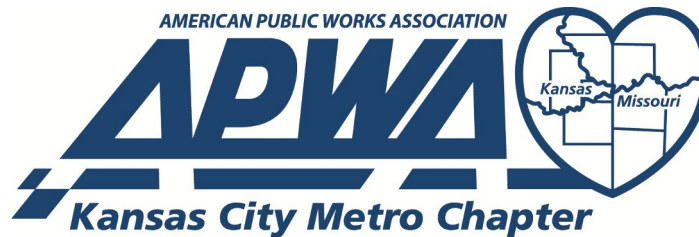


# PUB NEWS



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Chapter Membership:  
845

## President's Perspective

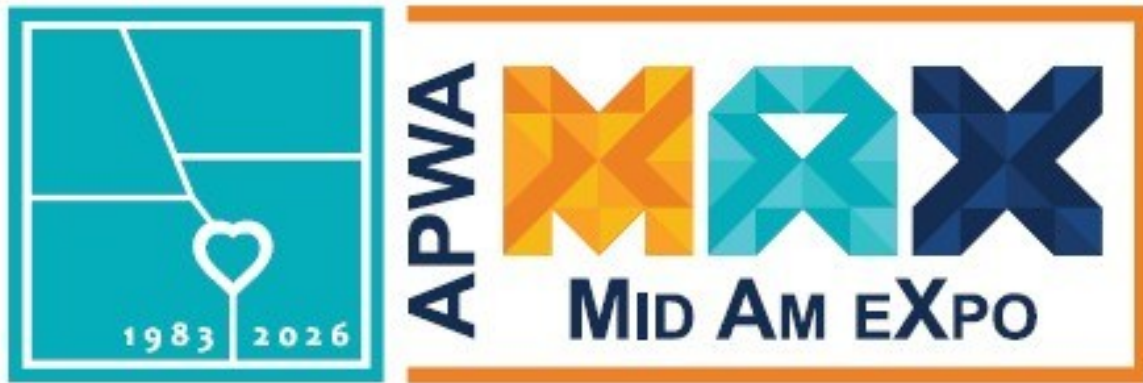
By Patty Hilderbrand

It is hard to believe that it is already July! Thank you to all of the public works staff (public and private) who are out there planning, designing, building, maintaining, and keeping our infrastructure safe through the heat of summer. As the temperatures rise, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude for your unwavering dedication and hard work. Your commitment to maintaining our roads, infrastructure and public spaces, often under challenging and sweltering conditions, does not go unnoticed.



Your resilience and perseverance ensure our community remains functional, beautiful and safe, even in the face of extreme heat. I truly appreciate your efforts and the sacrifices you make daily, but don't forget to keep yourself and your team safe as well. Hydrate and protect yourself from the sun, temperatures and humidity as much as possible!

**Chapter Activities** Since the last newsletter, our committees and members have been providing some excellent activities.



*Mid-America Conference & Expo (MAX)* - Congratulations and thank you to the Heart of America planning and management committees for another outstanding Mid-Am Conference. We had 75 vendor booths, 7 sponsorships and 294 conference registrants. They presented a fantastic program with topics in three tracts (Technical, Mgmt/Leadership and Operations) as well as the Leadership Talk Show and Vendor Tech Talks on the exhibit floor in addition to a Golf Tournament at Ironhorse Golf Club and NPWW celebration at Chicken N Pickle.

*Women in Public Works "3rd Thursday"* - lunch series presentation focused on work/life balance

*PW Peers* - Thank you to our new Chapter members from January, February and March that joined us for lunch in June to hear more about our Chapter and learn how they can become involved. We look forward to our next luncheon soon for those new members who joined in April, May and June.

*APWA in the Driver's Seat* - While not a Chapter activity, congratulations are still in order for this National event featuring two of the KC Metro's finest. John Cooper, GBA and his moderator (and partner in crime) Tim Ross, GBA retired, provided a fantastic presentation and discussion on leadership. Thank you to all of our Chapter members for logging in to support them.



