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Fall 2024 Conference Recap | The 2024 Night of Excellence Awards



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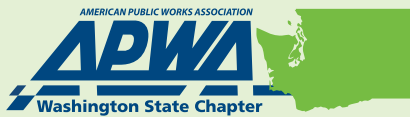
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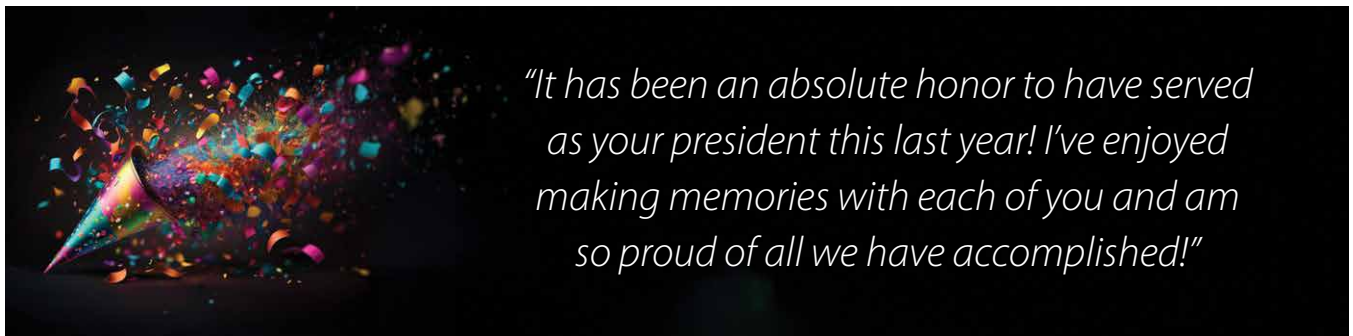
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Tara Davis, PE, 2024 Chapter President



Thank You for Celebrating with Me



My presidential theme for 2024, "Celebrating Public Works" came from the Chapter's Value initiative of the 2020–2025 strategic plan. I wanted to make sure we acknowledged each other's hard work and spent time celebrating what we do to better our communities, our industry and each other. We recognized that we don't do a very good job at telling our story to the public as well as each other, and if we don't tell it, who will?

As my year as Washington Chapter President comes to a close and I reflect back on these last several months Celebrating Public Works, I am proud of what our board, our committees, and our volunteers have accomplished. The highlights include:

- The introduction of our Kudos Wall in our quarterly magazine and social media to highlight the wonderful accomplishments, both individual and group, from our member agencies and firms.
- The continued use of *#iampublicworks* to tell our story to our friends, families, and communities, with the second annual Golden Hard Hat Award going to Thurston County and MacKay Sposito (with the privilege of the hard hat shared between our tied winners).
- The experimental change in our agenda for Thursday's lunch at the fall conference to highlight and celebrate

our ROADeo and all the amazing skills of our O&M teams.

- The introduction of the Ruta Jones Scholarship for administrative assistants or support staff to recognizing how important these roles are to our industry and encourage participation in APWA.
- The recognition by APWA National of five Project of the Year awards from Washington state and the Presidential Award for Chapter Excellence.

In addition to celebrating each other, our board, committees, and volunteers, we have continued to push the needle in improving our chapter offerings this year in



support of providing education, advocacy, expertise, and public awareness to our diverse community of members:

- The approval of two new CDL scholarships that will officially kick off next year
- The addition of more executive training courses – Project Management in Public Works and Emergency Management for Public Works Professionals
- The second year of our Mentorship Program (which is getting attention from APWA across the country)
- The addition of a quarterly article in our magazine to update our membership on implementation of our strategic plan

It has been an absolute honor to have served as your president this last year (broken foot and all)! I've enjoyed making memories with each of you and am so proud of all we have accomplished! While I may have retired from my day-job, you should still expect to see me around APWA, though hopefully more behind the scenes and not on the stage. My APWA family have been part of my life for over the last 20 years, and I can't imagine ending that involvement. I'm excited about the coming years and the energy and individuality each of our upcoming chapter presidents will bring.

Thank you for "Celebrating Public Works" with me. ■

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RENTALS AVAILABLE

New and Returning Members

August 14 through November 8, 2024

Angela Taylor, Senior Project Manager,
Keller Associates

Scott Messier, Solid Waste Operations
Manager, City of Snohomish

Eric Greene, Owner, EG Inspection

Taylor Michaels, Marketing, Kimley-Horn

Wayne Cornwall, County Engineer/
Public Works Director, Stevens County

Kylyn Sasaki, Atwell

Benjamin Turner,

Director of Public Works, Liberty Lake

Samir Chudgar, Principal Structural
Engineer, Chudgar Engineering

Nicole Nagao, HNTB

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2024 FALL CONFERENCE

Fall 2024 Conference By the Numbers

The Fall Conference was held from October 9–10 in Kennewick, WA. The conference had fantastic all-time-high attendance for the educational sessions with a well-received golf tournament and Equipment ROADeo. It was attended by APWA National President Dominick Longobardi who spoke at breakfast on October 10. This Fall Conference also included a new feature where the Thursday lunch was outside with a view of the live ROADeo. The Wednesday First Timers' Breakfast continues to be well attended (128!) since debuting in 2023.

CONFERENCE NUMBERS

- **512** attendees descended on Kennewick (up 50 from 2022)
- **95** exhibitors (sold-out!)
- **45** educational sessions with **72** speakers
- **77** ROADeo competitors
- **\$7,505** raised for scholarships (golf, lunch donations, raffle by Scholarship Committee, exhibitors, and attendee registration add-ons)
- **1** new scholarship honoring Ruta Jones for Admin professionals

AWARD WINNERS

- **9** Night of Excellence awards were given out on Thursday with individuals and teams recognized for their efforts to improve public works and their local communities.
- **5** ROADeo competition winners (more below!)
- **2** Golden Hard Hat Winners (Thurston County, MacKay Sposito) were recognized for their use of the hashtag #iampublicworks to contribute to bringing public works to the forefront in their own communities.

We will be highlighting the winners on Facebook (@APWAWashington) and LinkedIn (APWA Washington Chapter); follow us to get the inside scoop, news, info, and conference photos.

GOLF WINNERS

- \$3,000 was raised for scholarships by the Golf Tournament (Dan Ireland, Chair) and \$25,500 was awarded to 6 scholarships to students entering public works fields (Justin Matthews, Chair).
- **87** golfers got their golf on in support of scholarships
 - **Julie West** dominated the golf course, winning the Triple Crown (Longest Drive, Closest to the Pin, and Winning Team)

ROADeo WINNERS

With 77 competitors this year, the competition was fierce to get the coveted top spots. Congratulations to John Meats from Clark County Public Works on coming out as the Overall Winner!

