

WASHINGTON STATE

SPRING 2025

PublicWorks

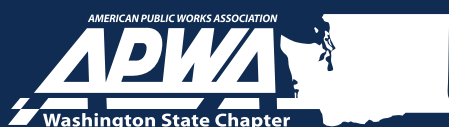
THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF WASHINGTON PUBLIC WORKS PROFESSIONALS

VISION

**2025 SPRING CONFERENCE
APRIL 23-24 TACOMA WA**



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On the cover:

Looking from hilltop across at the Tacoma Dome and Mount Rainier National Park. | dreamstime.com



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Jeff Brauns, PE, 2025 Chapter President



A Focus on Vision 2030

2025 marks the APWA Washington State Chapter's 70th anniversary. Looking ahead just five years, 2030 will bring us to the Chapter's 75th diamond anniversary, an opportunity to celebrate not just our history but our vision for the future. This forward-thinking perspective has inspired this year's theme: *Vision 2030*.

With *Vision 2030*, we are not only focusing on the Chapter's goals and achievements over the next five years but also on the growth, success, and accomplishments of our members, agencies, and firms. Together, we aim to build a stronger, more innovative, and impactful community as we move toward this remarkable milestone.

What does your vision for 2030 look like? As a public works professional, have you considered the opportunities available through APWA to grow and enhance your career? Options like Certification Programs, the Young Leader Academy, or participating on a national committee can provide invaluable pathways to professional development.

Locally, the Northwest Public Works Institute (<https://washington.apwa.org/nwpwi-training>) offers exceptional continuing education programs to meet the evolving needs of our industry. They've expanded their offerings with new courses, including the *Executive Leadership Forum*, *Project Management*, *Construction Management*, and *Emergency Management*. By taking advantage of these opportunities, you can align your personal vision with the Chapter's *Vision 2030*, ensuring both your individual growth and the continued success of the public works community.

How does *Vision 2030* take shape for your agency or firm? Are you prepared for the future with a well-defined succession plan? As we look ahead, engaging with Gen Z – the next generation of public works professionals and emerging leaders –



will be essential to our collective success. Have you developed strategies to connect with and inspire this dynamic group? For public agencies, achieving APWA Accreditation could be a powerful step in strengthening your organization's commitment to excellence, professionalism, and continuous improvement. *Vision 2030* is not just about looking forward; it's about taking actionable steps today to ensure your agency or firm thrives tomorrow. How will you lead the way?



2025 also marks the final year of the 2020–2025 Strategic Goals developed in the **2020 Strategic Plan**. These collective aspirations – *Voice*, *Value, Education & Networking*, and *Grow Diverse Membership* – have guided the Chapter's work over the past five years. To drive progress in each of these areas, dedicated work groups were formed, each focused on one of the strategic goals.

At the January Board Retreat, these groups shared their planned actions for 2025, outlining strategies to achieve these ambitious goals in this final year of the plan. As we close this chapter and look toward *Vision 2030*, the outcomes of these efforts

will lay the foundation for continued growth, innovation, and inclusivity within our Chapter and the public works profession.

Our Chapter has established itself as a vital resource for elected officials, fostering meaningful connections and supporting informed decision-making. However, communicating effectively with our elected leaders can often be a challenging task. The *Voice* workgroup is committed to making this process easier and more impactful for our members. To this end, they are refocusing the weekly legislative priorities email, adopting a plain-English approach as well as including videos to ensure clarity and accessibility for all members. This streamlined communication will better educate members and encourage a more focused collective effort. Additionally, the workgroup is developing a learning platform designed to enhance members' skills in working with public officials and councilmembers. This resource will equip public works professionals with the tools needed to build productive relationships and advocate effectively for the needs of our industry.

I am a member of the *Value* workgroup, where we focus on helping members demonstrate the value of APWA involvement to their agencies and employers. We are continuing the successful "*Public Works is...*"

social media campaign to highlight the importance of public works and engage a broader audience. Additionally, we are soliciting feedback to assess satisfaction and ensure the Chapter is meeting members' expectations.

The *Education & Networking* workgroup is focusing on expanding opportunities to connect and collaborate across the Chapter. One key initiative is the reintroduction of *Area East* and *Area West* meetings, providing localized forums for members to share knowledge, discuss challenges, and build relationships. Additionally, the group is exploring ways to invite general membership to participate in committee meetings.

The *Grow Diverse Membership* workgroup is fostering inclusivity and expanding the Chapter's reach. Their efforts focus on building formal connections with committees to enhance collaboration. This includes helping committees define roles and responsibilities, establish accountability measures, and share standard operating procedures. Additionally, the workgroup is collaborating with the Membership Committee to share valuable resources and develop a comprehensive work plan.

I am excited and motivated by these goals as we continue to enhance our Chapter and fulfill the objectives of the 2020 Strategic Plan. If any of the items listed above resonate with you or spark your passion, I encourage you to reach out. I'd be happy to connect you with the respective workgroup where you can contribute your ideas and efforts to help shape the future of our Chapter.

Since I was introduced to the Washington State Chapter in 2004 it has consistently fulfilled its vision of providing public works education, advocacy, expertise, and public awareness for its diverse community of members. APWA has been my organization of choice, playing a significant role in advancing my public works career. I am honored and excited to serve as your Chapter President for 2025. I look forward to working together to achieve our shared goals and hearing about your ideas for *Vision 2030*.

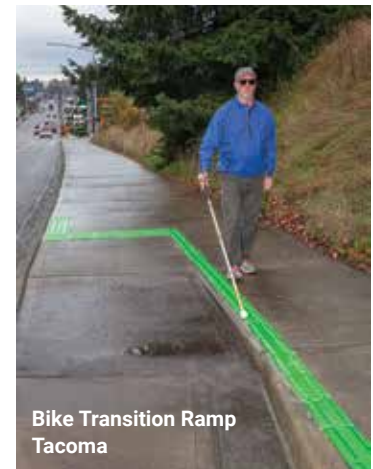


Jeff Brauns, PE, 2025 President,
Public Works Director, City of Newcastle

"Since I was introduced to the Washington State Chapter in 2004 it has consistently fulfilled its vision of providing public works education, advocacy, expertise, and public awareness for its diverse community of members."