**John Cooper, GBA**



**Tim Ross, GBA**

**Upcoming Events** - Please be sure to check out the upcoming events and get registered to enjoy the fun.

- July 14 SS4A A Tale of Two Cities
- July 21 Kansas City Metro Chapter – Lighting the Way: Women in Public Works
- July 24 21st Annual Barbecue Competition
- August 5 KC Metro Annual Awards Luncheon
- October 15 KC Metro Annual Golf Tournament

**New Appointments** - Congratulations to our KC Metro Chapter members who were recently appointed to National Committees.



**Michael Park**, Director of Public Works for the City of Lee's Summit was appointed to the APWA's Accreditation Council. This group reviews results of the site accreditation team's findings of public works agencies' applications for accreditation and determines accreditation status. It is comprised of public works professionals and members of allied professions such as city/county management, government finance, law, public administration, human resource management, planning, and others involved in administration of local, regional, state, provincial and federal government agencies. Lee's Summit is an accredited agency

## President's Perspective - Continued

By Patty Hilderbrand



**Doug Wesselschmidt**, Director of Public Works for the City of Grandview, MO was appointed to the Top 10 Public Works Leaders of the Year Awards Committee. Comprised of five members who are Top Ten Public Works Leader of the Year recipients from previous years, the Committee reviews nominations for the Top Ten Leaders of the Year award and selects recipients according to established criteria. Doug received his Top 10 award in 2005.

**PWX 2026** Remember that PWX will be held in Houston from August 30th through September 2nd. More details can be found here: [PWX Conference - American Public Works Association](#). The KC Metro Chapter Dinner will be on Tuesday night at Zaranda, offering Las Californias cuisine. A registration link can be found in the KC-Metro Chapter Events section on the Chapter website. Looking forward to a great meal and a fun night with you. Our chapter is proud to have several speakers representing the KC Metro Chapter. Let's support them by attending their session and asking those really tough questions!

Monday, August 31st

*SC/RC Perspective Panel: The Essential Soft Skills*

Alysen Abel, City of Spring Hill

Stephanie Boyce, City of Mission

Joey Carley, City of Raytown

*Elevating Women in Public Works: A Roundtable Discussion*

Alysen Abel, City of Spring Hill

Stephanie Boyce, City of Mission

Maggie Green, Burns & McDonnell

*AI-Powered Service Line Inventories: A Modern Approach to Tackling Lead and Copper Risks for the City of Edgerton, Kansas*

Dan Merkh, City of Edgerton

Elango Thevar, NEER

*Smarter, Faster, Stronger: AI-Powered Dry and Wet Weather Calibration in Sanitary Sewer Modeling*

Joey Carley, City of Raytown

Elango Thevar, NEER

Tuesday, September 1st

*Looking in the Rear View Mirror: Lessons Learned from the Past*

Alysen Abel, City of Spring Hill

Jennifer Taylor, SCS Engineers

*In the Driver's Seat with the Experts*

John Cooper, GBA

Wednesday, September 2nd

*Leading with Joy: Elevating Leadership through Purpose and People*

Tawn Nugent, TREKK Design Group



Remember, be sure to invite a friend or colleague to join you at the next Chapter event or even on a committee. One of the greatest values of your APWA membership is networking and meeting other Public Works professionals

Patty Hilderbrand

816-808-7430

[philderbrand@cfse.com](mailto:philderbrand@cfse.com)

## Delegate Details

By Alysen Abel

We have so much to celebrate! July 4<sup>th</sup> marks the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The entire country is celebrating that milestone. In the heart of all that, the country came together to host the world's largest sporting event, the World Cup. In true Kansas City style, we have stepped up to provide hospitality to our visitors.