- Backhoe Winner – Gregory Soto, Lake Whatcom Sewer and Water
- Loader Winner – Sam Dugo, City of Mukilteo
- Dump Truck Winner – Chris Smithson, Snohomish County
- Skid Steer Winner – Mike Hartman, WSDOT
- Overall Winner – John Meats, Clark County Public Works

EXHIBITOR CONTEST WINNERS

The following exhibitors beat out their peers with fantastic booths that embodied some tailgating pride. They will receive \$100 off future exhibit space.

- Osborn Consulting: People's Choice Consultant
- BRPELS – State of WA Board of Registration for Professional Engineers & Land Surveyors: People's Choice Supplier
- 3J Consulting – Best of the Best 🏆



WA Chapter Fall 2024 Conference Recap



APWA National President Dominick Longobardi



Legislative Funding Update



Tailgating #APWA Style



National Anthem Singer



Wednesday Night Exhibitor Social



First Timers Breakfast



Incoming Board Member Grace Richardson



Wednesday Night Exhibitor Social



Keynote Speaker Kyle Scheele



2023–2024 Outgoing Board



APWA National President Dominick Longobardi, WA Chapter President Tara Davis, and 2025 Chapter President Jeff Brauns

WA Chapter Fall 2024 Conference Recap



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The NIGHT OF EXCELLENCE 2024 Awards

On Thursday, October 10, 2024, the American Public Works Association – WA Chapter recognized three groups and six individuals at their annual Night of Excellence Awards held this year at the Kennewick Convention Center. The event recognizes how the state's most accomplished public works professionals have contributed to the field, to the Chapter, and to our community's health. The awards ceremony was presented as part of the WA Chapter's Fall Conference.

EMPOWERING TEAMS AWARD: CITY OF ELLENSBURG WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY CREW

The Empowered Teams award recognizes teams that advance the Public Works Industry.

Crew Members: Dan Walker, Ludwig Zavala, James Luce, Ronnie Cunningham, Mike Johnson, & Bryan Redlin

City of Ellensburg (COE) Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) crew worked diligently on updating system maps and details for priority sewer mains (10" or larger) throughout the City. Crews were able to capture over 700 manhole RIM & Invert Elevations (IE). Multiple GPS units were used to collect latitude, longitude, and elevations to update the old system data. The data collected greatly enhances the City's current wastewater system maps and will be used for modeling the entire system to prepare for future enhancements to the Wastewater Treatment Facility.



COMMITTEE IN ACTION AWARD: MENTORSHIP COMMITTEE

The Committee in Action award recognizes a Chapter committee that has provided/is providing exceptional value to the membership and/or the public works profession in Washington.

Chair: Alyssa Ardourel, Huit-Zollars

April 2023, the newly formed Mentorship Committee hosted a "Won't you be my mentor" speed mentoring event at the Spring Conference and then in June 2023, successfully launched its inaugural Mentorship Program with a goal of sharing experiences and insights. The committee successfully paired 14 mentors/mentees, provided an in-person kick-off meeting in September and virtual mid-year check in February. This first year program will be wrapping up in June and applications are now open for the 2024/25 mentorship program. The committee has been invited to PWX to share their program and experiences with the national membership.



The NIGHT OF EXCELLENCE Awards 2024

CHAPTER HEROES: CITY OF WALLA WALLA

This award recognizes outstanding service to the community in Public Works by front-line workers.

The Walla Walla County Public Works Crew is nationally recognized for their innovative approach to road maintenance, being the first to combine road widening and shouldering in a single process. After a demo of the Asphalt Zipper, the crew designed and welded a custom tool to enhance the machine's capabilities, enabling it to reclaim road base and shoulder material simultaneously. Their groundbreaking work has gained national attention, with the Asphalt Zipper Corporation featuring their process in videos, and the crew's foreman invited to speak at an industry conference, while the "secret invention" remains a well-guarded secret.



OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD: SCOTT EGGER, CITY OF LACEY

Outstanding dedication to the APWA WA Chapter is honored with this award.

Scott Egger has dedicated over 40 years to public works, serving as Public Works Director for the City of Lacey for 17 years, with prior roles in Spokane and Spokane County. His expertise spans design, construction, operations, and executive leadership. A long-time contributor to the Washington State APWA Chapter, Scott served as a Board member, Chapter President in 2018, and on the Executive team. He continues to share his knowledge through Northwest Public Works Institute courses, advocating for diversity and championing the public works community. His leadership has had a lasting impact on both his organization and the APWA Chapter.



CHAPTER PILLAR AWARD: DARCI BELL, CITY OF WALLA WALLA (RETIRED)

This award recognizes an individual who exemplify the qualities of leadership, mentoring, encouragement, and serving behind the scenes without seeking recognition for him/herself.

Darci Bell's nomination for the 2024 Chapter Pillar Award highlights her exceptional leadership, selflessness, and dedication within the Operations and Maintenance Committee. She stepped up to support during a challenging time, revitalized the Equipment ROADeo, and secured funding for prizes that enhance participants' professional growth. Darci's advocacy for educational sessions for maintenance workers and her proactive collaboration with chapter leadership have made a significant impact. Her leadership behind the scenes, particularly in coordinating the Fall Conference, exemplifies grace and humility. Darci's contributions make her a true pillar of the chapter, earning her the respect of her peers.



YOUNG LEADER AWARD: PAULA WELLY, PACE ENGINEERS

The Young Leader Award recognizes and encourages individuals who demonstrate commitment to the Public Works profession and show potential for future growth with APWA.

Paula Welly, a Business Development Manager at PACE Engineers, Inc., has demonstrated remarkable leadership and dedication since joining APWA in 2022. Within months, she became Chair of the Emerging Professionals (EP) Committee, transforming its monthly meetings by fostering professional development discussions and a collaborative culture. Paula organized successful networking and educational events, including a trail project bike tour and a joint happy hour. She also leads the Young Professionals group at PACE, supporting junior staff. Her passion for leadership and connecting with others has inspired her peers, positioning her as a rising leader within both APWA and her company.

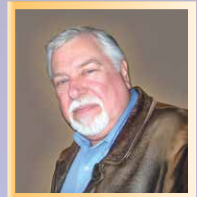


PRESIDENT'S AWARD

The President's Award recognizes a current Officer or Board Member for Chapter contributions to the APWA. In 2024, Chapter President Tara Davis chose to recognize two outstanding members.

John Ostrowski, Retired

John Ostrowski has spent his career and retirement going above and beyond in terms of volunteering. He served as our WA Chapter President in 1988; has served on several national committees and in leadership roles since; he's written four books on the topic of public works including *Lessons from the Life of Jack Pittis*; he began our Northwest Public Works Institute and has written 101 articles for the Chapter magazine (the article in our Fall 2024 issue being his last). We thank him for his service!



