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# IOWA CHAPTER FALL 2015 NEWSLETTER

## President's Message

Submitted by:  
Dan Whitlow, P.E., APWA IA  
Chapter President

As the end of my Presidential term nears, I am able to look back and better appreciate those things which mark the passing of the year. It was a year of exceptional reward for me—personally and also as Iowa Chapter President.

As most of you know, my year as president started with major surgery. That led to many weeks of recovery, which lapsed over into the Iowa Chapter Fall Conference in West Des Moines in late March. It was particularly rewarding to be able to attend. All your well wishes were appreciated and I especially want to thank Dave McDermott, president elect, for covering my presidential responsibilities at the conference.

As my recovery progressed, I was able to fulfill many of my duties, including attending various chapter events for the

year. On March 9th, I was able to join a great group of friends to meet with the Governor in Des Moines for the signing of 2015 Public Works Week Proclamation (and they didn't lose the photo this year).

Being chapter president during the same year our own Larry Stevens was National APWA President added that extra je ne sais quoi to the whole year. It provided our board the opportunity to dine with all of the regional directors in Des Moines on June 26th, where we hosted them during their National Board Meeting. It was a great networking opportunity for all involved and I enjoyed some fun conversations with the next National President, Brian Usher, and his wife, as we discussed our mutual love for Florida (where my wife and I enjoy getting the occasional glimpse into retirement).

In mid-August, the City of Marion hosted the Chapter Fall Conference. For me, it was a significant



IA Chapter President— Dan Whitlow, P.E., City of Marion.

challenge to put together, but was also a wonderful experience. To kick off the conference, I believe we had the largest group in recent history to play golf on what turned out to be a not-so-ideal day. As for the conference itself, it is my hope that you all had an enjoyable experience and that you were able to gather some useful information, while hearing about some of the great things going on in Marion. We appreciated the opportunity to provide some useful educational opportunities, while allowing us to “ring our own bell”.

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**Editor's Note:** This publication depends on you, the membership. Please email all submissions to [bmcconville@city.ames.ia.us](mailto:bmcconville@city.ames.ia.us). Your colleagues want to hear from you! Thank you to all those who submitted for the current publication, your contribution provides valuable insight to your fellow members.



## President's Message

*Continued from cover*  
The 2015 APWA National Congress and Expo was held in Phoenix at the end of August. It was HOT! But thankfully, as they say, it was a "dry heat". In contrast, the Conference Center was perpetually cold! However, it always filled with warm smiles and great conversations with attendees from all over the country. It was such a tremendous opportunity to learn and network.

*In addition, the Chapter was excited*

*to once again accept the PACE Award (thanks Beth) and to celebrate with Greg Reeder as he officially accepted the Top Ten Public Works Leaders of the Year Award. We were all in attendance as Larry relinquished his Presidency and as APWA made the major announcement that beginning with the National Congress and Expo next year in Minnesota, it would be known as the PWX (Public Works Expo).*

*In closing, I want to extend my thanks to everyone for the opportunity to serve as your president this year. I look forward to continuing my involvement in APWA and attending many future events, especially the Past Presidents Group. Pass the mimosas.*

*Dan Whitlow, P.E., APWA IA Chapter President  
DWhitlow@cityofmarion.org*

## Terry Cox receives the Stan Ring Distinguished Service Award



**Terry Cox (left) and IA Chapter Awards Chair Eric Cowles (Right).**

*Submitted by: APWA IA Chapter President Elect David McDermott*

**Harlan City Manager/City Engineer/ Public Works Director**

Terry Cox was awarded the American Public Works Association (APWA) Iowa Chapter Stan Ring Distinguished Service Award. This award is given to a chapter member who has demonstrated exemplary long-term service and commitment to the Iowa Chapter and to the Public Works Profession. On Tuesday November 17, Terry was presented the award at the Harlan City Council Meeting. Eric Cowles, Iowa Chapter Awards Chairman, introduced to the council Terry's qualities and commitment to APWA and the Iowa Chapter, then presented him with the award.