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New and Returning Members

November 9, 2024 through February 11, 2025

Matthew Taylor, Engineering Technician,
City of Selah

Toni Marie Pawlak, Portfolio Specialist II

Jessica Spenst, Program Coordinator,
Policy & Procedure Development,
Clark County WA

Daniel Tissell

Ryan Walters, Project Manager,
Harper Houf Peterson Righellis Inc. (HHRP)

Dila Saidin, Principal Geotechnical
Engineer, NV5

Jordan Thomas, Civil Engineer,
Pierce County

David Chain, Pierce County Planning
and PW, Pierce County

Kyle DelCampo, Stormwater Inspector,
City of Bellingham

Nina Biondolillo, Engineer, Pierce County

Alan Berbisco, Civil Engineer, Pierce County

Glen Chouinard, Senior Client Services,
CivilAir Engineers PLLC

Jodi Grager, Administrative Assistant,
City of Des Moines

Emily Moon, Public Works Director,
City of Issaquah

Joan Quade, Administrative Assistant,
City of Snoqualmie

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Shaun Shea, PE

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Impact Overview 2024



Spring Conference

493 registrants were able to attend 38 educational sessions supported by 86 exhibitors, and 90 speakers.



National Awards

The Chapter was awarded the PACE Award for excellence in service to our members.



PACE Award

Project of the Year

Celebrating award-winning projects across Washington state.



9 Chapter Winners, 5 National Winners



2 New Classes Launch

Under the Northwest Public Works Institute (NWPWI), two new stand-alone classes were launched in 2024.



Project Management



Emergency Management

1,005
conference attendees
Spring & Fall Conferences

Legislative Advocacy

The Government Affairs committee and lobbyist tracked 49 bills with impact to Public Works in the areas of emergency and project management, transportation, water and sustainability.



Tracked 49 Bills



Fall Conference

512 registrants were able to attend 45 educational sessions supported by 95 exhibitors, and 72 speakers.



Excellence Awards



8 Individuals & Teams

Scholarships Awarded

7 Scholarships awarded \$26,000



\$10k

\$5k

\$2.5k

\$1k

Scholarships \$13,500+ Raised

Individuals and organizations contributed toward our scholarship program through the golf tournament, sponsorships and donations. A new 2024 scholarship was awarded for admin staff.



169 Golfers



Voice

Celebrated Public Works Week and the inaugural First Responders Day with social media campaigns.

Two organizations won the Golden Hardhat for their use of the hashtag #iampublicworks.



Golden Hardhat Winners

1,608
educational attendees
January - December
Conference, trainings & webinar combined

Equipment ROADeo

Contestants remained at high levels as maintenance crews competed in a variety of vehicles targeted at testing skills.



77 Competitors, 4 Equipment Winners

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2025 SPRING CONFERENCE
APRIL 23-24 TACOMA WA



As public works professionals, you shape the backbone of our communities, ensuring sustainable growth and resilience for future generations. "Vision 2030" challenges you to look ahead—to the infrastructure, innovation, and leadership that will define the next decade. This year's conference is your opportunity to embrace bold ideas, tackle emerging challenges, and spark transformation across all facets of public works. From advancing sustainability to addressing workforce needs, this is our moment to create a legacy of progress.

Let's envision a future built on collaboration, innovation, and purpose. Together, we can shape a brighter tomorrow—starting today.

HIGHLIGHTS

- » **Earn CE Credits**
35 educational sessions, 9 dedicated educational tracks
- » **Legislative Update**
- » **Networking Events**
Emerging Professional, First Timer, & all-attendee events
- » **Special Rates for First Timer's, Students & More**

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DRIVING CHANGE TO CREATE GROWTH & OPPORTUNITIES!

***KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
MORRIS MORRISON***

Morris Morrison is a world-class entertainer, futurist, author and entrepreneur who is driven to help organizations build stronger, kinder, more focused human beings and leaders.

It's no secret that human beings crave consistency – and we dislike change. Yet, one thing remains clear—owners, leaders and producers must deliver results. In this program, Morris Morrison will equip you to abandon your need for certainty and comfort, to embrace change and disruption and develop new disciplines. The powerful message, unforgettable content and easy to apply learning outcomes in this program will challenge you to reimagine your role as owners and producers, to become DISRUPTORS.

The PROJECT OF THE YEAR Awards

APWA-WA honors excellence in successfully completed public works projects with the Project of the Year Awards. Join us for a stand alone awards ceremony on Thursday, April 24. [Learn more: apwawaconf.com](https://apwawaconf.com)

7:00PM: Dinner & Awards

8:00PM: Entertainment

To attend please add Project of the Year Awards Ceremony to your conference registration or purchase tickets separately.



Jana Crawford
Stormwater
Retrofits Project
Manager
Jacobs



Melanie Vance
Environmental
Manager
*WSDOT Local
Programs*

6PPD-QUINONE: RESPONSE TO AN EMERGING CONTAMINANT

Untreated stormwater presents a potential adverse effect to listed endangered species due to the toxic effects of 6PPD-Quinone, which is significantly impacting projects through the Endangered Species Act (ESA) permitting process. Learn how local jurisdictions can address the issue as the science on this new pollutant is evolving.



**Dustin
DeKoekkoek**
Seattle Office
Director
Toole Design



**Dylan
Passmore,**
MScPI, PE
Senior Engineer
Toole Design



Tyler Wong, PE
Senior
Multimodal
Engineer
*Seattle Department
of Transportation*

CONNECTED & COMFORTABLE: THE 2024 AASHTO BIKE GUIDE

The 2024 AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities signals a pivotal shift in bikeway design, emphasizing connected, comfortable, and safe facilities for all ages and abilities. Backed by modern research and Safe System principles, it offers flexible, context-sensitive solutions for creating effective bicycle networks that integrate with existing infrastructure.



- » **Golf Tournament**
April 22
Supporting the Scholarship Fund
- » **Hike APWA**
April 22
Hike with the Membership Committee
- » **Fun Run**
April 23
Organized by the MPAC Committee

- » **Exhibit Hall & Coffee Cart**
Over 100 exhibitors! Complimentary coffee & snacks!
- » **Wednesday Night '80s Social**
April 23
- » **Project of the Year Awards Banquet**
April 24
Ticket purchase required.



Steve Nichols
Construction
Manager
Kitsap County
Public Works



Paki D. Perala, PE
Senior Project
Manager -
Construction
HNTB



Chris Pirnke
Attorney
Inslee Best

TALE OF TWO CONTRACTORS

A case study on what to do and what not to do when providing notice to an owner where the contractor protests a change to work. This session can provide insight to some potential pitfalls to help the owner and contractor navigate the process.



Lauren Behm, MPA
Senior Marketing
Manager
Landau Associates
Past President 2023



Donald J. Huling, PE
Principal
Geotechnical
Engineer
HWA GeoSciences
Past President 2021



Toby Rickman, PE, PTOE, PWLF
Administrator
Northwest Public
Works Institute
Past President 2014



Jay Burney, ICMA-CM
City Manager
City of Olympia
Past President 2010



Nicole Brockwell, PE
Project Engineer
City of Wenatchee

HOW TO RETAIN AND GROW YOUR WORKFORCE

Having engaged employees is critical to effective and efficient delivery of public works services to your community. This session will explore the extent of employee disengagement in Washington and what you can do to correct this in your department, leading to ideas on how to retain and grow your workforce.