Speaking of hosting visitors, I can't believe it was just a few weeks ago that the KC Metro Chapter hosted visitors for the MidAm Expo conference. A special "Thank You" to all those who made the MidAm Expo possible, especially our MAX Co-Chairs Kyle Dieckmann and Dan Brown. This year's regional conference did not disappoint...

providing the local chapters an opportunity to obtain Professional Development Hours, learn about new technologies, and network with others in the Public Works field. The conference committee will follow up with a post-event survey, please take the time to provide your feedback...so that we can make the event better in 2029.



PWX is right around the corner! This year's PWX will be held in Houston from August 30<sup>th</sup>-September 2<sup>nd</sup>. For more information (and to register for the conference), visit the website at [PWX Conference - American Public Works Association](#).

### Here are a few tips for those who are attending...

**Attend the Awards Ceremony on Monday Night** – National APWA recognizes Projects of the Year, Top Ten Public Works Leaders, and Chapter and Young Professional Awards during PWX. The National Award Winners will be honored at the Awards Ceremony held on Monday, August 31<sup>st</sup>. During the ceremony, the KC Metro Chapter will be honored with the Presidential Award for Chapter Excellence (PACE) Award. The KC Metro Chapter continues to hold the record for the longest consecutive streak to receive this distinction.

**Attend the Chapter Dinner on Tuesday Night** – Each year, the KC Metro Chapter hosts a Chapter Dinner at PWX. This year's event will be held on Tuesday, September 1<sup>st</sup> at Zaranda, a new award-winning Mexican restaurant in Houston. To encourage attendance and to keep the price affordable, the KC Metro Chapter will help subsidize the cost of the event. The ticket price is held at \$50 per person. There is limited tickets available, be sure to reserve yours ahead of the deadline at [2026 KC Metro PWX Chapter Dinner – APWA Kansas City Metro Chapter](#)

**Support Kansas City Presenters** – Throughout the conference, there will be a variety of educational sessions available. Many of these presentations will include some familiar faces from our KC Metro Chapter. Support your KC Metro Chapter Leaders by attending these presentations. When we get closer to PWX, APWA will finalize the program. Look for a comprehensive list of speakers from Kansas City who will be presenting at the conference.

**Network with Others** – There will be opportunities throughout the conference to network with members from other chapters. Through these conversations, you will learn from others' experiences that will provide ways to improve your organizations.

Please contact Kyle Dieckmann or myself if you have any questions. [Alysen.Abel@springhillks.gov](mailto:Alysen.Abel@springhillks.gov) or [Kyle.Dieckmann@opkansas.org](mailto:Kyle.Dieckmann@opkansas.org).

## Past Events

### Women in Public Works Virtual Discussion: Finding Balance Together

On May 21, approximately 20 women representing both public and private agencies across the Kansas City metro came together for a virtual discussion on one of the most important, and often challenging topics we face: work-life balance.

The conversation was open, honest, and filled with practical ideas. Participants discussed the importance of leaders modeling healthy behaviors, such as taking vacation time, stepping away to recharge, and demonstrating that rest is not only acceptable but necessary. We also talked about setting boundaries in a profession that often demands our attention around the clock. Simple strategies like using "Do Not Disturb" during family time, scheduling emails to send during business hours, and blocking time on our calendars for focused work or personal commitments can help create healthier routines.

Another common theme was learning to ask for help. Whether it's sharing responsibilities, delegating tasks, or leaning on our support systems at work and at home, many participants acknowledged that we don't have to do everything ourselves. Giving ourselves permission to step away, recharge, and trust others is an important part of long-term success.

Of course, recharging looks different for everyone. Some participants shared that they find balance through a walk outdoors, a good laugh, a pedicure, a book club, a running group, or simply a girls' night out. The common thread was making time for activities that restore energy and help us show up as our best selves both professionally and personally.

Perhaps the biggest takeaway from the discussion was realizing that, regardless of where we work or what stage of our careers we're in, many of us share the same challenges. It was a wonderful opportunity to connect with women from across the metro, exchange ideas, and remind one another that we are not alone.

