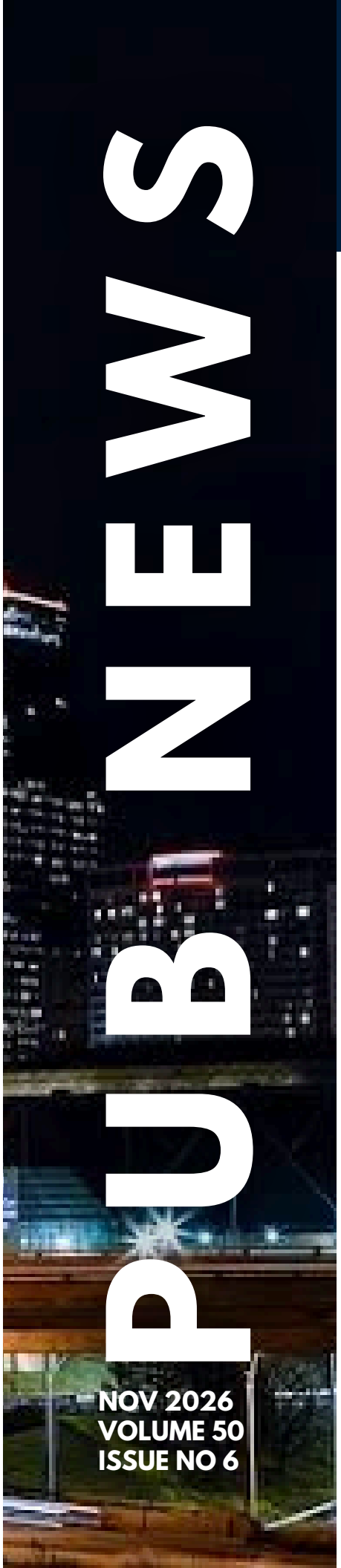

PUBNEWS

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AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION

APWA

Kansas City Metro Chapter

Kansas Missouri

FOCUSED ON PROVIDING EDUCATION AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR PUBLIC WORKS MEMBERS WHO BETTER OUR COMMUNITIES





CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP: 785

HIGHLIGHTS

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

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President's Perspective

By Patty Hilderbrand



Wow! 2026 has just flown by! Looking back over the past year, I continue to be amazed at the energy and passion our members have for both APWA and their roles in public works. It's great to see so many KC Metro members at national events and to see so many different members at our chapter events. Thank you all for supporting APWA, and I hope you know how important you are to fulfilling our promise as public works professionals. Every day, residents across the KC Metro area depend on us to provide essential services and to ensure safe passage on our transportation infrastructure. Thank you for doing your part and doing it well.

Serving as your Chapter President for 2026 has been an honor. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Executive Committee for their dedication to our chapter. Your leadership and collaboration have been appreciated and valued. Normally, their work is done behind the scenes, but I want to share some of the important work done on your behalf. Work is underway to update three essential chapter documents: the Bylaws, Strategic Plan, and Chapter Leadership Manual. Together, these documents provide structure for how the chapter is governed and operates from day to day and event to event. Thank you to Tawn Nugent (2026 Past-President) and John Cooper (2026 Vice-President) for leading these updates, as well as to those serving on supporting committees.

The Executive Committee has also taken a major step: we hired our first-ever Chapter Administrator! In October, Heidi Thummel was selected to assist with many chapter functions and to provide consistency in how we manage the chapter. With almost 800 members and 34 committees, the KC Metro Chapter can be a challenge to keep organized and up-to-date, and we are looking forward to Heidi's help. As a past board director and member since 2001, she brings a wealth of knowledge and history to the chapter.



As founder of Cuneo Consulting, Heidi provides fractional project management services to non-profit organizations and professional services companies. She can be reached at heidi@cuneollc.com or chapteradmin@kcmetro.apwa.org.

Thank you as well to our Committee Chairs for your commitment, creativity, and countless hours of volunteer effort that make our chapter so strong. If you are interested in joining a committee, don't hesitate to let us know!

President's Perspective (Continued)

Next Up! Please help me in welcoming our incoming President, John Cooper. I know the chapter will be in great hands. John, I am confident that your energy and passion for APWA and public works will lead us into another great year of service to our members.