Jim Rioux, City of Olympia

Serving as WA Chapter Treasurer is no easy task, as any executive committee member knows. This year, Jim Rioux took on the role and faced an unexpected challenge: fraud. After a second request for electronic payment from a regular vendor, Jim noticed something suspicious. Investigating further, he discovered the vendor's system had been hacked, and payments were being redirected to a different account. Jim quickly contacted MRSC, the Chapter's accountant, and their Bank of America representative to reverse the transfers, ultimately saving \$30,000 – equivalent to one year's worth of scholarships for the chapter.



ROY MORSE AWARD: MIKE CLARK, DAVID EVANS & ASSOCIATES

The Roy Morse Award recognizes outstanding technical or professional accomplishments in Public Works. The winner of this award is sent to APWA National as a nominee for the National Top 10 Public Works Leaders of the Year Award. Roy Morse was a quiet force in industry, government, and public works in the twentieth century.

Mike Clark has been a dedicated member of APWA since 1990, making significant contributions to public works and the Washington State Chapter. He joined the Transportation Committee in 1996 and led the Conference Programs team, developing a proactive process for creating technical sessions based on themes and trends, which increased engagement and conference attendance. Elected to the Board in 2008 and the Executive Team from 2011–2016, Mike championed the chapter's first lobbyist to strengthen connections between public works and elected officials. As Chapter President, he transitioned the Project of the Year award to the Spring Conference, spotlighting public works professionals and recognizing teams like the Oso Landslide responders. Mike played a pivotal role in securing Seattle as the host city for the 2019 PWX, one of the best-attended events. As Chapter Delegate, he helped shape APWA's Advocacy program, benefiting chapters nationwide. His leadership, mentorship, and advocacy have profoundly impacted the growth and success of the Chapter, ensuring the next generation of public works professionals is equipped to succeed. ■



SCAN TO WATCH THE VIDEO:



2024 Washington Chapter Scholarships

Thanks to the generous outpouring of funds from our Chapter members to the scholarship fundraiser, we have once again been able to expand our pool of recipients. With a total of six scholarship winners this year, we are pleased to be assisting the largest cohort of scholarship students to date. Congratulations to our scholarship winners and well-done to our members who have helped deliver on the Chapter mission of inclusivity and diversity within the public works field.

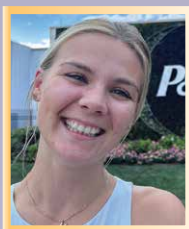
For more information on scholarships, contact the Scholarship Committee Chair, Justin Matthews – justin.matthews@kpff.com.

JACK PITTIS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

(4-Year College/University)
Amount Awarded: \$10,000

Hope Redhead

(University of Washington)
With a focus on Hydrology, Hope will use this scholarship to complete her education in Civil Engineering.

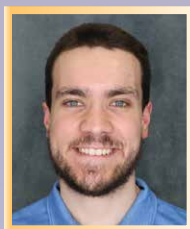


HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP

(4-Year College/University)
Amount Awarded: \$2,500

Matthew Quall

(University of Washington)
With a focus on Civil Engineering and Education, Matthew plans to use the scholarship to help finish his degree in 2025.



HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP

(4-Year College/University)
Amount Awarded: \$2,500

Caden Palitz

(University of Washington)
Caden will use this scholarship toward his degree and his goal of preparing for a construction management role.



HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP

(4-Year College/University)
Amount Awarded: \$5,000

Minda Chen

(University of Washington)
Minda's focus is water management and this scholarship will help her continue her education in that field.



HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP

(4-Year College/University)
Amount Awarded: \$2,500

Jose Hortillosa

(Cascadia College)
This scholarship will help Jose complete his Associates degree and continue toward his goal of becoming a Mechanical Engineer.



HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP

(2-Year College/Technical School)
Amount Awarded: \$2,500

Kelly Kauk

(Everett Community College)
As a working student already employed in public works, this scholarship will provide crucial financial support for Kelly's education.



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Spotlight on: Student Outreach Network Committee

By Lauren Behm, 2025 Chapter National Delegate, laurenjbehm@gmail.com
and Justin Matthews, 2025 Chapter Secretary, justin.matthews@kpff.com

Where is the next generation of public works professionals going to come from?

This is a question on many people's minds as we struggle to find the workforce we need now. The Washington State Chapter's Student Outreach Network committee works on programs to educate students about public works careers, connect them with our public works network, and help fund their education. The committee administers the Chapter's scholarship program, raises scholarship funds, and seeks to connect students with professionals via student chapters, conference attendance, school events, and community events.

In 2024, the Board voted to increase our scholarship program to include three scholarships to university students in four-year programs and two scholarships to community college or technical college students in two-year programs. The four-year scholarships include the \$10,000 Jack Pittis Memorial Scholarship to two additional \$5,000 scholarships. The Board and the committee also added a new scholarship in honor of Ruta Jones that sponsors conference or training for a public works administrative or support staff member. Our scholarship offerings this year totaled \$26,000 and helped six students and one public works administrative staff member in their educational journey!

The success of our scholarship program is due in part to the generous support of our members' donations and participation in conference fundraisers. At the fall 2024 conference, in the Tri-Cities, we raffled off an impressive array of donated event tickets ranging from Kraken and Seahawks games to a Kenmore Air float plane voucher and raised \$4,300! In addition, the conference golf tournament raised \$3,000 for the scholarship fund. Thank you for your continued support of the scholarship program! In the words of a past winner, "you are changing the world one student at a time!" If you have ideas for scholarship fundraisers, want to donate, or are interested in helping out – please reach out to the committee.

On the horizon is a new scholarship program to assist public works departments with obtaining CDLs for new hires, removing one hurdle in recruiting operations and maintenance employees. Stay tuned for more information on how to apply to this program in Spring 2025.

This school year we have a renewed focus to increase student outreach at Washington colleges. We are currently focusing on the University of Washington, Everett Community College, and Saint Martin's University, but there are many opportunities to grow the student outreach program both at the college level and with K-12 students.

We acknowledge that students now are learning about and selecting their career focus long before they reach college. The committee is also strategizing how we can reach younger students to make them aware of all the amazing opportunities in public works earlier in their education.

If you know of teachers, classes, or events where public works professionals could share their passion for the industry with students, our committee would love to support this. Please reach out to the Student Outreach Network chair, Liam Olsen, at liam.olsen@jacobs.com.

Join the committee! We always welcome new members, so please reach out to Liam if you are interested in growing the next generation of APWA members and public works professionals. ▀





MRSC is a research nonprofit that offers local government staff free, one-on-one guidance with legal and policy consultants. Below are inquiry responses the MRSC Public Works Consultant. If you work for a city, county, or contracted special purpose district, Ask MRSC by calling 800-977-6553 or emailing mrsc@mrsc.org.

Questions About the ADA

The *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) is landmark federal legislation that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities and guarantees that they have the same opportunities to enjoy employment opportunities, to purchase goods and services, and to participate in state and local government programs. The following are some questions MRSC has received regarding construction and the ADA.