Melissa Richey
Principal
Marketing
Strategist
Middle of Six



Kristina B. Nelson, PE
Senior Program
Manager
Kitsap County Dept
of Public Works



Letticia M. Neal, PE
Transportation
Improvement
Section Manager
Pierce County

TURNING THE TABLE: QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW PANELISTS

It's time to turn the table and ask agency selection panelists what they want to hear in project interviews. Join us for a panel discussion with a cross section of county and city staff ready to offer their perspectives on what makes for a winning interview presentation. Bring your questions!



Alysha Kaplan
President
WSEMA



Kyle Bustad
President Elect
WSEMA

DISASTER DECLARATIONS: REDUCE THE COMMUNICATION CHAOS & PAPERWORK SCRAMBLE

Windstorms, flooding, cold snaps... Washington is no stranger to disasters where public works professionals are the first responders on scene, undertaking activities that might be eligible for disaster reimbursement! Learn about Presidential Disaster Declarations, state and local emergency proclamations, and making damage assessments a breeze!



Jay Drye
Director
WSDOT- Local
Programs



Ashley Probart
Executive
Director
Transportation
Improvement Board



Jake Lewing
City Engineer
City of Wenatchee

LOOKING AT FEDERAL DISCRETIONARY GRANTS

Federal discretionary grants are often the key to funding a legacy project. However, these grants (RAISE, INFRA, CRISI, Bridge Investment, PROTECT, SS4A, etc.) may not be the best or realistic solution for what your community is trying to fund. This session will discuss the challenges and lessons learned from RAISE recipients and other grants.



Reema Griffith
Executive
Director
Washington State
Transportation
Commission

FUNDING WASHINGTON'S TRANSPORTATION FUTURE

This session will focus on how Road Usage Charging (RUC) can be implemented, the impacts it could have on drivers, and why Washington State is considering implementing it, noting legislation is being considered during the 2025 State legislature.



Brian Kittleson
Construction
Manager
HNTB



Jessica Murphy
Program
Construction
Manager
*Office of the
Waterfront*

REBUILDING THE SEATTLE WATERFRONT

Journey through years of reconstructing Seattle's Waterfront Program. Evaluate contracting strategies needed to manage multiple public and private construction projects occurring simultaneously. Relive the major delays and the trials and tribulations that can befall a 4-year long construction program and how to adapt and resolve issues. Review lessons learned and helpful tips in preparing contracts with multiple adjacent projects.



Chad Booth
Water Resources
Project Engineer
*David Evans and
Associates, Inc*



Darrell Smith
Civil Engineering
Director
PACE Engineers, Inc.



Ryan Harmon
Engineering
Services
Manager
City of Wenatchee



Alexis Simon
Business
Development
Specialist
*Crawford &
Associates, Inc.*



Derica Escamilla
Business
Development
Manager
Kleinfelder

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, PREPOSITIONING, & ACTIVE LISTENING

This session explores active listening, emotional intelligence, and strategic prepositioning as essential tools for business development. Panelists will share practical tips for fostering trust, building stakeholder relationships, and positioning teams for future opportunities.

- » **Earn CE Credits!**
- » **Legislative Update**
April 23
- » **Meet the Committees!**
available for everyone to pop
in and learn more about the
committees

- » **9 Educational Tracks**
Transportation
Funding
Building Seattle
Marketing
Sustainability
Leadership
Water / Regulatory
Division 1 and Technology
Emerging Professionals





2025–2026 SCHOLARSHIP *Call for Applications*

APPLICATIONS DUE JUNE 20, 2025

By Liam Olsen, Scholarship Committee Chair, Jacobs



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APWA-WA Chapter Scholarship applications for the 2025–2026 school year are now open! With scholarships for two-year and four-year schools, our goal is to assist individuals with their educational pathway into the public works industry. This year, six scholarships will be offered for a total available scholarship amount of \$26,000. Applications are due June 20, 2025 and are available online at the Chapter website.

Public works offers a huge variety of jobs and many students can be eligible. From engineer, surveyor, environmental scientist, GIS specialist, communicator, graphic artist, writer, mechanic, equipment operator, accountant, HR professional, administrative professional, and many others – public works has an opportunity for everyone. As a public works professional this is your chance to make a difference in the life (and budget) of a student by sharing our scholarships with your social circle.

Jack Pittis Memorial Scholarship (1), \$10,000

Higher Education Scholarships 4-Year Degree (2), \$5,000

The Washington State Chapter of the American Public Works Association is offering one \$10,000 scholarship to honor Jack Pittis. Jack was an active member of APWA, a past Chapter President, and a friend who is greatly missed. Jack's legacy was one of leadership, commitment to his community, and dedication to his role as a public servant. The Washington Chapter of the American Public Works Association (APWA) is seeking scholarship applicants who exhibit a devotion to career and community similar to Jack Pittis and students who are pursuing a future in the

public works industry. Additionally, the Washington Chapter is offering two \$5,000 scholarships to students pursuing a four-year degree.

Eligibility Criteria

1. The application process is open to undergraduates currently enrolled in four-year degree programs and full-time students in community colleges that will be enrolled in a four-year institution as an entering junior or senior as of fall 2025. Applicants must be enrolled in a college or university in the state of Washington. Students enrolled in an out-of-state school will not be eligible.
2. To be eligible for consideration, the applicant shall be majoring in a field related to Public Works (Civil, Structural, Transportation, or Environmental Engineering, Construction Management, Environmental Science, Communications, Public Administration, etc.).
3. The applicant shall be an entering Junior or Senior as of the fall 2025 school year.
4. The applicant shall meet the respective school's definition of full time standing for the 2025–2026 school year.
5. Evaluation criteria will include scholastic achievement, a dedication to community involvement, activities and interests beyond the classroom, and demonstrated knowledge of the public works industry.

Higher Education Scholarships 2-Year Degree (2), \$2,500

The APWA Washington State Chapter is also offering two \$2,500 scholarships to students in two-year colleges or technical schools. These scholarships are directed to students in pathways or programs that will benefit the field of public works.

The application process is open to students currently enrolled in two-year programs. Applicants must be enrolled in a college or school in the state of Washington. Students enrolled in an out-of-state school will not be eligible.