Chapter Activities As you'll see on the coming pages, the past couple of months have been filled with exciting events, including:
- An Admin & Contracts Committee panel presentation
- Public Works Institute Module III
- Mid-America Equipment Expo
- Golf Tournament
- 2027 Planning Workshop

I love the variety of programs we offer to our members, and it's been inspiring to see so many of you engage, volunteer, and give back. Thank you to everyone who continues to make our chapter an active and supportive community. If you have an idea for an educational event or tour, please let us know. We love highlighting your success stories and sharing knowledge.

Holiday Party Once again, Nicole Woods and Sabrina Parker have planned an amazing holiday party! I'm looking forward to celebrating the season with everyone on December 9th at The Rockhill Grille in downtown Kansas City, MO! Registration and additional event details can be found at APWA KC Metro – 2026 Annual Holiday Party.

As with all our events, don't forget to invite a friend to attend with you. You will get the most out of your membership by actively participating on committees and attending luncheons and events. Why wouldn't you want to share that with a friend or colleague?

2027 is right around the corner. If you are interested in getting involved at any level within the KC Metro Chapter, please let us know.

And finally, Happy Holidays! I hope you have a wonderful holiday season and are able to take time for family, friends, and rest. Thank you again for all you do to advance the quality of life in our communities through public works.

Patty Hilderbrand
816-808-7430
philderbrand@cfse.com

DELEGATE DETAILS

By Alysen Abel

I can't believe it is November already, the holidays are right around the corner. That means time with family, lots of food, and celebrations.It also means our favorite four-letter word…SNOW. Public Works employees have already started getting ready for the winter season with safety training and practicing routes. Crews will spend countless hours clearing and treating the roads during the winter months. For those of us with young drivers on the roads…THANK YOU for making the roads safe!

Committee – Call for Volunteers

On October 27, the KC Metro Chapter hosted our annual Committee Leadership Workshop. Committee chairs from the local chapter gathered together to discuss 2026 accomplishments and our goals for 2027. It will be exciting to see all the amazing programs and events over the next 12 months. We need YOUR help! There are several committees looking for volunteers. If you are looking to get more involved in APWA, please contact me directly at Alysen.abel@springhillks.gov. I have served on many of the committees and can connect members to committees that fit their interests and time constraints.



Accreditation

The KC Metro Chapter has about a dozen communities who have received the honor of being an APWA Accredited Agency. The Accreditation process ensures that agencies meet high standards in their organization. There is a lot of work involved in getting accredited, but it is all worth it when your employees proudly wear the accreditation symbol on their sleeve as a badge of honor.

There are three Accredited agencies who have recently completed their re-accreditation.

- KCMO - 3rd Accreditation
- Fairway - 3rd Accreditation
- Overland Park - 6th Accreditation

For municipalities interested in becoming an Accredited Agency, the local KC Metro Chapter will be hosting an Accreditation Workshop in 2027. Look for more information in upcoming PubNews.

DELEGATE DETAILS (CONTINUED)

By Alysen Abel

Asset Management Roadmap

National APWA has several technical and standing committees that provide resources to our members. APWA's Asset Management Committee recently developed an Asset Management Roadmap to help agencies of any size determine their needs. The roadmap includes eleven sections with key concepts, objectives, and strategies, from pre-planning to continual improvement. This resource is meant to motivate agencies, whether they're just getting started or want to enhance their existing system.

To learn more about the Asset Management Roadmap, visit the APWA website: https://www.apwa.org/resource/asset-management-roadmap/



Sustainability and Resiliency Online Learning Library

Another active committee with National APWA is the Sustainability and Resiliency Committee.They have developed an online learning library to provide quick access to resources on sustainability and resiliency.There are two modules, which include (1) water resources management and (2) solid waste management.

For more information, visit the APWA website at https://www.apwa.org/connections-networking/groups-committees/sustainability-and-resiliency-online-learning-library/

It has been an absolute pleasure working with the Executive Committee over the past year. I look forward to serving in 2027. Please contact Kyle Dieckmann or myself if you have any questions.