Terry has been a long time member and contributor to APWA. He has been an Iowa Chapter member for 38 years and earned a lifetime member status. He has held several offices in the chapter including Secretary/Treasurer, Vice President and President. He is currently the Publicity

Committee Chairman. In this position, he has arraigned to have the Governor of the State of Iowa sign a proclamation for Public Works Week and several member have their picture taken with him each year. Terry has been recognized nationally by APWA for his leadership Skills. He was awarded the Top 10 Public Works Leader of the Year in 2014. This award is only given to only 10 members annually out of approximately 28,000 members. The honorees have been recognized for discharging critical responsibilities in connection to the design, construction, maintenance and/or operation of major public works projects or activities in large and small municipalities. The next time you see Terry, congratulate him on his latest award - The Stan Ring Distinguished Service Award.

*David McDermott, President Elect  
dmcdermott@councilbluffs-ia.gov*

# Iowa Chapter fostering Student Chapter at Iowa State

Submitted by: Zac Dietrich, APWA ISU Student Chapter President

At Iowa State University, we are working on putting together a student chapter of the APWA. The organization is coming along well; we will hopefully be made official by the end of this semester, after going through the student activities center and the student government. Right now in the student chapter, there are currently five core founding members of sophomores and freshmen. This is to ensure that the organization will gain a solid footing at ISU with dedicated officers. We are working on events for the next semester and building ideas for recruiting new members. Overall, there is a good amount of interest in the CCEE department for this club and we are looking forward to a successful next semester.



# West Des Moines Public Works Ideas Program

Submitted by Joe Corey, P.E., PWLF

Recently the City of West Des Moines Public Works Department started an ideas based work improvement program. While attending a conference in another state, a staff member participated in a presentation on servant leadership. The presenter talked about a book entitled "Ideas are Free" and focused on the fact that 80% of most ideas of how to make improvements in the workplace are typically possessed by those who actually perform the work. While social media outlets of all kinds mention innovation, and it sounds like a great idea, getting started with creating a culture where ideas are provided and allowed to flourish can be a challenge. Since this ideas philosophy tied in well with the City's existing Quality Initiative, the Department decided to "head down this road".

To begin the process, the Department enlisted volunteers from a cross section of staff. This group got together and proposed ideas on how our department could develop an

effective program to get employee input on work related improvements. A key focus was on eliminating barriers with regards to getting ideas to the right people. Another aspect as a process to document all ideas that are submitted. The group developed a tracking system using a

NAME:	_____
DATE:	_____
IDEA:	   



simple Excel spreadsheet to ensure that ideas are not "overlooked". Finally there were directions on how an idea could be submitted. Here are a few methods that have been implemented:

1. Write it on the Department white board.
2. Fill out an "idea form" and drop it in the suggestion box
3. Share your idea with your supervisor (who must document the idea)
4. Email your idea to your supervisor or department leaders.

5. All ideas are forwarded to a designated staff member for processing
6. Ideas don't have to be "home-runs". Several small improvements can lead to big "gains".

Another hurdle the group had to climb over was "who" was going to review the proposed ideas. Since we have an existing Public Works Quality Team comprised of staff from various sections of the Department, it was determined this would be an excellent forum for the reviews. When looking at proposed ideas, there are typically some questions that this group looks at.

1. Is the idea feasible?
2. Is there a need?
3. Is there a benefit for the employees or residents?
4. Does it fit with the City's focus, mission and direction?

One very important aspect of our program was to provide feedback and simple recognition to the inspired employees that submit ideas. While not every idea may be implemented, recognition for taking the time to propose one is critical



# West Des Moines Public Works Ideas Program

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## THANK YOU FOR YOUR IDEAS!

**IDEA:** Build a small rack that can be mobile for the tail gates of trucks 325, 318, and 323; this would not be a tail gate sander but would keep the weight off the wall.

**RESULT:** A work group will come up with a design and implementation for this idea.

**IDEA:** Get block heaters for equipment with diesel motors.

**RESULT:** All diesel equipment stored outside will now have block heaters.

for success. This effort not only fulfills an important component of the program but also stimulates new ideas from other staff members. After reviewing the proposed ideas, we provide both feedback and recognition at our monthly Department meeting. The Department has

also installed large LED monitors in our Break Room which highlight proposed ideas and the employee that submitted it. The display also includes the status proposed ideas and other city-wide communications.