Eligibility Criteria

1. To be eligible for consideration the applicant shall be pursuing a course of study that will lead to a career in public works. This can include the engineering field directly related to Public Works, e.g., engineering, surveying, GIS, mechanics, communications, administrative services, marketing, construction administration, environmental sciences, operations, etc.
2. The applicant shall be a full-time student as of the fall 2025 school year.
3. The applicant shall meet the respective school's definition of full time standing for the 2025/2026 school year.
4. Evaluation criteria will include, in addition to scholastic considerations:
 - Beyond the classroom activities and interests
 - Community service efforts
 - Responses to essays and situational questions

Ruta Jones Memorial Scholarship (1), \$1,000

In honor of Ruta Jones, an active servant leader of the APWA Washington Chapter and caring employee of the City of Wenatchee for over 40 years – the WA Chapter is offering a \$1,000 training scholarship to Administrative Professionals supporting the public works industry. Please forward to the administrative staff in your office for their consideration.

In Ruta's honor, the Washington Chapter is offering this scholarship to provide the opportunity for a public works administrative or support staff member to attend a training of their choice. Ruta earned her degree in Business Administration from Central Washington University and she relished any opportunity to continue her learning journey. This scholarship is offered to any current administration staff member of a public agency or APWA-member firm. The scholarship will reimburse up to \$1,000 for conference or training registration, lodging, and transportation. Winner will submit receipts and be reimbursed up to \$1,000.

Eligibility Criteria

1. The application process is open to administrative or support staff at APWA-member agencies or firms.
2. The applicant shall meet their employer's definition of full-time employment for the current year.
3. Evaluation criteria will include excellence in work history, a dedication to community involvement, a commitment to continuing education, and demonstrated knowledge of the public works industry. ▀

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Empowering Public Works Professionals: The Value of Mentorship

Alyssa Ardourel, PE, Vice President, Huitt-Zollars, Inc., aardourel@huitt-zollars.com
Caroline Barlow, PE, CMOM Program Manager, Seattle Public Utilities, caroline.barlow@seattle.gov



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Kevin Buhr | 425.754.4325
Kevin.Buhr@MYFUELMASTER.com

A common motivator for young professionals today is career growth and opportunities to develop and expand professional skills. Mentorship is essential for promoting professional growth and developing talent. The APWA Washington Chapter Mentorship Committee is focused on sharing their experience and resources to promote successful mentorship across the public works industry. This article outlines the value of mentorship and resources for both individual mentoring relationships and for formal mentorship programs.

The Value of Mentorship

Mentorship is a reciprocal relationship between a mentor and mentee in which they share experience and insight. A successful mentoring relationship is one that is built on trust and provides guidance, motivation, and direction in support of professional goals and career development. There are many sources for mentorship including formal or informal with a supervisor, among peers, through professional or volunteer organizations, and through formal mentorship programs.

Key benefits:

- **Skills development:** Mentorship helps professionals develop skills and knowledge that enhance their effectiveness and contribute to career growth. Participation in a mentoring relationship refines communication skills, reveals personal strengths, and boosts confidence.
- **Knowledge transfer:** Experienced mentors share expertise and insights, ensuring that valuable institutional knowledge is passed to developing professionals and future leaders in the industry.
- **Career advancement:** Mentorship provides guidance and support for mentees as they navigate their career paths. Consulting with a mentor can promote career progression and strengthen a sense of professional fulfillment and career satisfaction.
- **Retention and recruitment:** Intentional mentorship offers value to professionals that creates incentive to join and remain an active part of an organization or agency. The value and support of an effective mentorship program is an enticing benefit to attract and retain talented individuals and sustain a skilled and stable workforce pipeline.

- **Networking and relationship building:** Mentorship fosters connections and relationships within organizations and the industry that are beneficial for both personal and professional development. Collaborative relationships and strong professional networks are essential for a sustainable future for the public works industry.
- **Increased confidence and fulfillment:** Mentees often gain confidence through the support and encouragement of their mentors, empowering them to take on new roles and responsibilities. Mentoring also serves as a resource for guidance and motivation to persevere through challenges. Sharing experiences with a mentor also enhances pride in accomplishments and excitement for future career opportunities.

Tips for Successful Mentorship

Effective mentorship requires intentional participation and effort from both mentee and mentor to build a meaningful and mutually beneficial relationship. Proactive participation and regular communication are key to making the most of a mentoring relationship.

Mentorship tips:

- **Be respectful:** Be on time and be flexible to meet the needs of both parties. Listen intentionally during discussions and be respectful of experiences and stories shared. Be open to different perspectives.
- **Have patience:** Mentors will need to be patient with mentees who may not be experienced with mentor-style meetings. Encourage openness and authenticity in discussions.
- **Bring curiosity:** Mentoring presents a learning opportunity for both mentees and mentors. Having questions, an open mind, and a curious nature will help make mentoring discussions efficient and meaningful.
- **Collaborate:** Understand each other's objectives and goals for the mentorship relationship and work together to accomplish them with thoughtful, planned discussions and regular scheduled meetings. It takes participation from both parties to be successful.

- **Come prepared:** Be intentional about the purpose of mentoring meetings and discussions. Plan discussion topics ahead of time and arrive with questions or ideas to contribute to the conversation.

Mentorship Program Resources

Establishing the APWA WA Mentorship Program began with a Mission Statement: *Fostering opportunities for connection, networking, and professional development and promoting a culture of diversity and open dialogue through facilitation of a Mentorship Program for the APWA Washington Chapter.*

The Program goals and framework are presented in the "Mentorship Program Guidelines" document which has been the roadmap for establishing and facilitating a successful mentorship program. As the program evolves, the Mentorship Committee has developed several additional resource documents to facilitate and support meaningful mentoring relationships.

Resource documents:

- Mentorship Program Guidelines
- Mentorship Planning Worksheet and Agreement
- Mentorship Discussion Topic Ideas
- SMART Goals Worksheet (in development)

The APWA-WA Mentorship Committee looks forward to continuing to provide value to the Chapter through the Program and these resources. The third annual Mentorship Program will begin accepting applications at the Spring Conference in April 2025.

Contact Alyssa Ardourel (aardourel@huitt-zollars.com) or Caroline Barlow (caroline.barlow@seattle.gov) to learn more about the APWA WA Mentorship Program and Committee, or to request any of the resources mentioned in this article. ▀

The Mentorship Committee has developed several additional resource documents to facilitate and support meaningful mentoring relationships.



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Strengthening Cybersecurity for Public Utilities in Washington State

Partnering with the WA Emergency Management Division for Free Support and Resources

By Tristan Allen, Infrastructure & Industry Section Manager, Washington Emergency Management Division

Endorsed by the APWA-WA Emergency Management Committee

Public utilities play a crucial role in ensuring that Washington's communities have access to essential services, including water, electricity, and transportation.

However, these systems are increasingly vulnerable to cyber threats that can disrupt operations, compromise sensitive data, and endanger public safety. With the growing complexity of digital networks and the sophistication of cybercriminals, state and local governments must prioritize cybersecurity and leverage existing resources and best practices to protect critical services.