Q: When are the ADA curb ramp upgrade requirements triggered when a local government undertakes street maintenance and improvements?

A: Generally, the owner of a public right-of-way is required to update curb ramps constructed before January 26, 1992, if the roadway is "altered." Whether a roadway is altered depends on the extent of the restoration during the project. ADA guidance (<https://archive.ada.gov/pcatoolkit/chap6toolkit.htm>) defines 'alteration' as another category of construction, noting:

A street or sidewalk falls into this category if it was constructed pre-ADA (construction began before January 26, 1992) and has since been altered. What does "altered" mean? An alteration is a change that affects usability. Resurfacing a roadway beyond normal maintenance is an alteration. By contrast, filling potholes is not. [28 C.F.R. § 35.151(b)]

Federal agencies interpreting ADA regulations have opined on the meaning and scope of the term 'alteration.' For example, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) offers guidance on when the scope of an alteration project triggers accessibility improvements under the ADA in their Questions and Answers about ADA/Section 504 webpage (www.fhwa.dot.gov/civilrights/programs/ada/ada_sect504qa.cfm):

The scope of an alteration project is determined by the extent the alteration project directly changes or affects the public right-of-way within the project limits. The public agency must improve the accessibility of only that portion of the public right-of-way changed or affected by the alteration. If a project resurfaces the street, for accessibility purposes the curbs and pavement at the pedestrian crosswalk are in the scope of the project, but the sidewalks are not. Any of the features disturbed by the construction must be replaced so that they are accessible. All remaining access improvements within the public right-of-way shall occur within the schedule provided in the public agency's planning process.

And from that same webpage, here is additional information in the form of Q&A that also provides guidance:

1. What projects constitute an alteration to the public right-of-way?

An alteration is a change to a facility in the public right-of-way that affects or could affect access, circulation, or use. Projects altering the use of the public right-of-way must incorporate pedestrian access improvements within the scope of the project to meet the requirements of the ADA and Section 504. These projects have the potential to affect the structure, grade, or use of the roadway. Alterations include items such as reconstruction, rehabilitation, widening, resurfacing (see USDOJ-FHWA technical assistance dated 6-28-13 for additional clarification, at www.fhwa.dot.gov/civilrights/programs/doj_fhwa_ta.cfm), signal installation and upgrades, and projects of similar scale and effect (6-28-2013).

2. What activities are not considered to be alterations?

The Department of Justice (DOJ) does not consider maintenance activities, such as filling potholes, to be alterations. The DOJ does consider resurfacing beyond normal maintenance to be an alteration. See DOJ's ADA Title II Technical Assistance Manual, § II-6.6000, 1993, USDOJ-FHWA Technical Assistance dated 6-28-2013.

The FHWA has determined that maintenance activities include actions that are intended to preserve the system, retard future deterioration, and maintain the functional condition of the roadway without increasing the structural capacity. These activities include, but are not limited to, joint repair, pavement patching (filling potholes), shoulder repair, signing, road striping, minor signal upgrades, and repairs to drainage systems.

There are 'safe harbor' provisions in some cases if the cost of improving the curb ramp is out of proportion to the cost of the project, but a municipality is required to have an ADA transition plan that identifies all of its public facilities (including roads and sidewalks) and sets out a plan for bringing these up to the current standards. Note that a local government can pass the curb ramp requirement to utilities or other persons altering its roadways.

Q: A question came up at last evening's meeting of the city's Planning Commission: If a commercial building downtown is renovated/updated to allow for living units on the second floor, is the owner required to install an elevator?

A: This sounds like it could be an ADA requirement. See the 2010 ADA Standards, at www.ada.gov/regs2010/2010ADAStandards/2010ADAstandards.htm, and in particular

“ABA Accessibility Standards and associated requirements are not legally binding on local governments but, instead, demonstrate best practices for local governments to follow.”



Section 206.2.3. That section requires that certain two-story buildings are required to have ‘accessible’ routes (like elevators or ramps) in certain circumstances. See also section 206.2.3.1, which indicates that, in alterations and additions, where an escalator or stair is provided where none existed previously and major structural modifications are necessary for the installation, an accessible route shall be provided between the levels served by the escalator or stair unless exempted by 206.2.3.

Note that the size of the building matters with regard to installation of an accessible route. Private buildings less than three stories or that have less than 3,000 square feet per story are exempt from this requirement (with some exceptions – see Exceptions to Sec. 206.2.3). Your city attorney will want to confirm to what extent the ADA applies to this particular building remodel situation.

Q: *A Thomas Dambo troll was installed in one of our public parks. The troll is a huge tourist draw, and an existing walking trail leads to it from the parking lot. Though the trail is not specifically ADA compliant, we made a considerable effort to have it be accessible: it is 11 feet wide, level, and composed of compacted (not loose) gravel. Are we required to make this trail ADA compliant?*

A: There are ADA guidelines for outdoor areas, such as trails in parks, but there are not mandatory requirements for ADA accessibility for trails in parks. The United States Access Board has issued requirements as part of the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) Accessibility Standards. The standards apply to facilities designed, built, altered, or leased with certain federal funds, and to national parks and other outdoor areas developed by the federal government.

ABA Accessibility Standards and associated requirements are not legally binding on local governments but, instead, demonstrate best practices for local governments to follow. The following are a few of the provisions about exceptions in the ABA Accessibility Standards.

Under the section F202.3 Alterations:
EXCEPTIONS: 2. In alterations, where compliance with applicable requirements is technically infeasible, the alteration shall comply with the requirements to the maximum extent feasible...

Under the section 1019 Conditions for Exceptions:

Exceptions to specific provisions in 1011, 1013, 1014, 1015, 1016, 1017, and 1018 shall be permitted when an entity determines that any of the following conditions does not permit full compliance with the provision:

1. Compliance is not practicable due to terrain.
2. Compliance cannot be accomplished with the prevailing construction practices.
3. Compliance would fundamentally alter the function or purpose of the facility or the setting.
4. Compliance is limited or precluded by any of the following laws, or by decisions or opinions issued or agreements executed pursuant to any of the following laws:

Under the section 1017 Trails:

EXCEPTIONS: 1. When an entity determines that a condition in 1019 does not permit full compliance with a specific provision in 1017 on a portion of a trail, the portion of the trail shall comply with the provision to the extent practicable.

Note: On outdoor recreation access routes, trails, and beach access routes, the exceptions apply only on the portion of the route where the condition applies.