If you missed this discussion, we hope you'll join us at one of our upcoming Women in Public Works events!

#### **KC Metro APWA Women in Public Works Networking & Self-Care Event**

**July 21 | 5:30–7:30 p.m.**

**Fuse, Lenexa**

Take a break from the deadlines, meetings, and project schedules and join us for an evening dedicated to creativity, connection, and self-care.

[Kansas City Metro Chapter – Lighting the Way: Women in Public Works – APWA Kansas City Metro Chapter](#)

#### **Women in Public Works Virtual Lunch & Learn**

**August 20 | 11:30AM – 1:00PM – drop in or stay for the whole event**

Our next virtual Lunch & Learn will focus on **Mental Health and Resilience**, exploring ways to manage stress, build resilience, and support ourselves and one another in the public works profession.

To receive the meeting invitation and virtual link, email **Stephanie Boyce** at [sboyce@missionks.org](mailto:sboyce@missionks.org) to be added to the distribution list.

We hope you'll join us as we continue building a supportive network of women across the Kansas City metro public works community.

**CONGRATULATIONS**

**Spire Honors Western Missouri Municipal Public Works Departments with 2026 Silver Shovel Awards**



**Missouri West region winners:**

- Anderson
- Cameron
- Grandview
- Joplin
- Lamar
- Liberty
- Neosho
- Nixa
- Willard
- Republic
- Harrisonville
- Carl Junction
- El Dorado Springs
- Peculiar
- Windsor

On Tuesday, April 21, Spire recognized western Missouri municipal public works departments for practicing safe digging around its underground utilities. Spire’s Damage Prevention and Right of Way teams created the Silver Shovel Award in 2019 as a way to thank local municipalities for putting safety first.

Municipal public works departments with no at-fault damages to Spire’s infrastructure over the past year were honored with an award. At two breakfast events across the state, including one in Kansas City, Spire recognized more than 30 Missouri municipalities that have practiced safe excavation.

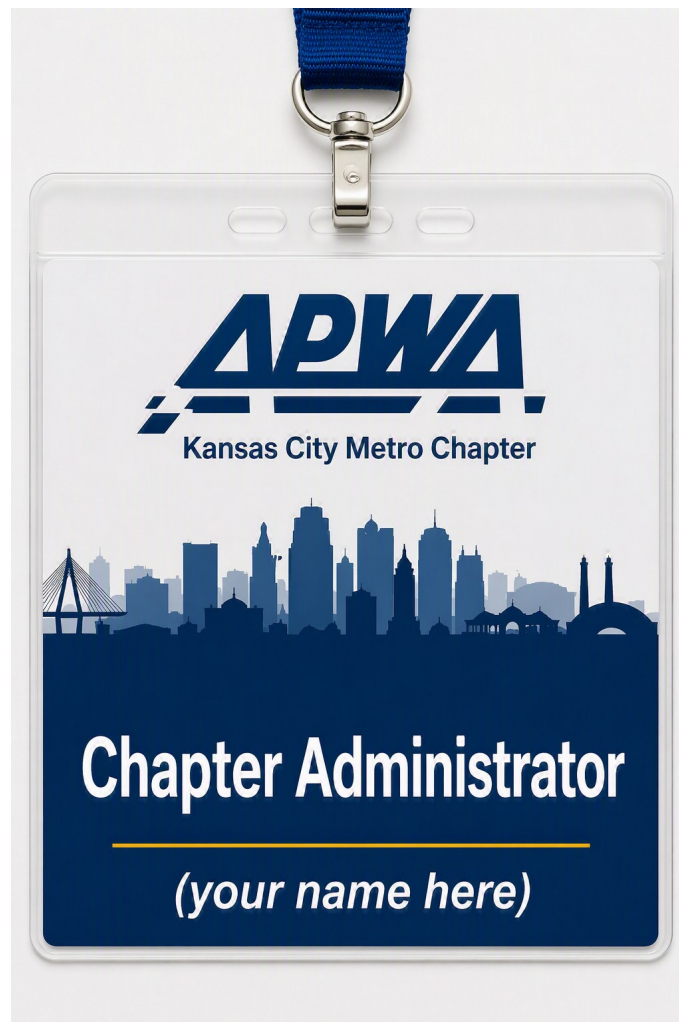
“By making the free phone call to 811 before starting a digging project, these municipalities protect their employees and residents,” said Alan Meyer, Spire damage prevention manager. “Presenting the Silver Shovel Award is our way of saying thank you to these municipal public works departments for making the decision to put safety first before every dig.”