The Growing Threat of Cyber Attacks on Public Utilities

Cyber threats against public utilities are not just hypothetical risks; they have real-world consequences. Recent attacks on water treatment facilities, power grids, and transit systems across the country have demonstrated the potential for widespread service disruptions, financial losses, and threats to public health

and safety. Malicious actors, including state-sponsored hackers and cybercriminal organizations, increasingly target public utilities to exploit vulnerabilities, demand ransom payments, or cause chaos.

For example, the October 3, 2024 attack on utilities giant American Water forced the utility to shut down some of its client systems to prevent further risk, causing a disruption in billing, customer service, and potentially exposed customer data. Across the country within the last two years, other attacks have seen data theft, ransomware attacks, cyber infrastructure infiltration, and in one instance the overflow of a water tank. While critical systems have not been breached yet, it is clear that the attacks are not going away. Given the high stakes, public utilities in Washington must remain vigilant and proactive in their cybersecurity efforts.

Resources for Public Water Systems

Drinking water utilities are particularly susceptible to cyber threats, given their

reliance on interconnected digital systems to manage operations. A breach in these systems can lead to service disruptions, data theft, or even contamination of the water supply. To help mitigate these risks, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) provides resources and guidance to strengthen cybersecurity posture. The DOH recommends that drinking water systems implement the following measures:

- **Develop Cybersecurity Plans:**

Water utilities should establish detailed cybersecurity policies and procedures that align with industry best practices, such as those outlined by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

- **Employee Training and Awareness:**

Regular cybersecurity training programs can help employees recognize phishing attempts,



suspicious activity, and other common cyber threats, reducing the likelihood of human error leading to a security breach.

Incident Response and Recovery Planning:

A well-defined response plan ensures that utilities can quickly mitigate and recover from cyberattacks. Regularly testing and updating these plans enhances their effectiveness.

Emergency Management and Cybersecurity Preparedness

The Washington Military Department's Emergency Management Division (EMD) plays a pivotal role in cybersecurity preparedness for critical infrastructure. The EMD's cybersecurity plans provide a framework for identifying, protecting, and responding to cyber threats.

These plans emphasize:

Public-Private Partnerships:

Collaboration between government agencies, private utilities, and cybersecurity experts enhances information sharing, threat intelligence, and coordinated responses to cyber incidents.

Regular Cybersecurity Exercises:

Conducting simulated cyberattack exercises allows utilities to assess vulnerabilities, test their response strategies, and refine their security measures.

Integration with Statewide Emergency Plans:

Cybersecurity measures must be incorporated into broader emergency management strategies to ensure resilience in the face of disruptions. This integration helps utilities respond effectively to both cyber and physical threats.

Moving Forward: A Call to Action

Public utilities in Washington State must take proactive steps to enhance their cybersecurity defenses. By leveraging federal and state-provided resources, conducting regular security assessments, and fostering a culture of cyber awareness, utilities can mitigate risks and safeguard essential services. Stakeholders are encouraged to explore the following resources to improve their cybersecurity posture:

No-cost cybersecurity audits for critical infrastructure:

WA State Auditor's Office:
<https://sao.wa.gov/about-audits/about-it-audits>.

Develop cybersecurity incident response plans and exercise them:

Contact Tristan Allen with the WA Emergency Management Division:
tristan.allen@mil.wa.gov.



No-cost cybersecurity training for utility owner/operations:

Contact Tristan Allen with the WA Emergency Management Division:
tristan.allen@mil.wa.gov.

The Future of Cybersecurity for Washington's Public Utilities

As cyber threats continue to evolve, it is imperative that public utilities stay vigilant, adaptive, and committed to strengthening their cybersecurity defenses. Investing in

cybersecurity today ensures the continued reliability and safety of Washington's critical infrastructure for years to come. The state's public utilities must view cybersecurity not as an optional investment but as an essential safeguard to protect the public and maintain trust in the services they provide.

By staying informed, leveraging expert resources, and fostering collaboration, Washington can lead the way in securing its public utilities against the ever-growing landscape of cyber threats. ▀

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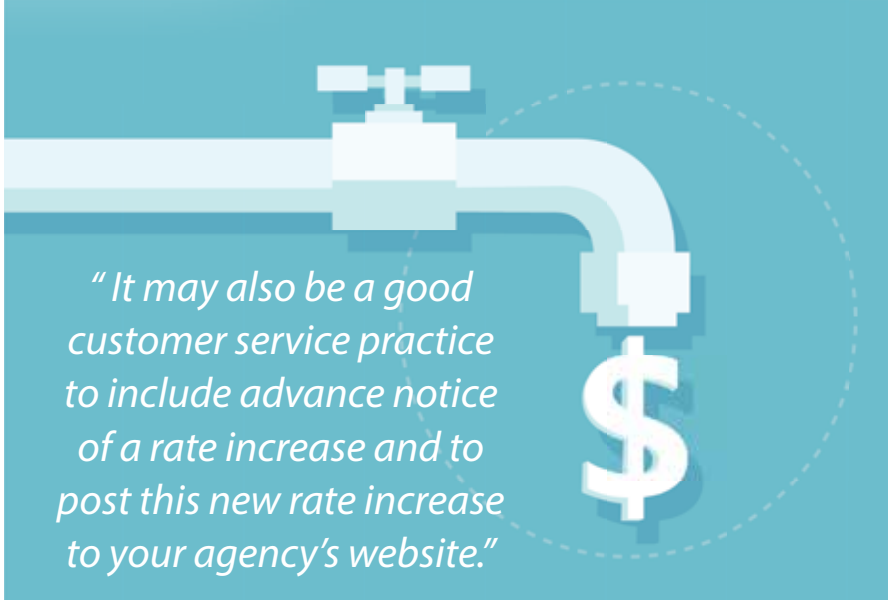
MRSC is a research nonprofit that offers local government staff free, one-on-one guidance with legal and policy consultants. Below are inquiry responses the MRSC Public Works Consultant. If you work for a city, county, or contracted special purpose district, Ask MRSC by calling 800-977-6553 or emailing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

Billing and Collections

The following are some questions MRSC has received regarding utility billing and collections.

Q: *The city council of our code city is planning to raise the water and sewer rates by 10% by ordinance. Once the ordinance has passed, can the new rates be billed immediately or is there a waiting period?*

A: Although local governments often hold public hearings and provide prior notice about utility rate increases, state law does not require published notice and a public hearing unless the rate increase is for a solid waste utility. So, the new water and sewer rates could go into effect as soon as the ordinance goes into effect (which would be five days after publication of the ordinance per RCW 35A.12.130, unless a different effective date is listed in the ordinance).



"It may also be a good customer service practice to include advance notice of a rate increase and to post this new rate increase to your agency's website."