So, although a municipality such as a parks district is not legally required to follow the ABA guidelines for an outdoor recreational trail (unless such a trail is being created, maintained, or upgraded using federal funding), it would likely want to consider doing its best to comply to these guidelines to the extent practical. ■

THE GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE TO TAKE UP RECOGNITION OF PUBLIC WORKS AS FIRST RESPONDERS



At its October 2024 meeting, the AWP Washington Chapter Board of Directors directed the Chapter's Government Affairs Committee (GAC) to include pursuit of legislation that recognizes public works professionals as first responders as part of the Chapter's 2025 legislative priorities. This direction followed discussion of what the Chapter should do to celebrate National First Responders Day, which is celebrated annually on October 28.

While the Chapter has consistently included emergency response as part of our legislative priorities, this element marks an important shift. In addition to advocating for funding and resources the GAC will now engage with legislators and other stakeholders to educate them on the important role public works plays in incident prevention, response, and recovery.

The Role of Public Works in Emergency Response and Recovery

Public works professionals are often the first on scene and the last to leave the scenes of disasters – no matter the peril. As the APWA webpage, *Recognizing Public Works Professionals as First Responders*, notes:

While police, fire, and EMS are often the three most recognized first responders, public works is also often silently there – providing vital support to emergency response partners, helping protect essential services, and restoring those services following an emergency.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defines first responders as

“those individuals who in the early stages of an incident are responsible for the protection and preservation of life, property, evidence, and the environment, including emergency response providers as defined in section 2 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 101), as well as emergency management, public health, clinical care, public works, and other skilled support personnel (such as equipment operators) that provide immediate support services during prevention, response, and recovery operations.” (Source: www.firstrespondertraining.gov/frts/serve)

FEMA also lists public works alongside police, fire, and public health in its National Incident Management System (see NIMS, 3rd Edition) framework. NIMS is a standardized approach to incident management and was established in March 2004, in response to Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5, issued by President George W. Bush.

Consider the following timeline, which is detailed on APWA's *Recognizing Public Works Professionals as First Responders*:

- In 2003, President George W. Bush issued Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8 (HSPD-8) officially recognizing public works as first responders.
- In 2010, Mississippi, under House Bill (HB) 664, recognized public works professionals as first responders.
- In 2017, the APWA National Board of Directors approved the adoption of a national “Public Works First Responder” symbol for use throughout North America to identify public works personnel and acknowledge their federally mandated role as first responders.
- In 2019, the US Senate passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 15 (S.Con.Res.15), “Expressing support for the designation of October 28, 2019, as Honoring the Nation’s First Responders Day.” Public works is specifically included.
- In 2022 New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu signed into law SB 325, formally recognizing public works employees as first responders.
- In 2022, New Hampshire passed HB 536, “An Act relative to death benefits for public works employees killed in the line of duty, and relative to workers’ compensation offsets for certain retirement system benefits.”

The Government Affairs Committee is excited to engage in this dialogue with our legislative partners. If you would like to participate with the committee, contact Patrick Holm at 360-352-1465, ext.102 or at patrick.holm@scjalliance.com, or contact Patrick Knouff at 360-753-8352 or at pknouff@ci.olympia.wa.us. ▀



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The Kudos Wall will be published in both magazine issues and online (web, LinkedIn, and Facebook). We'd love to publish your kudos on our wall. Send your kudos with 1–3 photos to apwa.washington@gmail.com by January 21, 2025 to make our next magazine issue. And let's celebrate public works!

Kudos to Stephanie Forman on Your Appointment to TIB!



Kudos to Stephanie Forman, PE, Owner of Foreman Consulting Service and current member of the APWA Washington Chapter board of Directors, for recent appointment to the Washington State Transportation Improvement Board (TIB).

TIB fosters state investment in quality local transportation projects. The Board distributes

grant funding and selects transportation projects that best address the criteria of the funding program. These programs include the Urban Arterial Program, Arterial Preservation Program, Small City Preservation Program, Sidewalk Program, Small City Arterial Program, and Road Transfer Program. Stephanie was selected from a field of highly qualified applicants in August to serve as the private sector representative. Stephanie will serve a four-year term.

—APWA WA Chapter Board

Kudos to Adam Klein for Going Above & Beyond with 3-D Model!



MYRA ROAD SOUTH EXTENSION

Kudos to City of Walla Walla's Adam Klein for demonstrating great compassion for his community members. When the City was constructing multiple roundabouts in series, the vision impaired community was concerned about how to navigate them safely. Adam went above and beyond the normal project management duties to construct, in his personal time, a miniature 3-D model of a roundabout that would allow vision impaired citizens the ability to feel the features of the roundabout and proper walking paths.

—City of Walla Walla

Kudos to Lisa Hull & D'Andra Buchanan on Being Stellar Co-workers!



Lisa Hull



D'Andra Buchanan

Have you ever had those experiences with a co-worker that just made you think "WOW, you just made this so easy?!" That is the best way to describe what I would want to focus on with Lisa Hull (Project Admin) and D'Andra Buchanan (recently promoted to Construction Manager). These two, on a day-to-day basis, make working the front counter for Public Works easier. With their stellar communication about updates in projects (including issues because we know no project ever goes perfectly), scheduled pre-con meetings, bid dates or possible delays... has just made life working customer service so much easier. Most people don't think about updating the front counter staff on issues which could generate calls – but these two think of us. I cannot express my thanks enough. It shows that the littlest thing could go such a long way.

You go girls!

—Samantha Keesler, Executive Assistant and the City of Lacey Public Works Customer Service Counter

Kudos to Mary Heather Ames – New City of Pasco Deputy Director!



Kudos to Mary Heather Ames for stepping into the Deputy Public Works Director role at the City of Pasco. Her vast experience, dedication to excellence, and collaborative, people-focused approach makes her a valuable addition to our department. Mary Heather's leadership and fresh perspective will help us continue delivering high-quality services and shaping Pasco's future. We're excited to have her on board and confident she will empower the team to achieve great results.

– **Maria Laura Serra**, Public Works Director, City of Pasco

Kudos to Our Unsung Heroes: Public Works Dispatchers



The City of Olympia Public Works dispatchers play a crucial role regarding the day-to-day operations and, because their role is behind the scenes, the important work they do every day is largely unknown to the community.

The City of Olympia currently has two primary dispatchers, Caroline Inions and Jessica Ashlee. This small, mighty team also includes three Administrative Specialists, Lindsay Walker, Jeannine Stewart, and Hannah Hart, who provide coverage and back-up. They are the calming voices that take information from our community members and dispatch the appropriate help to the front lines. They often direct Public Works operations to critical incidents such as watermain breaks, signal outages, flooding, snow and ice, and more.

Public Works Operations and community members depend on our dispatch team during a crisis. Their job is challenging and can include any emergency or situation. In addition to receiving and dispatching calls, they also provide excellent customer service with a friendly smile.

A heartfelt thank you to the City of Olympia Public Works dispatch team and a huge appreciation to all the dedicated dispatchers in this great state of Washington.

–City of Olympia

Kudos to Bill Franz on Retirement After 30 Years at the City of Lynnwood!