To be awarded, a municipal public works department must be located within Spire’s service territory, be a member in good standing of Missouri One Call, and have no at-fault damages to Spire’s facilities in 2025.

**Congratulations to the communities that won the 2026 Silver Shovel Award!**

## New Chapter Administrator Opportunity

The APWA Kansas City Metro Chapter has long been recognized for its outstanding volunteers. Our Executive Committee and Standing Committees dedicate countless hours each year to delivering the programs, events, and resources that make our Chapter successful. To better support those volunteers and promote the continued growth and sustainability of the Chapter, the Executive Committee has approved the creation of the Chapter's first Chapter Administrator position. This independent contractor role will provide part-time administrative support for many of the recurring operational tasks that help keep the Chapter running smoothly, allowing our volunteer leaders to focus on serving our members and advancing the public works profession. Fortunately, the Chapter is in a strong fiscal position to be able to fund this role.



***Know someone who would be a great fit?*** Please share this opportunity with experienced professionals in your network who have a background in association administration, nonprofit organizations, or public works.

For more information, including the scope of services, qualifications, and submission requirements, visit the [RFQ listing](#).

Statements of Qualifications should be submitted to [KCMetro.APWA@gmail.com](mailto:KCMetro.APWA@gmail.com) by **5 PM on July 22, 2026**.

## Advancing Community Quality of Life Through Rail Quiet Zones

### An Envision Framework Perspective with a Kansas City, Missouri Case Study

By: Scott Komarek

#### Why Quiet Zones Matter?

For many communities, train horn noise is more than an inconvenience. Federal regulations require locomotive engineers to routinely sound train horns at public grade crossings to improve safety. Repeated horn blasts can negatively affect nearby residents, businesses, sleep quality, outdoor activity, and overall quality of life. Businesses near rail corridors may also experience impacts on customer experience and redevelopment potential. Quiet zones offer an opportunity to reduce these impacts while maintaining crossing safety through a regulated evaluation and implementation process.

#### What Is a Quiet Zone?

A Quiet Zone is a section of railroad corridor approved under Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) regulations where routine locomotive horn use is suspended at public highway-rail grade crossings. Establishment requires evaluation of crossing conditions, FRA risk analysis, stakeholder coordination, safety improvements where required, and formal notices of intent and establishment. The minimum requirements for a quiet zone are that it be one-half mile in length, that the crossings be equipped with Active Warning devices (flashing lights & gates), and that it be in compliance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) requirements. Because each corridor has unique safety and operational conditions, implementation requires a structured review process.

#### The Quiet Zone Implementation Process

- Community need identified.
- Existing conditions and risk evaluation.
- Diagnostic review with the Railroad, FRA, state DOT, and local agency.
- Development of recommended improvements.
- Notice of Intent.
- Construction and implementation.
- Notice of Establishment.



#### Kansas City, Missouri Case Study: East Bottoms Quiet Zone

The effort originated from concerns raised by local business owners within Kansas City's East Bottoms industrial area. The City of Kansas City retained consulting services to assist with the evaluation and establishment of a Quiet Zone along Union Pacific Railroad's (UPRR) KC Metro Subdivision.