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In contrast, when a solid waste utility rate is increased, then there is a 45-day notice requirement in state law. RCW 35A.21.152 and RCW 35.21.157 both require that the public be notified at least 45 days in advance of a proposed effective date of the rate increase for a solid waste utility, either by mail or by publication once a week for two consecutive weeks.

MRSC's webpage on Utility Billing Procedures (<https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/utilities/billing/utility-billing-procedures>) offers guidance on and examples of utility billing procedures applicable to sewer, water, storm drainage, gas, electric, and solid waste. Note that there may be a local policy or procedure to follow for providing notice of rate increases to your utility customers. It may also be a good customer service practice to include advance notice of a rate increase and to post this new rate increase to your agency's website.

Finally, while the new rate could go into effect five days after the ordinance is published, the city could not impose that rate on utility usage that occurs prior to the effective date. So, it would likely need to wait a billing cycle so that a customer is only being charged the increased rate for utility usage starting on the effective date of the rate change.

Q: My utility recently realized that we have underbilled one of our water accounts due to a metering error. How far back are we able to "back bill" a customer?

A: Generally, local governments are allowed to go back six years for underbilling. RCW 4.16.040(2) provides for a six-year statute of limitations for an account receivable, which is defined as "any obligation for payment incurred in the ordinary course of the claimant's business or profession, whether arising from one or more transactions and whether or not earned by performance."

As noted on MRSC's Collection Practices for Delinquent Utility Accounts webpage (<https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/utilities/billing/delinquent-utility-accounts>), utilities may set up payment plans with customers, but they must charge a reasonable rate of interest. MRSC recommends working with the customer to determine a reasonable schedule to repay the delinquency. Your agency may also have a local policy that

covers repayment plans, and if so, that policy should be followed.

Q: Currently, our policies require that we provide advanced notice of water shut off due to nonpayment of water bills by hanging a tag on the door of the residence or business in question. Can we do away with the use of door tags?

A: MRSC has received this question before. Door hangers are not required by state law. However, if your agency's current code or policy requires the use of door tags for notification of an impending shut off, the agency will need to amend this policy first before it can stop using them.

Q: Can water be turned off to a residence if the property owner has passed away and someone is living there without permission from the owner's family?

A: As a general practice, the city/utility typically leaves the account in the property owner's name and waits for an executor or family member to contact the agency and provide documentation (death certificate). If the family can show the individual is deceased and/or the property has now been transferred to a family member, and if the city code authorizes it, the city can temporarily disconnect water and place the account in inactive status. In this circumstance, only a minimal administrative fee would be charged, and water would be temporarily shut off. Note that this procedure would also need to be authorized in the city's municipal code.

If the property has not yet been transferred to a family member but the account is delinquent, the city could shut off water once the account is delinquent.

Q: Is our utility restricted from shutting water off during the winter?

A: There is no legal prohibition against shutting water off during the winter months. That said, to shut off water, your agency will need to follow precise steps. MRSC's online Utility Liens and Shut-offs tool (<https://mrsc.org/research-tools/utility-liens-and-shut-offs>) can walk you through the necessary steps on water shut off, and the Notice of Delinquency Procedures section on MRSC's Utility Billing Procedures webpage (<https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/utilities/billing/utility-billing-procedures>) lists the requirements that need to be met before shutting off any utility service. ▀

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An Introduction to the Washington State EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

From the Emergency Management Committee

Washington State ranks as the fourth most disaster-prone state in the nation, presenting an array of challenges for emergency management professionals. From powerful earthquakes and severe winter storms to large-scale wildfires, cybersecurity threats, and critical infrastructure vulnerabilities, the state faces a continuous battle to maintain preparedness and resilience. Adding to these concerns, potential civil unrest and other unexpected crises can further complicate the landscape of emergency response and recovery efforts.

The Washington State Emergency Management Council (EMC) plays a crucial role in navigating these challenges. Serving as an advisory body to the Governor and the Director of the Washington Military Department, the EMC is responsible for assessing, reporting, and promoting statewide emergency readiness. To strengthen its mission, the EMC has established various committees, commissions, and working groups that focus on critical aspects of emergency management. These efforts align with the Washington Military Department's overarching goal: to minimize the impact of disasters on residents, infrastructure, the environment, and the state's economy.

A leadership transition took place in December 2024 when Kirk Holmes, past president and current Emergency Management Committee Chair for APWA Washington Chapter, was nominated and confirmed as the new EMC Chair. Holmes brings extensive experience to the role, having served as



a Public Works Director in both Montana and Washington, and currently overseeing Central Washington Services and Preparedness Programs for Pertteet. With decades of expertise in emergency management, Holmes has worked alongside numerous agencies and private sector firms to build robust emergency response frameworks.

Holmes has expressed a strong commitment to leveraging his role to enhance collaboration between the EMC and public works professionals across Washington. He aims to increase awareness of emergency management initiatives and ensure that communities statewide are better equipped to handle disasters. His leadership comes at a pivotal time as emergency preparedness becomes an increasingly urgent priority for government agencies and local municipalities.

The recently released EMC annual report, prepared in compliance with RCW 38.52.040, offers a comprehensive assessment of the state's emergency readiness. The report identifies six key issues that require immediate attention and provides targeted recommendations aimed at improving statewide preparedness. However, a major challenge remains – these recommendations currently lack the necessary funding and resources for implementation.

The EMC has formally presented its findings to the Governor, the Legislature, the Adjutant General (TAG), and other key stakeholders, advocating for future consideration and funding. The Council encourages public works professionals to integrate these recommendations into their own emergency planning strategies, reinforcing a collective effort to enhance resilience and safety across Washington State.

ISSUE #1:

Take Measured Steps to Manage the Potential Impacts of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on Emergency Management

Synopsis: Artificial intelligence (AI) is a part of our daily lives, from weather forecasting to internet search functions. It is imperative for governmental agencies, especially emergency management, and public safety agencies, to adopt generative AI policies to ensure the public's trust is maintained throughout the life cycle of an emergency or disaster.

ISSUE #2:

Improve the Ability of Local and Tribal Emergency Management to Respond to and Recover from Disasters and Emergencies

Synopsis: The growing expectations and requirements placed upon local and tribal emergency managers pose a significant issue throughout Washington. In the post-pandemic environment, we now realize that local and tribal emergency management must be able to perform the full spectrum of their responsibilities during multiple, recurring, concurrent, and/or compounding disasters. This new paradigm stretches the capacity and capabilities of local and tribal emergency managers beyond their limits.



ISSUE #3:

Address Fire Danger in Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Areas

Synopsis: As the population in Washington grows, housing density increases, and we experience hotter and drier weather conditions, we are seeing an increase in wildfires occurring in Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) zones. The competing priorities of housing development, critical infrastructure, environmental protection, and wildfire mitigation measures can work against each other to undermine the resilience needed to protect populations in WUI zones.