Congratulations to Public Works Director Bill Franz on an incredible career of over 30 years at the City of Lynnwood! Your legacy includes managing stormwater programs and rebuilding major roads to establishing programs that improved city infrastructure and quality of life for our community and employees. Your leadership brought over \$100 million in grants, improved transportation, environmental programs, and even a salmon hatchery! Thanks to your dedication, our community is stronger, safer, and more connected. You've set a remarkable standard for those who follow in your footsteps. Wishing you all the best in your retirement – you've more than earned it!

– **Marcie MacQuarrie**, Deputy Director with the City of Lynnwood Public Works Department





The Clock Is Ticking on Our Motor Vehicle **Fuel Tax Exit Strategy**

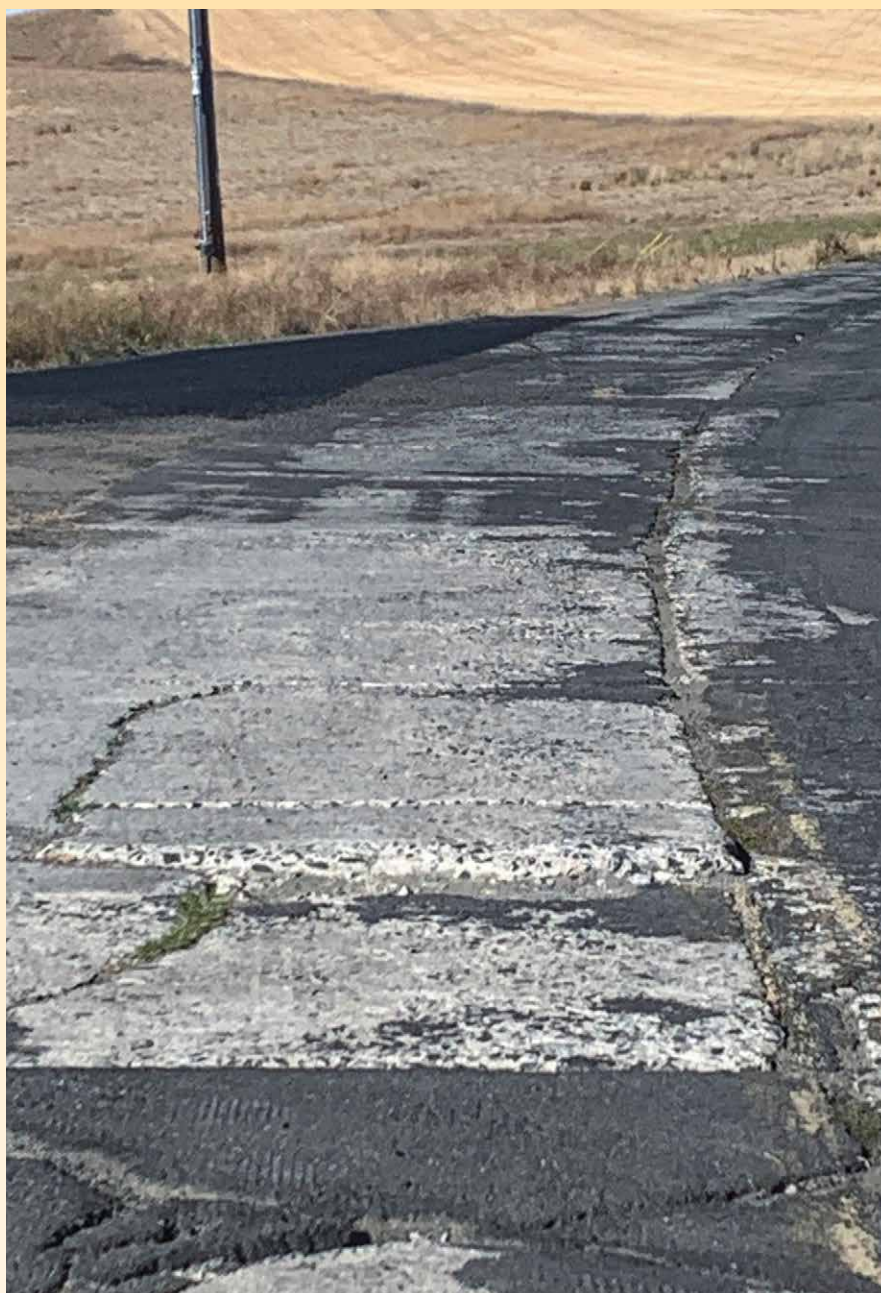
By Jane Wall, County Road Administration Board Executive Director

Depending on the GPS you use, you could be directed off Highway 2 prematurely on your way to the Inland Northwest Rail Museum and be in for a bumpy surprise on Sunset Highway. Once a part of the historic state highway system, the 100-year-old stretch near Rearden, Washington, is now the responsibility of Lincoln County to maintain. The foundation of Lincoln County's road system budget since 1921 has been Washington's Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax (MVFT).

The MVFT is an excise tax collected by state and local agencies that is imposed on the sale of fuel for transportation and other purposes. It currently provides one-third of the state's overall transportation budget and is equally critical to cities and to counties. For example, in Lincoln County, the MVFT supplies over 52% of their annual road budget.

While MVFT revenue has been a budgetary foundation for most of the last century, vehicles have both become more efficient and are moving away from internal combustion engines. According to the Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council, gas consumption in Washington has declined 9% since 2018 and is expected to continue doing so in the coming decade, resulting in a loss over \$300 million in critical transportation funding for state and local governments. While exact numbers vary by municipality, the MVFT and the property tax serve as the two largest revenue sources for local governments. For many cities and counties, it can be difficult to replace such critical revenues sources, but it is especially difficult for smaller local governments like Lincoln County (which has a population of under 12,000 residents) because new revenue sources can be limited and hard to find.

With the drop in fuel consumption, the writing is on the wall for the MVFT: as a waning source of revenue, it can no longer



The stretch of Sunset Highway in Lincoln County is made from 100-year-old concrete panels and rebar covered with broken patches of asphalt. Local government public works budgets are stretched so thin that projects like these cannot be addressed.

be the primary support for our state's transportation system. Washington needs to find a replacement.

It has been over a decade since the Washington State Legislature took its first tentative steps in exploring how to make up for declining MVFT revenue and finding its possible replacement. Many solutions have been suggested for replacing the MVFT, including a flat fee (similar to the electric vehicle fee), a vehicle sales tax, and impact fees, but none were without their challenges.

Following the lead of Oregon and other states, Washington policymakers chose to study the frontrunner idea, a Road Usage Charge (RUC). The RUC is a per-mile charge based on the number of miles driven, not on gallons of gas purchased. They tasked the Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC) with the effort and, since 2012, the WSTC has studied and analyzed the issue in depth, exploring what a RUC would look like and how it would work in Washington.