Following the process described above, the City and Consultant met with the FRA and the UPRR Diagnostics team on-site to evaluate the rail crossings and identify supplemental safety improvements. The suggested safety improvements would have made establishing the Quiet Zone cost-prohibitive. After further investigation and using the FRA's web-based Quiet Zone Calculator Tool, it was determined that the risk factor for the three at-grade rail crossings was below the national threshold for establishing a Quiet Zone. Therefore, no additional supplementary safety measures were required to establish the Quiet Zone.

This development enabled the City to use internal staff to make the required improvements to bring the crossings into compliance with MUTCD standards, resulting in a cost-effective implementation of the Quiet Zone.

These targeted upgrades demonstrate that, in some cases, meaningful quality-of-life improvements can be achieved without extensive reconstruction.

#### Where Is the Quiet Zone?

The corridor is located in Kansas City's East Bottoms area northeast of downtown Kansas City and includes the crossings at North Montgall Avenue, Prospect Avenue, and Shelly Street.

## Advancing Community Quality of Life Through Rail Quiet Zones



### What Improvements Were Required?

This project required relatively modest improvements because active warning systems already in place at the crossings, and no supplemental safety measures were required to meet FRA Quiet Zone risk thresholds. The improvements consisted of updating the railroad signage and pavement markings to meet current MUTCD standards. This included replacing the existing advanced Railroad Crossing signs, installing No Train Horn plaques (after the QZ establishment period), adding centerline and edge line pavement markings, and adding stop bars at the cross gates.

### Project Outcomes

The project progressed beyond a study and was implemented by Kansas City. Outcomes included reduced train horn noise, maintained crossing safety, support for business activity and redevelopment, and improved quality of life.

The project also showed how a data-driven, collaborative process can help communities identify practical solutions that balance livability, safety, and cost.

### Alignment with Envision Quality of Life Credits

- QL1.4 Minimize Noise and Vibration by reducing train horn noise along the corridor.
- QL1.1 Improve Community Quality of Life by creating a quieter and more livable setting for nearby businesses and users.
- QL1.2 Enhance Public Health and Safety by maintaining protected crossings while reducing adverse noise impacts.
- QL3.4 Enhance Public Space and Amenities by improving the experience of the corridor and adjacent areas.
- QL3.1 Advance Equity and Social Justice by supporting a more comfortable and accessible environment for people who work in and travel through the area.

### Conclusion

The Kansas City East Bottoms project demonstrates that successful Quiet Zone implementation can be achieved through collaboration, FRA-guided risk analysis, and targeted safety improvements. The result was a completed project that reduced noise pollution and created a more livable environment while maintaining public safety.

More broadly, this case study shows that quality-of-life improvements do not always require major capital investments. With the right analysis, coordination, and targeted upgrades, communities can achieve meaningful benefits in a cost-effective way.

Note: This article outlines the overall process. For more information on how to establish Quiet Zones, you can visit the FRA's website: [QuietZoneBrochure.pdf](#)

**Upcoming Events**

**APWA KC Metro—SS4A: A Tale of Two Cities**

Tuesday, July 14, 2026  
11:30am-1:00pm

Powell Community Center  
6200 Martway St.  
Mission, KS 66202

Join Alysen Abel and Stephanie Boyce for a discussion comparing and contrasting how two very different Kansas communities approached the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) planning process.

**Lighting the Way: Women in Public Works**

Tuesday, July 21st

Take a break from the deadlines, meetings, and project schedules and join us for an evening dedicated to creativity, connection and self-care.

Create a custom 13 oz candle at Fuse Candle Bar  
12808 W. 87th Street Parkway, Lenexa, KS

**The 2026 APWA Barbecue Competition**

Friday, July 24th!

Come on out to the Knights of Columbus Park at 19699 Shawnee Mission Pkwy, Shawnee, KS and enjoy all you can eat competition barbecue and drinks, FREE! Dinner will be served at 6:00PM!