ISSUE #4:

Ensure that People with Limited English Proficiency Get the Information They Need in an Emergency

Synopsis: Messaging systems and message translation services continue to be a challenge in Washington. It is critical to identify the specific language needs in a jurisdiction. Being equipped with this data will allow emergency messaging to be effectively delivered and can help improve the message dissemination systems.

ISSUE #5:

Prioritize Cybersecurity Risk to Critical Infrastructure

Synopsis: Cyber-attacks are increasing in frequency and sophistication. Given the central role of critical infrastructure systems in the everyday functioning of society, cyber-attacks impacting these systems can create severe consequences for our state's residents, economy, and environment. The potential for these severe impacts motivates threat actors to target our critical infrastructure through attempts to gain unauthorized access to computer systems, networks, data, or other valuable assets. This threat highlights the need for our state to be proactive in securing the information and operational technologies necessary to operate these critical systems and facilities.

ISSUE #6:

Take Steps to Mitigate Known Hazards and Reduce the Risk of Disasters

Synopsis: Disaster risk continues to increase in Washington, due to the combination of more frequent and severe climate-related natural hazard events (e.g., floods and wildfires) along with continued development and population growth in hazard-prone areas (e.g., in high-risk seismic zones in western Washington). The resources required to reduce these risks long-term are substantial and should include investments in hazard mitigation and resilience projects as well as planning-related efforts, such as hazard analysis.

For questions, please contact: Kirk Holmes, 2025–26 Emergency Management Council Chair, APWA-WA Past President, kirk.holmes@perteet.com. ▀





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Strategic Pillar:

Grow Diverse Membership

By Caroline E. Barlow, PE, Seattle Public Utilities

In 2020, the Washington APWA Chapter identified Strategic Goals to advance inclusivity by placing value on the different perspectives and experiences reflective of our Chapter's membership. At our Board Retreat in January 2024, the Board revised our goals to grow and look for opportunities to diversify our membership that was more reflective of the public works workforce. This included establishing an outreach strategy. The outreach strategy focused engagement with our Membership, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) and Operations & Maintenance (O&M) committees to define structure and identify targeted audience for outreach opportunities. Our vision of success in 2024 included:

- Develop Membership Committee mission and vision consistent with chapter goals on diversity
- Support and empower Diversity Committee in developing a new vision and increase committee participation
- Identify opportunities for public agencies to increase operations and maintenance participation and engage agencies that have not historically participated in Chapter events

In 2024, the Board engaged the Membership Committee and focused on reviving new member engagement through the successful First Timer's Events at the Spring and Fall Conferences. The Diversity Committee is slowly gaining momentum and was able to develop a new vision "To celebrate differences, equity, and inclusion by fostering a sense of value and empowerment in our communities." Both the Membership and Diversity committees are seeking new members to help establish work plans and implement new resources for the Chapter. To address an increase in O&M participation, the Chapter hosted

a new networking luncheon at the fall ROADeo which was a huge hit for all conference attendees. It provided an opportunity to network with all members and show our appreciation for O&M attendees and ROADeo competitors.

Board liaisons are working to build upon O&M and Membership committees' Work Plans to create outreach strategies for underrepresented groups and strengthening partnerships with new public agencies. A key priority is increasing engagement with agencies by showcasing the value of APWA membership to expand participation to all staff, including O&M and Administration within public works. Providing these opportunities not only supports growth of employees, but it can also improve retention within an organization and the overall public works workforce. Efforts include developing targeted talking points to highlight the benefits to agencies/employees and exploring sponsorship opportunities to recognize O&M contributions. By building these connections and emphasizing the value of inclusion, the Chapter aims to cultivate a diverse and vibrant membership while enhancing its impact within the community.

At PWX 2024 in Atlanta, APWA National set out an organizational goal to be more diverse, equitable and inclusive as outlined in the APWA DEI Roadmap, available at www.apwa.org/wp-content/uploads/TB_DEI_Roadmap_Overview_NEW.pdf. Key concepts outlined the roadmap include building diverse representations of membership, ensuring fair opportunity and access to resources, and creating inclusive culture of belonging and participation.



In 2025, the Board has set goals to baseline the Chapter's Membership metrics, establish targeted work plans for the Membership and DEI committees, and encourage collaboration between Chapter committees to optimize outreach efforts.

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Dawn Fletcher, WSDOT; fletcdm@wsdot.wa.gov

“Both the Membership and Diversity committees are seeking new members.”

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BRAIN *Ziegle Bits*

By Brian Ziegler

Five Things That Motivate You

Welcome back to another edition of my column. Apparently, the Chapter thinks this endeavor is worth pursuing – because I am back again!

Last quarter, I shared some personal stories about how various motivations moved me (and others) to act in ways I later regretted (check out “BRAIN Ziegle Bits – Winter 2024” [washington.apwa.org/news/223-2/](https://www.washington.apwa.org/news/223-2/) if you missed it). In that article, I suggested that our mental diets have tremendous influence over how we think, feel, and act (“Garbage In – Garbage Out”) so it’s important to “BRAIN” (Build Resistance Against Incessant Negativity) by eating a healthy mental diet.

Let’s talk about the “Build” component of BRAIN for a moment. In public works, before construction can begin, a lot of planning takes place. Deciding “where to go” with a project or activity requires a good assessment of “where we are” and the environmental factors that got us there. So, before we BRAIN ourselves a better life, let’s take a look at some of those environmental factors that helped us get “where we are” today.

This environmental assessment might start with the all-important question: “Why do I do the things that I do?”

(Socrates said, “The unexamined life isn’t worth living,” so we should probably heed his sage advice.) Of course, we have a myriad of reasons for feeling, thinking, and acting the way we do. But are you consciously aware of those factors and the degree to which they do – or do not – influence you?

Here are five categories of motivations you may have experienced and/or are currently employing yourself, maybe without even being aware. (By the way, these five are in a particular order, for a reason. See if you can figure out the order.)

Coercive Motivations – In a nutshell, this is “fear-based” influencing. In some cases, these physical and/or verbal coercions are entirely appropriate (like yelling “FIRE!” in a crowded theater or pushing someone out of the way of a speeding vehicle, for example). But sometimes our motivations are not so altruistic. I vividly recall my first ride on the “berry picking” bus when I was young. The bus driver welcomed me aboard with the hardest handshake of my life. He certainly showed this 12-year-old wannabe berry picker who was boss. But I was constantly scared of him from then on as a result. And for some, that’s the point of coercion.



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My advice is to avoid coercive motivations in nearly all professional situations. And where you can identify it in action, root it out quickly and decisively.

Legitimate Motivations – We all have titles in life, usually more than one. Titles convey positional authority, and we rely on titles to denote roles. Titles can also command a certain respect for the titleholder. These are considered “legitimate” motivations.