Alysen.Abel@springhillks.gov or Kyle.Dieckmann@opkansas.org



Strategic Plan 2027-2030

By Tawn Nugent

Your Voice Is Shaping APWA KC Metro's Next Strategic Plan

The APWA KC Metro Chapter is finalizing our 2027–2030 Strategic Plan, and member input is helping shape where the Chapter goes next. This fall, we asked members what they value most about our Chapter, what would encourage greater participation, and where the Chapter should focus its efforts over the next several years. Thanks for providing valuable feedback and specific ideas for the future!

What We Heard

Several themes emerged:

- Education and training remain central to the value of APWA, including technical, operations, management, and leadership development.
- Members want more opportunities to connect, including consistent meetings and clearer pathways to Chapter involvement and leadership.
- Accessibility matters, with interest in programs offered throughout the metro.
- Knowledge transfer is increasingly important, particularly as experienced professionals retire and emerging leaders take on greater responsibility.
- Public works needs a stronger voice, with greater recognition of public works professionals, agencies, projects, and the essential role public works plays in our communities.
- Partnerships can expand our impact through collaboration with other professional organizations.

Building the Plan

The new Chapter plan will align with APWA National's People, Purpose and Presence framework while focusing on priorities specific to the Kansas City region.

People will focus on member connections, involvement, leadership, and an inclusive metro-wide Chapter community. **Purpose** will emphasize relevant education, knowledge transfer, development of future leaders, and stronger technical and operations resources. **Presence** will focus on telling our story, strengthening advocacy and partnerships, and recognizing Public Works First Responders.

Next Steps

The final APWA Kansas City Metro Chapter 2027–2030 Strategic Plan will be shared with members in December. The committee is also developing specific strategic initiatives to put the plan into action beginning in 2027. Thank you to everyone who completed the survey and shared ideas. Your feedback is helping us build a plan around what members value today and what our public works community will need tomorrow. More details to come on how to can get involved!

AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION
APWA
Kansas City Metro Chapter



Past Events

APWA KC Metro Golf Tournament at Topgolf

The APWA KC Metro Chapter held its annual Golf Tournament at Topgolf, bringing together members and industry partners for an afternoon of golf, networking, and friendly competition.

This year's event included 19 teams of six golfers, along with additional attendees who joined for food, drinks, and networking. The Topgolf format provided a fun setting for the annual tournament and a great opportunity to connect with others from across the KC Metro public works community.



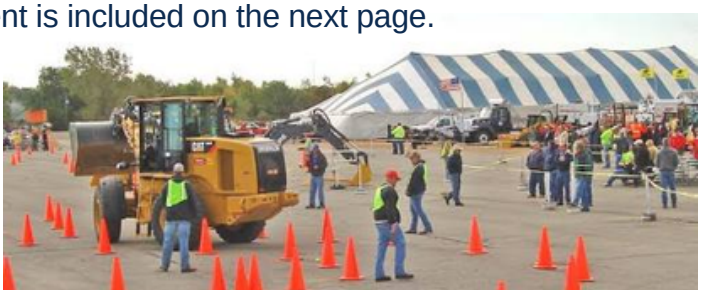
Congratulations to this year's tournament winners:

- 1st Place Team (Flight 1): HNTB
- 1st Place Team (Flight 2): Kimley-Horn
- Highest Scoring Male: Trent Robinett
- Highest Scoring Female: Tawn Nugent
- Longest Drive Champion: Reid Catt

A big thank you to everyone who participated, as well as the sponsors and volunteers who helped make the event possible. We appreciate everyone's continued support of the APWA KC Metro Golf Tournament and look forward to another great event next spring in Missouri!

APWA Mid America Equipment Expo

Fox 4 KC did a segment on this year's APWA Mid America Equipment Expo. Click the icon to watch! A summary of the event is included on the next page.



Past Events (Continued)

APWA Mid-America Equipment Expo (Continued)

The 2026 APWA Mid-America Equipment Expo and Roadeo was another huge success! Held October 7–9 at New Century Airport, the event brought together 23 agencies and more than 225 participants from across the region for three days of competition, training, networking, and camaraderie.

Public Works employees had the opportunity to showcase their skills in a variety of equipment competitions, including snowplow trucks, wheel loaders, skid steers, mini excavators, and other events. These competitions highlight the talent, precision, and dedication it takes to operate the equipment that keeps our communities running safely and efficiently.