**APWA Awards Luncheon**

Grand Street Café  
4740 Grand Ave, KC MO 64112

Wednesday, August 5, 2026  
11:30am-2:00pm

\$25 per person  
Registration Cap - 250 people

**Upcoming Events (Continued)**

**Third Thursday: Women in Public Works**

**Second Session  
August 20, 2026  
Mental Health and Resilience**

**RSVP: [sboyce@missionks.org](mailto:sboyce@missionks.org)**

**2026 APWA PWX Chapter Dinner for KC Metro**

**ZARANDA**

Las Californias Cuisine

**1550 Lamar, Suite 101  
Houston, TX 77010**

**Tuesday, Sept. 1, 2026  
6:00pm-9:00pm  
\$50/person**



**Registration will be capped at 80 participants, and will close Monday, August 31, 2026.**

**No payment at the door.**

**APWA KC METRO  
ANNUAL GOLF  
TOURNAMENT**

**TOPGOLF OVERLAND PARK  
OCTOBER 15, 2026  
12-5 PM**



## Chapter Leadership

### APWA 2026 COMMITTEE CHAIRS

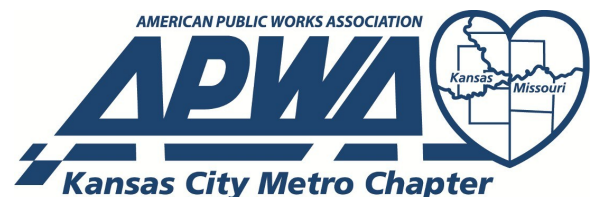
Administrative & Contracts - Kristen Love & Cindy DeShazo  
 Asset Management - Brandon Grover  
 Audit & Budget - Bryan Blizzard  
 Awards - Nathan Hladky  
 BBQ Contest - Brian Ladd & Jack Renfro  
 By-Laws - Tawn Nugent  
 Chapter Meetings - Thomas Renfro  
 Communications & Publicity - Kait Hanson, Joshua Martinez & Morgan Reidmiller  
 Community Service - Kylan Rottinghaus  
 Emergency Management - Trey Whitaker  
 Engineering & Technology - Michael Haake  
 Facilities & Grounds - Dan Brown  
 Fleet Services - Josh Wood  
 Golf Tournament - Tommy Hunter  
 Government Affairs - Trey Whitaker  
 Historical - Ernie Longoria  
 Holiday Party - Nicole Woods & Sabrina Parker  
 K-12 Student Outreach - David Smalling  
 Leadership & Management - Chad Thompson  
 Membership - Jon Batchelor  
 Membership Engagement - Sheila Shockey  
 MidAmX - Kyle Dieckmann & Dan Brown  
 MO-KAN Street Superintendents - Paul Dunn  
 Myron D. Calkins Scholarship - Phil Herrman  
 National Public Works Week - Nicole Woods & Sabrina Parker  
 Small Cities, Rural Communities - Stephanie Boyce & Alysén Abel  
 Snow & Equipment Training Expo - Paul Dunn, Sean Phelps & Logan Stiles  
 Standards & Specifications - Mark Montgomery & Cody Wilbers  
 Sustainable Infrastructure - Scott Komarek  
 Transportation - Linda Rottinghaus  
 Utility & Public Right-of-Way - Andy Roddy & Brent Berry  
 Water Resources Management - Andrew Smith  
 Webmaster - Joshua Martinez  
 Women in Public Works - Tania Tavakkoli  
 Young Professionals - Joey Carley

### APPOINTMENTS, LIAISONS, COORDINATORS, AND TASK FORCES

Asset Management Task Force - Brandon Grover  
 Calendar/Events Coordinator - Todd LaTorella & Jack Renfro  
 Construction Materials - Christy Martin  
 Public Works Institute - Dena Mezger & Tim Ross  
 Solid Waste Management - Clayton Duffin  
 Student Chapter- **Vacant**