But titles can also intimidate, sometimes purposely. Often, employees use titles to command unwarranted respect, or worse, belittle others with “less important” titles. Beware of your tendency to imply value or worth based on titles. Lastly... and I’ve been guilty of this... don’t “chase” positional titles for self-aggrandizement. Your coworkers will quickly see this for the ego-trip that it is.

Legitimate motivations have their place in an organization, but only to the extent they facilitate an efficient bureaucracy. My best advice is to minimize the extent you use your positional authority to get your way. After all, you’re only renting your current title.

Knowledge Motivations – I admit it, I like really smart people. Their vast repertoire of facts and erudite manner just pull me in. Selfishly, I want to be them. But frankly, not everyone is like me. Some people see intelligence, or merely the projection of same, and are immediately turned off. Where are you on that spectrum?

For sure, employees want supervisors who are competent in their field. And our society has oodles of ways to “test” knowledge to ensure that qualifications meet minimums. But remember, none of us like old “smarty pants” over there spouting off at every opportunity, trying to impress whomever. If that kind of behavior irritates you, like it does me, remember the old adage – “We tend to dislike in others that which we dislike in ourselves.” Another Socrates moment.

I get hung up on this “Knowledge” motivation all the time. I fear making mistakes in front of coworkers and bosses, I feel like I should have an answer for every question, so I sometimes resort to “bluff

and bluster” mode to avoid being thought of as a fool. Avoid this trap at all costs, especially if you want to maintain trust and integrity with your team.

Wisdom Motivations – As I constantly remind myself, *knowledge* is knowing what to say and *wisdom* is knowing whether to say it or not. Mark Twain said, “It’s better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to open one’s mouth and remove all doubt.” (What this tells me validates my own experience, i.e., there is great wisdom in silence.) And yet, wisdom is compelling.

We all know people who attract us by their “groundedness,” their peaceable nature, their all-around sage advice. They just “have something” that we want.

Wise people make great bosses and even better mentors. And they don’t have to be grizzled veterans either. Wisdom exists in many forms and in diverse communities. I think true wisdom reflects more on a person’s character and personal motivation than on their years of experience.

Wisdom is a subtle motivator. Ever catch yourself saying or doing what your favorite teacher or mentor said or did? If so, their wisdom appears to have resonated with you in the past and now echoes through you into the world. I wish I could bottle that elixir and give it away because it represents the highest form of leadership.

Referential Motivations – I save this one for last because it is the most powerful of motivations. And the hardest to implement.

Consider three cases: Mother Theresa of Calcutta, Mohandas Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela. All were born into humble circumstances, without worldly titles, inheritance, or power. All were focused on one thing – and all three changed the world through their actions.

The motivation at work in each case here is called “referential” because in itself, the person doing the motivating possesses no inherent authority or power, but instead “points to” a larger moral or institutional imperative. The power comes not from the individual but from the reference to something far more powerful.



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This motivation is at work within you when you hear an inspiring speech and leave with renewed vigor and desire. This motivation is also at work when agency leaders develop and promote an inspiring Purpose, Mission, Values, and Goals. Unfortunately, this motivation also works on you when you consume too much of the wrong tenor of the social media available today.

Referential motivation is the preferred approach for almost all professional situations. It is why strategic planning is so ubiquitous and influential, and as such should ground our important decision-making (more on this next quarter).

So, did you catch the trend in these five motivations? The initial ones are "fear-based" and transition eventually into "love-based" motivations. Makes a big difference which one is applied and when. Whenever possible, motivate with the love-based ones more than the fear-based.

In closing, I hope this personal "environmental assessment" opens you to new ways of examining "why you do that thing you do." And consider using these motivational tools to help further your personal and professional goals. They say "knowledge is power..." and you now know more about yourself than you did before.

So go, be empowered.

Bonus: Why is the "r" missing from "Ziegler" in this column title? It's by design, of course. "Ziegle" is the German word for brick, and I come from a family of engineers who have been "Zieglers," or builders for generations. It's a proud legacy, awareness of which I gained only after someone told me what a "ziegle" was. ▀



Next Article: "Is Strategic Planning Worth the Effort?"

Because "Referential" motivation plays a key role in our organizations, we should probably talk about it some more. Come back next quarter for the next article in the series, "Is Strategic Planning Worth the Effort?"



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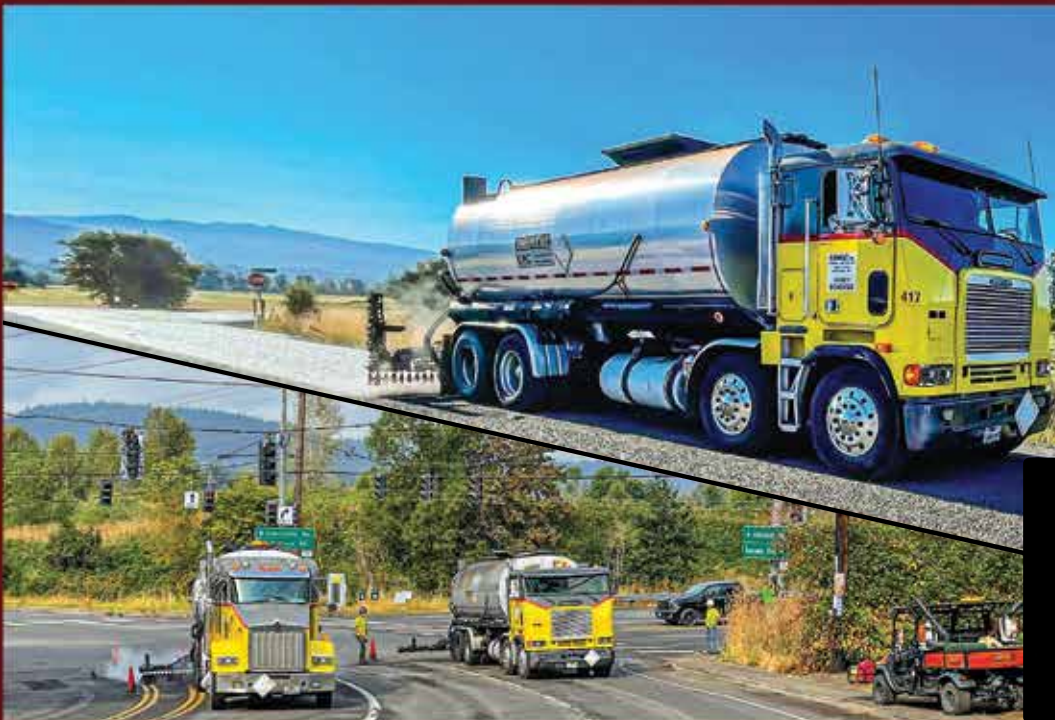
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