In addition to the competitions, the event provided valuable training opportunities, including chain saw, asphalt paving, and flagger training along with an equipment expo where participants could connect with vendors and learn about the latest equipment and technology in the public works industry.

FIRST PLACE MINI EXCAVATOR OPERATOR: **KYLE COX**
SECOND PLACE MINI EXCAVATOR OPERATOR: **BRADEN GALYEAN**
THIRD PLACE MINI EXCAVATOR OPERATOR: **JOSHUAH DRAKE**

FIRST PLACE SKID STEER OPERATOR: **PATRICK POWERS**
SECOND PLACE SKID STEER OPERATOR: **ZACH BATZOLD**
THIRD PLACE SKID STEER OPERATOR: **JAKE STAHLMAN**

FIRST PLACE SMALL PLOW TRUCK OPERATOR: **CLINTON ATKIN**
SECOND PLACE SMALL PLOW TRUCK OPERATOR: **DANIEL TIMES**
THIRD PLACE SMALL PLOW TRUCK OPERATOR: **JASON PIO**

FIRST PLACE LARGE PLOW TRUCK OPERATOR: **BRUCE BILSTEN**
SECOND PLACE LARGE PLOW TRUCK OPERATOR: **CHRIS McLAUGHLIN**
THIRD PLACE LARGE PLOW TRUCK OPERATOR: **ERIC WHITE**

FIRST PLACE MECHANIC'S COURSE: **ZACH LARSON**
SECOND PLACE MECHANIC'S COURSE: **JASON COOK**
THIRD PLACE MECHANIC'S COURSE: **ANDREW WAINSCOTT**

FIRST PLACE WHEEL LOADER OPERATOR: **RICK ROBERTS**
SECOND PLACE WHEEL LOADER OPERATOR: **MIKE MESEBEG**
THIRD PLACE WHEEL LOADER OPERATOR: **ZACH BATZOLD**

Past Events (Continued)

PWI Module III - Public Works Management Fundamentals

The Kansas City Metro Chapter held its 25th Public Works Institute (PWI) session entitled Module III - Public Works Management Fundamentals on October 13-15, 2026 at the APWA HQ in downtown Kansas City, MO. Thanks to APWA COO Julie Bebermeyer and team for arranging this exceptional facility at no charge to the Chapter. Their generosity allowed us to maintain the registration fee of $250 again for this module. It was an enriching experience to conduct PWI while embedded in the headquarters atmosphere with so many resources at hand.

Seventy-five people from 25 agencies registered for this module. Attendees were engaged by twenty-two public works professionals who volunteered to share their expertise by presenting educational material and facilitating group discussions.



PWI Module III.7 Class Gathered outside APWA Headquarters

The latest written quotes from the attendees' feedback forms included:

People work for managers but follow leaders…
We train today so we can serve tomorrow…
Everything is possible…
Learning excellent skills to have an excellent career
Keep an open mind
Learning from someone is learning your future

By completing this module, nine attendees have completed all four three-day training modules and graduated from PWI. CONGRATULATIONS! These individuals and nine others who graduated in the spring of 2026 will be recognized at the end of the year with plaques and graduation certificates.

Chapter President Patty Hilderbrand presented on the topic of Managing Consultants and Vendors on the last day, then joined the graduates for recognition of their accomplishments.

Past Events (Continued)

Admin & Contracts Panel Discussion
Customer Service/Connecting with Customers through Communication



On September 30, the Admin & Contracts Committee hosted a Panel Discussion featuring Customer Service professionals.

The panel was facilitated by Stephanie Boyce, Public Works Director for Mission, KS. Panelists included:

- Sarah Shore – Assistant Director of Public Works Administration (Lee's Summit, MO)
- Jillian Foster – Customer Service Manager (Olathe, KS)
- Bea Thies – Public Works Administrative Assistant (Overland Park, KS)

In the Public Works profession, every employee is responsible for providing customer service each day. This includes serving both internal and external customers within the organization. Regardless of position, we can all learn valuable lessons about customer service.