The idea of an RUC is neither new nor novel. In fact, many liken it to a form of tolling, but there are many questions that remain unanswered. Key areas of concern are how revenues will be split and distributed, whether such revenue will have conditions on use, and, perhaps most importantly, if the RUC would have 18th amendment protections.

The controversy an RUC proposal stirs is real, and many are uncomfortable with it as the potential route forward. Specifically, concerns have been raised about the higher administrative costs of an RUC (compared to the MVFT) and program logistics. The RUC would rely on odometer readings, either through attestation or some form of virtual tracking, which brings Orwellian "big brother watching" privacy concern to mind.

The controversy has resulted in the state legislature punting the issue forward repeatedly, unwilling to act. Washington, now 12 years in, is faced with declining MVFT revenue that is unlikely to rebound, and no strategy in place. To say that the problem is nearing crisis level is an understatement.

As an MVFT replacement, Road Usage Charge is not perfect, nor is it universally loved. You may not like it and your constituents may not like it, but it is my view that state agencies, local governments, and transportation stakeholders simply must be engaged in the discussion. Too much is riding on this conversation, and the debate around replacement alternatives for the MVFT (including the RUC), as well as the best path forward, needs broad input.



Used by locals as a farm-to-market route, the Sunset Highway is subject to heavy wear and tear during seeding and fertilizing seasons and has received safety concerns from residents.

This coming legislative session, which starts in January, will likely be your opportunity. House Transportation Committee Chair Jake Fey (D-Tacoma) has indicated he will be introducing a bill for a Road Usage Charge pilot program. If you are interested in getting an early start, he is currently conducting stakeholder listening sessions that will help inform his proposed RUC pilot program.

To be facing a future where a revenue source as critical as the MVFT will disappear with no adopted, unified plan moving forward is alarming, to say the least. At the

County Road Administration Board, three of our four grant programs are almost exclusively funded by the MVFT, and our future is dependent on policymakers deciding on a solution.

But it isn't just us; the same is true for most of our counties and cities, and for our economy. The future of Washington will grind to a halt without a well-maintained and funded transportation infrastructure. The perfect is the enemy of the good: We had 12 years and failed to come up with a perfect solution, now we need to decide and move forward on a good solution. ▀

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Strategic Pillar:

Education & Networking

By Tara Davis, WA Chapter President

In the last two issues of this magazine, we introduced you to the Value and Voice initiatives from the APWA WA Strategic Plan. This article is focused on the Education & Networking initiative, with a goal of providing excellence in education and networking opportunities for ALL of our public works members. From conference sessions to other focused training opportunities, our goal is to provide quality education that will help enhance our members knowledge, skill sets, and careers.

Past Efforts Towards Education & Networking

Some background context on our current education and networking goals.

Through my years with APWA, I have seen our educational offering increase in quality. I recall when the new format for the conference session proposals was introduced that required the proposer to not just outline the session, but specifically detail the learning objectives which served the goal of focusing sessions on lessons learned that attendees could apply to their own workforce, projects, and careers. Hearing about the good, bad, and the ugly is a benefit to our members and improves the caliber of our educational programs.

While our conference sessions were continuing to increase in quality, we simultaneously saw a reduction in non-committee networking opportunities. Back in the day, our Chapter hosted two additional luncheons in the May/June and December/January timeframes. The Project of the Year and Night of Excellence (individual and team awards) were integrated into these luncheons; however, both were hosted in the Puget Sound area making it inconvenient for statewide attendance. The conferences became a better venue to celebrate these accomplishments, and consequently these luncheons faded away.

In addition, each of our committees also provide opportunities to learn and network; however, during COVID, we saw a decrease in committee involvement, losing momentum on some of their great networking and educational offerings. Many of these committees are currently rebuilding with more opportunities on the horizon, but it has been a slow endeavor.

Current Education & Networking Focus

The goal of the Education & Networking initiative is to continue to improve our educational offerings, as well as increase the variety of offerings and general networking opportunities. Each year during our Executive Board retreat, we update our

strategic plan initiatives and make new goals for the year. Our current vision of success for this initiative focuses on increasing networking opportunities, better integration of our operations and maintenance (O&M) members, and providing resources and tools to help committees with efficiency and sustainability which will enable them to consistently provide additional education and networking opportunities.

Increase Networking Beyond Conferences



We have reintroduced a networking/tour as part of the June Board Meeting which will be at a different location each year. The first occurred in 2023 with a tour of the Central Washington University Materials Lab and following no-host lunch. In 2024 we had a box lunch and tour of the Wild Horse Renewable Energy Center near Ellensburg. These events are building in success, and we hope to come up with new and interesting tours and events in future years.

Education Sessions for O&M Members

While our O&M Committee has a maintenance track on the Wednesday of our fall conferences, we are now working on O&M sessions for the spring conferences, encouraging participation at both conferences. These new spring sessions will include technical training with CEUs that meet our agencies' needs, as well as general career development sessions that apply for all disciplines within public works.

“ To help strengthen our committees to endure the ebbs and flows of our industry, the committee/board liaisons and Vice President have been encouraging succession planning and providing additional opportunities for committee chairs to share ideas and strategies.

Integrate O&M Members Into All Events



We want our O&M members to feel welcome and included in all of our events, after all what would public works be without those that keep our infrastructure operating smoothly. Having the ROADeo over the last 11 years has been a huge success, but we want to take more steps in breaking down barriers and encourage our O&M staff to participate in all APWA WA events. This last fall conference we adjusted our Thursday schedule to highlight our O&M members by encouraging all attendees to spend their lunch time cheering on these talented ROADeo participants. It seemed well received, and we hope to increase opportunities for our diverse membership to engage.

Support Committees to Increase Opportunities

Our volunteers and committees are the life blood of our Chapter and provide for a large percentage of educational and networking opportunities. To help strengthen our committees to endure the ebbs and flows of our industry, the committee/board liaisons and Vice President have been encouraging succession planning and providing additional opportunities for committee chairs to share ideas and strategies. Succession planning was introduced during the 2024 annual Committee Summit. Since then, there have been two virtual follow-up meetings to allow committee chairs to collaborate with the other committees, hear about any upcoming changes, and communicate their questions and needs with the board (which provide future direction for this initiative).