### KC APWA 2026 OFFICERS

President - Patty Hilderbrand  
 Vice President - John Cooper  
 Secretary - Trey Whitaker  
 Treasurer - Stephanie Boyce  
 Director (2<sup>nd</sup> Year) - Todd LaTorella  
 Director (2<sup>nd</sup> Year) - Nicole Woods  
 Director (1<sup>st</sup> Year) - Jack Renfro  
 Director (1<sup>st</sup> Year) - Brandon Kuehl  
 Past President - Tawn Nugent  
 Director-At-Large - Paul Dunn  
 Delegate - Kyle Dieckmann  
 Alternate Delegate - Alysén Abel



### List of accredited Agencies in KC Metro Chapter

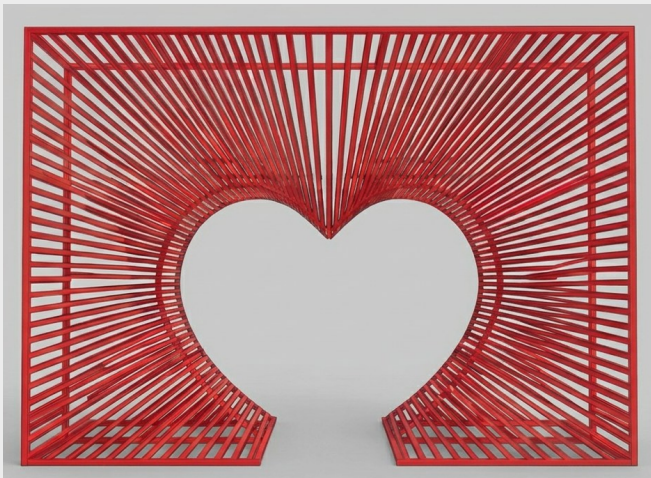
- Belton, MO: *Public Works*
- Fairway, KS: *Public Works*
- Kansas City, MO: *Public Works*
- Lee's Summit, MO: *Public Works and Water Utilities*
- Lenexa, KS: *Municipal Services*
- Olathe, KS: *Public Works*
- Overland Park, KS: *Public Works*
- Raymore, MO: *Public Works*
- Shawnee, KS: *Public Works*
- Unified Government: *Public Works*



The APWA Pub News, a free publication of the Kansas City Metro Chapter of the American Public Works Association (APWA), is published in six issues throughout the year. To receive a free subscription, send an e-mail to [kkhanson@burnsmcd.com](mailto:kkhanson@burnsmcd.com).

Publisher: Kansas City Metro Chapter of APWA  
 Editor: Kansas City Metro Chapter of APWA  
 Staff: Kait Hanson

The Pub News staff welcomes announcements, news articles, photos and suggestions. A new issue will be published in September. The deadline for the next issue will be Friday, September 4, 2026. Deadlines will be strictly enforced. Electronic formats are preferred, but not required. Send your stories to Kait Hanson via email at [kkhanson@burnsmcd.com](mailto:kkhanson@burnsmcd.com)



### **POLICY FOR THE USE OF THE APWA PUB NEWS, WEBSITE AND ELECTRONIC MAILING LIST**

It shall be the policy of the KC Metro Chapter that the use of the "APWA Pub News, Website and Electronic Mailing List" by outside agencies shall abide by the following:

- Outside agencies, educational institutions, and not-for-profit organizations may utilize the Chapter's website for dissemination of approved items that are considered beneficial to our membership.
- Approval of these items may be granted by the Chapter President, the Newsletter Editor and the Website Committee.
- When requested, announcements from other organizations may be posted on the Chapter's website under "News" if the Newsletter/Communications Committee is provided electronic announcements in a format that can be posted without modification or editing.
- The Newsletter/Communications Committee may use the chapter's electronic mailing list for announcements to KC Metro Chapter members when the topic is related to an APWA activity or event. However, an announcement will not be sent before the Chapter event has been posted on the KC Metro Chapter website.

This policy was approved by the Executive Committee on November 19, 2008.