The "Customer Service / Connecting with Customers through Communication" program focused on the real-world situations administrative staff encounters every day. Panelists shared their experiences and lessons learned regarding customer service, along with practical tips and strategies for addressing common customer service challenges.

The program started with a discussion of Active Listening. Customers need someone who will listen and make them feel heard. The panel discussed strategies like listening to the customer's entire story before responding, confirming details to ensure understanding, and asking clarifying questions.

Panelists shared stories about dealing with difficult customers and offered strategies for de-escalate challenging situations. Employees should feel safe during these interactions and should not be expected to tolerate raised voices or inappropriate language.

Continued on next page...

Past Events (Continued)

Technology has advanced significantly over the years, providing valuable tools for Public Works professionals. Many agencies use shared calendars and Microsoft Teams to communicate internally. Work order systems help log complaints and track requests. While online work order tools are often more efficient than phone calls, many residents still prefer speaking with a real person.

Effective internal and external communication is essential to the success of any organization. Many communities use social media and their websites to share information with residents. Finding the right balance of communication methods helps agencies better connect with their customers.

As the discussion concluded, the panelists shared the following words of wisdom.

- Listen and show empathy
- Take time to connect the customer with the right person. Don't be too quick to transfer or forward calls.
- Do what you can to help the customer resolve their issues.
- Honor your commitments to both employees and customers.

The Admin & Contracts committee supports administrative and contract staff through training, workshops, and networking. For more information about the committee, contact Kristen Love at klove@leawood.org.





Upcoming Events



A City Manager's/Administrator's Panel on Leadership & Management

Tuesday, November 17, 2026
7:30AM - 9:00AM
John B. Glaser Fire Station 71
6501 Quivira Road
Shawnee, KS 66216

This City Manager/City Administrator Forum provides a collaborative setting for local government executives to discuss their leadership and management styles through the exchange of ideas, experiences, and best practices. A key focus of the forum is the exploration of diverse leadership stylistic approaches, helping participants better understand how adaptive, transformative, servant, and strategic leadership can be applied to meet the evolving needs of their organizations and communities.

KC Metro Women in Public Works Quarterly 3rd Thursday Workshop

Thursday, November 19, 2026
RSVP to sboyce@missionks.org for the link to join

Join the Women in Public Works Committee for a quarterly virtual lunch series designed to bring women in public works together to connect, collaborate, and engage in meaningful conversations around the topics that shape our daily lives, both at work and at home.



Upcoming Events (Continued)

APWA Project of the Year Application Adivce



Tuesday, December 1, 2026
11:00AM - 12:00PM
RSVP to philderbrand@cfse.com for the link to join.
Registration closes 12/1 @ 10:00AM

Topic:
How to submit a great Project of the Year Awards application with advice from previous reviewers.

Speakers:
- Bill Stogdill, APWA National Board of Directors
- Patty Hilderbrand, KC Metro Chapter President
- Alysen Abel, KC Metro Chapter Alternate Delegate
- Nathan Hladky, KC Metro Chapter Awards Committee Chair

Have you recently completed a great project that you want to share and think deserves an award? Now is the time to submit your projects for APWA's Projects of the Year Award. Join a virtual "town hall" with KC Metro Chapter members who have served as reviewers on the National Awards Selection Committees. They will provide general guidance and advice on what makes a great application and what to avoid.