Want to learn more, share an idea or location for the June tour, or offer your support to the Education & Networking initiative? Please reach out to any of our team members:

- Tara Davis, Formerly WSP (retired) – taradavis4315@gmail.com
- Darci Bell, Formerly City of Walla Walla (retired) – zokar007@hotmail.com
- Linda Ayala, Cross Connection Program Specialist, City of Olympia – layala@ci.olympia.wa.us
- Mike Helgeson, Assistant Public Works Director, City of Ellensburg – helgy@ci.ellensburg.wa.us ■



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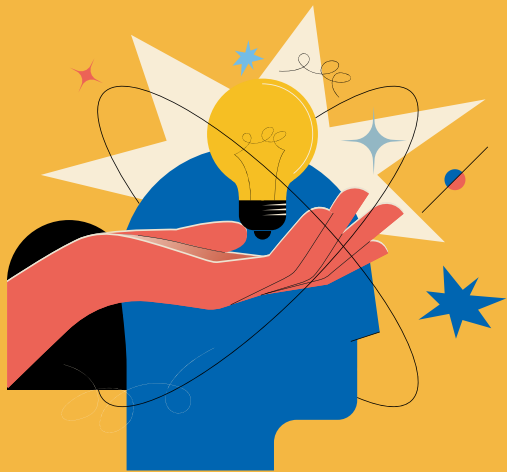
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BRAIN *Ziegle Bits*

By Brian Ziegler

Strange title for an article, huh? You might think it's the fruit of deep thinking and hours of contemplation. But it is merely the most common misspelling of my first name. This misspelling has become somewhat of an oxymoronic badge of honor for me (my oldest daughter loved to use it), so I hang onto the misspelling for sentimental reasons.

Mind you, I'm no brainiac. I don't claim any special intelligence or wisdom beyond the common person (we all have brains after all, believe it or not) and in my 45 years of public works experience, I've made enough mistakes, gaffs, foibles, and misjudgments to fill ten careers. I wonder if that's why I was asked to write this column, to showcase the many ways one can fail, and ultimately learn from those failures.

As you know, mistakes are a part of living, and big mistakes come from living large. If we pay attention, the lessons teach us how to avoid pain. Like most mammals, human beings are wired to avoid pain, as we seek "homeostasis" or a "balanced physical and chemical" state. So, if I share with you some of my mistakes and most importantly, how I avoided them (on the second, or third, or fourth try) maybe you could avoid the same, leading to faster homeostasis. Consider this column as mental therapy; heck, maybe you can even write off the magazine subscription as a medical expense!

My first mistake, which I will now refer to as a learning opportunity, comes from childhood. My younger brother and I were "hired" by our dad to haul dirt from the backyard to the front yard, one wheelbarrow load at a time with each load being worth a nickel. Some of my "loads" were not worth a plugged nickel because they were skimpy (a good lesson for your construction spec writers out there), but I counted them, nonetheless. When Dad got home, we proudly presented him with our individual "bills" for payment. He looked at the progress and thought for a moment, then gave us the requested payment. At the same time, he canceled the contract and said, "at this rate of production, I can't afford you guys."

I quickly learned the value of honesty – and my brother is now much more cautious partnering with me. The lesson here: "cheat someone and you will eventually pay the price." My ingenious scam had actually put me out of work, and I learned the hard way that justice always prevails.

My second learning opportunity came in my sales career, selling paint and hardware at a local store. My employer drilled the maxims of "the customer is always right" and "a satisfied customer is a repeat customer," and I was on a mission to prove that they could count on me. One particularly busy day, I got way behind mixing

paint and the line at the sales register was backing up, I could see frustration in the eyes of my customers. I doubled my efforts yet I didn't seem to be making headway and I must admit that when a demure, young lady who only wanted a gallon of turpentine came in, I thought, "I'll zip through this simple request." I walked with her to the proper aisle, and, to my shock we were out of gallon containers. I profusely apologized to her and sheepishly told her that I could sell her four quarts instead but that it would cost her more than a gallon, and maybe it would be cheaper if she tried buying a gallon at our competitor's store. She decided to buy the four quarts, and I quickly sold them to her, feeling grateful that I got through another transaction speedily.

A few moments later, a very large and imposing man walked up to me, shoved a package in my chest, and said "I want to speak to your manager." I opened the package and inside were the four quarts of turpentine I had just sold to the woman. The next moments were a blur as I called the manager and stood at a distance as he listened to the angry customer yell about "making my wife wait forever," "trying to send her away to another store," and "ignoring her concerns about the high cost of quarts." Afterwards, the manager came up to me and thanked me for trying to be of service but suggested that I might try a little harder to listen better next time. I nodded my head in agreement, but I was still in shock over the whole incident.

This lesson has stuck with me for almost five decades: "Quality is in the eye of the beholder, not the provider." I realized that I had failed miserably, I had made minimal effort in determining whether the customer felt heard and whether she left satisfied, which are two important aspects of customer service interactions. I resolved to never repeat that mistake.

One more lesson, this one from early in my construction career. A seasoned project inspector was explaining to me the difference between payment via "Lump Sum" or via "Force Account." His advice to me was that I need to pay close attention to the contractor when "Force Account" is the payment method.

My sage instructor demonstrated this by holding his hands in front of him (as if they were on the levers of a backhoe) and turning his body left and right, mimicking the digging and loading movements. He moved very quickly, back and forth, then stopped and said, "Lump Sum Payment." He then repeated those same movements, but at a much slower pace, looked at me again and said, "Force Account Payment."

This last lesson brought flashbacks of my skimpy wheelbarrow loads and of my poorly contrived rush to move a paint



customer along. It dawned on me that not only do I need to do the right thing to succeed in my career, but I need to do it **in the right way**. That right way is what people see first, and it communicates an important customer service ingredient – motivation.

In each of the lessons above, motivation was present, but not the best kind as my motivation was to maximize profits and minimize efforts. You all know from your own experiences that proper motivation is hard to maintain, especially when one is tired, anxious, or distracted. One of my favorite mentors, Zig Ziglar, said this about motivation:

"People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing – that's why we recommend it daily."

I can hear you now – "Hmmm... daily motivations... sounds like a devotional program to me. I'm outta here!"

But wait! Before you jump to a hasty conclusion, hear me out. Every day, you're constantly inundated with "motivational messages" from your family, your co-workers, and social media, but have you ever asked yourself how many of those messages are supportive, uplifting, wholesome, and inspiring? If you're societal exposure is anything like mine, your answer would be "not too many."

If that's your experience too, what can you do to change your mental diet? How are you counteracting the GIGO dynamic

("Garbage In – Garbage Out") by ingesting something fresh and healthy? How much good mental food do you consume daily?

This brings me to another advantage of having my name misspelled. "BRAIN" becomes useful for the theme of this article: **"Build Resistance Against Incessant Negativity."**



And if public works employees do one thing well, it's build things. So why not build resistance against negativity? For me, a physical reminder helps, so, I created this loveable squeeze toy to keep me on track (see Figure 1). When I get tense, it's there to assure me I can do something about my motivation, even if in the moment it merely involves thrashing a defenseless LEGO brick.

To build up resistance against negativity, you need to know the motivational forces you are up against. These various powers and influences are all around us and whether you are aware or not, they have been affecting you both positively and negatively. Join me in the next installment of this article series for a review of these important influences, and to continue to expand our awareness of our motivations.

Until then, be the kind of world you want to see! ▀

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