding that demonstrates a commitment to sustainability, climate change resiliency, and/or use of sustainable infrastructure rating system or the equivalent.

NOTE: Supporting documentation is limited to 20 pages, exclusive of photographs and nomination form and shall be in pdf format. Photographs will be used for promotional purposes by the association and should be submitted as a .jpeg, .bmp, or .gif. Submittal should include nomination form and supporting documentation form, and photographs. No letters of recommendation please.



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TOM TRICE: A MAN WITH A MISSION

Kristen McCue, GCSI Association Services

A chilly October morning at Buck's Run Golf Course in Mt. Pleasant gave way to a brisk, albeit sunny, day for 40 golfers – all of whom gathered in the name of an industry leader. The guest of honor: Tom Trice.

What better place to “raise some green” than on the green?

That's the goal of the **Tom Trice Annual Golf Outing**, which is expected to grow in the following years. Now in its second year, the event is a scholarship fundraiser for educational programs, such as MPSI and Road Scholar. This year, Trice's family joined him on the course to help raise some cash.

“Education and advocacy are two of the main goals of APWA,” Trice said. “Education is important because we need to save lives. We need to be educated on the programs – whether it's safety, leadership, or engineering.”

Trice has been active with the APWA Michigan Chapter in various capacities for several years. In fact, he's a forefather of MPSI, a three-year rigorous education program, which he helped create 30 years ago. It's now the top recognized program of its kind in North America.

Continuing to serve as chairman of MPSI to this day, Trice was president of APWA from 2004 to 2005.

Thanks to his unwavering commitment to improving industry standards and mentoring leaders, Trice has become a nationally renowned expert on infrastructure. In fact, throughout his tenure, the media have turned to Trice as a subject matter expert, and his wise words have appeared in dozens of news stories.



Tom (center) at the outing with his son and daughter-in-law

Trice is now a coach and consultant for local governments. In 2000, he retired as Bloomfield Township's director of public works – a position he held for 15 years. Prior, Trice served as deputy city manager for Royal Oak.

“Education is important because we need to save lives. We need to be educated on the programs – whether it's safety, leadership or engineering.”

-Tom Trice

“We're first responders and it's our responsibility to save people's lives, whether it's treating water, cleaning sewage...those types of things,” Trice said.

Trice's enthusiasm is contagious, said Don Rohraff, director of public works for the City of Livonia, who coordinated the outing.

“There's no doubt in my mind this will turn out to be a long-standing, large golf outing, producing multiple scholarships for the Road Scholar program or any other educational program Tom chooses to help,” Rohraff said.

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HITTING CONES AND AVOIDING BARRELS

2023 SNOWPLOW ROADEO

Kristen McCue, GCSI Association Services



The Roadeo mascot highlights the names of previous competition winners

It's not every day you'll see a local celebrity behind the wheel of a snowplow. But that's exactly what happened in October when a handful of West Michigan officials and elected leaders tried their best to navigate a tricky course.

The consensus: It's a lot harder than it looks.

That's precisely why APWA Michigan Chapter, Midwest Branch, hosts the Snowplow Roadeo and Equipment Show every year. Both experienced drivers and newbies can benefit from the skill development and educational opportunities the event provides.

The City of Norton Shores held this year's event at its Public Works Department.

"While this event is intended to help hone the skills of the plow drivers who are on the roads during the worst weather of the year to make our roads safe and passable, it is also intended to network and to share ideas, allow the vendors to showcase their equipment and services and also to be fun," said Gary Nelund, mayor of Norton Shores.

“It's a great networking opportunity. We can throw ideas off each other and later, contact each other in the winter.”

-Jason Miller, City of Wyoming



ROADEO CONTINUED

And of course, there's competition.

During the timed event, drivers compete for a total of 2,750 points, with each station worth varying points. The most difficult station, worth the most points, is the parked cars. Here, the objective is to hit the target cones, with each cone worth 100 points. But if drivers hit the barrels – which simulate parked cars – they lose 100 points.

Other obstacles include a ball tip, a makeshift alley and diminishing clearance. Drivers also receive points for attending education sessions, facilitated by Lew Bender, PhD, professor emeritus at Southern Illinois University, who specializes in management and supervision.

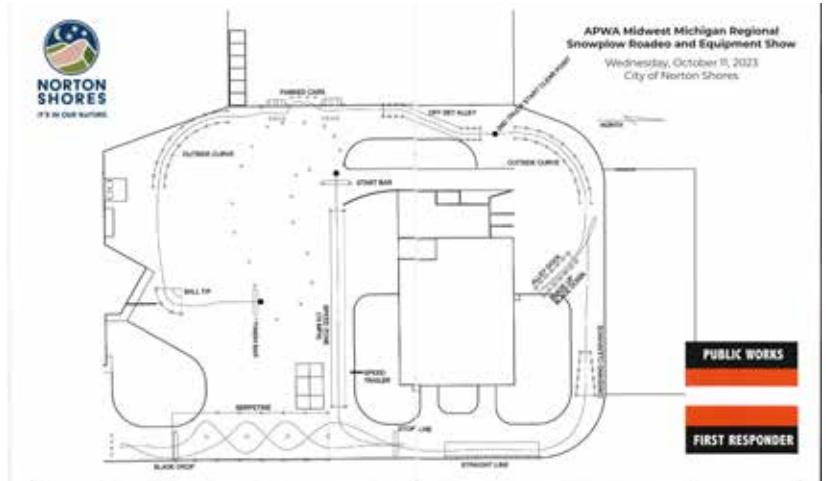
"We've been doing this event for several years, and it's great because we get to talk with each other," said Jason Miller, a crew leader for the City of Wyoming. "It's a great networking opportunity. We can throw ideas off each other and later, contact each other in the winter."

Miller, who's been in public works for 21 years, was co-champion of the Roadeo in 2020.

Additionally, Miller and his colleague, Tim Ratliff, love "free water Tuesday." While that doesn't really exist, they take joy in telling struggling families there's no charge for water work because it's "free water Tuesday."

"We're people pleasers," Miller said. "Whether we can help a young mom who thought she'd have a \$6,000 bill or when someone is stuck in the snow and we sprinkle salt, we're in this business to help people."

Next year's Snowplow Roadeo will be held Oct. 9, 2024 at Kentwood Public Works. And who knows? Perhaps a famous face or two will get behind the wheel.



Map of the competition course at the Roadeo



Plows navigate the course at the 2023 Snowplow Roadeo

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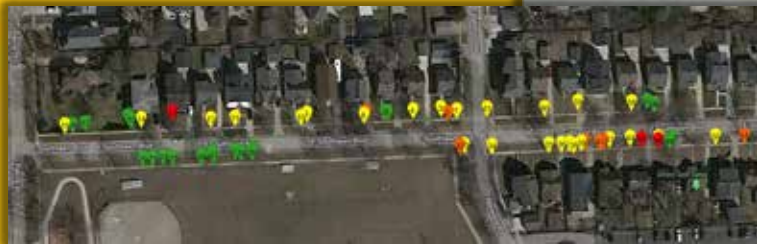


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