REGISTER NOW

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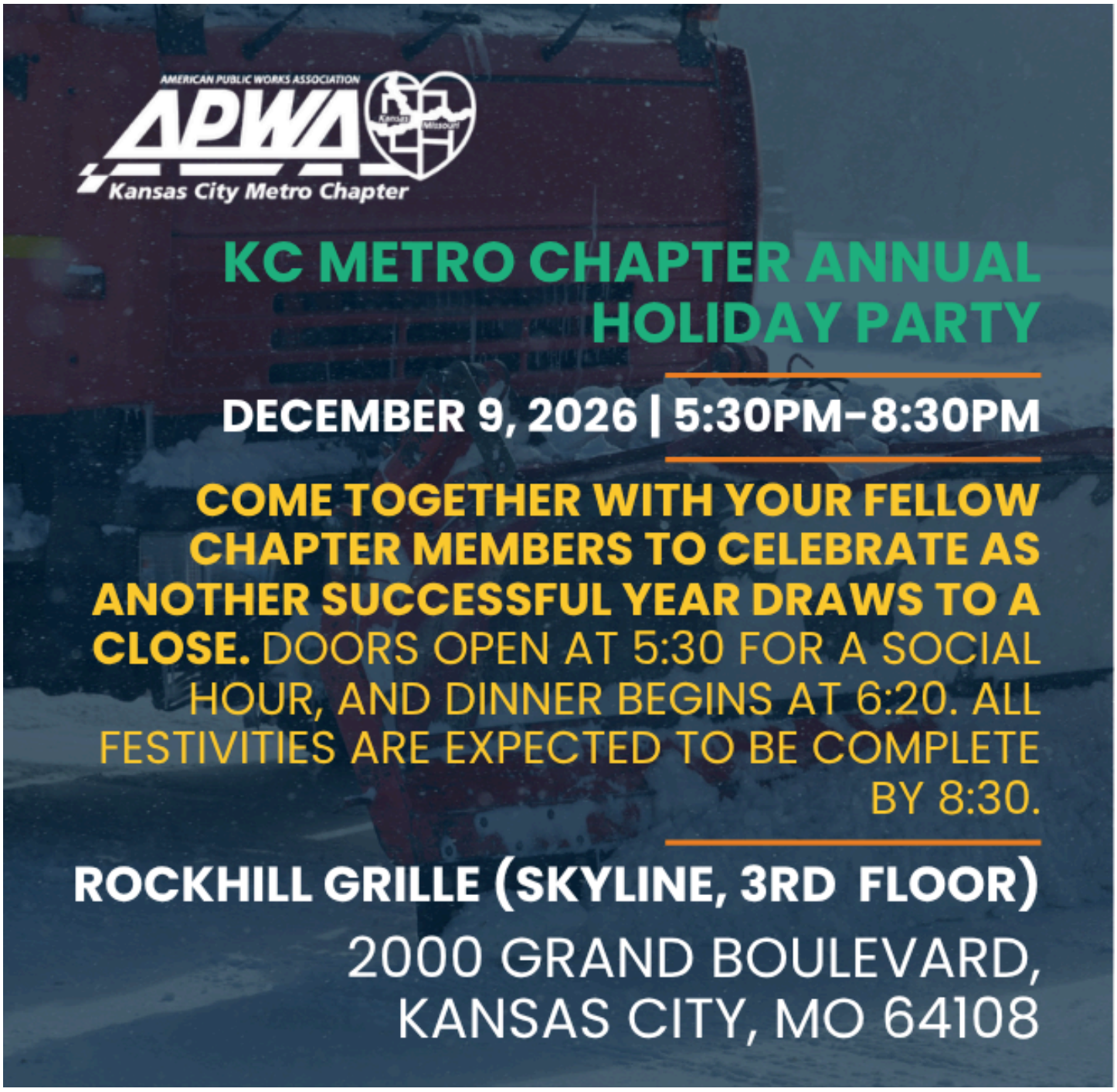
Upcoming Events (Continued)



REGISTER NOW



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 - Emie 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 Herman
National Public Works Week - Nicole Woods & Sabrina Parker
Small Cities, Rural Communities - Stephanie Boyce & Alysen 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 (2nd Year) - Todd LaTorella
Director (2nd Year) - Nicole Woods
Director (1st Year) - Jack Renfro
Director (1st Year) - Brandon Kuehl
Past President - Tawn Nugent
Director-At-Large - Paul Dunn
Delegate - Kyle Dieckmann
Alternate Delegate - Alysen Abel

CHAPTER ADMINISTRATOR

Heidi Thummel, Cuneo Consulting
chapteradmin@kcmetro.apwa.org

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

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

Publisher: Kansas City Metro Chapter of APWA

Editor: APWA Kansas City Metro Chapter Communications Committee

Staff: Kait Hanson

The Pub News staff welcomes announcements, news articles, photos and suggestions. A new issue will be published in January. The deadline for the next issue will be Friday, January 8, 2027. Deadlines will be strictly enforced. Electronic formats are preferred, but not required. Send your stories to Kait Hanson via email at 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, or 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.