If you have ever thought about implementing a program like this, I would encourage you to pick up a copy of the book “Ideas Are Free”. This book identifies methods of encouraging ideas from the staff members that do the work each and every day. A second book called the “Ideas Driven Organization” takes the process to the next level and examines the success many

organizations have realized when implementing ideas based programs. One thing I should point out, there is no “cookie-cutter” approach to developing an ideas program. It is as simple as developing a process of getting ideas from the people who possess them to potential implementation.

Like a clergyman once said to their congregation when asking for funds, “the good news is we have the money, the bad news is – it is still in your pockets”. The same can be said of the countless ideas many of our employees have stored up in their heads.

*Joe Corey, P.E., PWLF, Deputy Public Works Director, City of*

Name of Submitter & Date Submitted	Description of Idea	Date Reviewed	Next Steps	Feedback Provided By	Date Feedback Provided	Status	Result
Anonymous - 7/23/15	Put together a dedicated night staff during winter shifts and get volunteers to work nights when snow shifts occur.	07/23/2015	Members of PW/OT will discuss with their peers to determine if there's enough interest to move forward.	Bret	Bret shared at 7/23/15 dept. meeting	No further action at this time.	No further action at this time.
Larry L. - 8/6/15	Look at modifying the handicap parking spots in the parking lot	08/19/2015	Jim D to review parking layout and regulations	Jim	Bret shared at 8/19/15 dept. meeting	Rick reported at the 8/19/15 dept. meeting that once the north side of the building is painted, the handicap parking signs will be moved from the grass area to the building.	
Chris S. - August 2015	Automate the flood gates	08/19/2015	Kevin H will review costs and opportunities	Kevin Hensley	Bret shared at 8/19/15 dept. meeting		



**2016 APWA North American Snow Conference**  
**The Premier Event in Snow & Ice Management**  
**May 22-25, 2016 | Connecticut Convention Center, Hartford, CT**  
**Hosted by the APWA New England Chapter | [www.apwa.net/snow](http://www.apwa.net/snow)**

The 2016 Snow Conference in Hartford will bring together more than 1,500 snowfighters from every corner of the winter maintenance community. Public, private, rural, metropolitan, domestic, international – they’re all sure to be there at the Show for Snow! The 2016 Conference features an exhibit floor packed with the newest equipment and products, quality education programs and technical tours, and opportunities to exchange ideas with manufacturers, distributors, consultants and other public works professionals. Its four days of winter training and networking you can’t afford to miss out on!

# APAI ANNOUNCES NEW AWARDS PROGRAM



Submitted by Bill Rosener, Executive Vice President of the APAI

The Asphalt Paving Association of Iowa (APAI) have announced a new awards program in conjunction with the APAI's 60th Anniversary in 2015. The new program features several new awards, expanded categories and the opportunity for Iowa DOT, City, County and Consulting Engineers to

submit project award applications for the best local projects and paving programs in their region. The new awards include expanded categories in the traditional smoothness and QMA Awards, an Environmental Sustainability Project Award, Municipal and County Paving Program Awards, the Consulting Engineer of the Year Award, and the introduction of the Robert S. Nady Award for the best overall paving project in the State of Iowa.

"The opportunity to involve local agencies, the Iowa DOT, and consulting engineers is an exciting addition to an already strong awards program." said Bill Rosener, Executive Vice President of the APAI. "Updating and improving the APAI Awards program to include environmental, project design and program awards is only going to grow the popularity of the APAI Quality Paving Awards at our Annual Convention in December."

For more information, and a full list of the

APAI Awards and award applications please visit: <http://www.apai.net/awards.aspx>.

## THE FULL LIST OF THE APAI AWARDS CATEGORIES:

[APAI Quality Construction Awards - 2015](#)

[APAI Smoothness Awards - 2015](#)

[APAI Special Recognition Awards](#)

[APAI Quality Design Awards - 2015](#)

[APAI QM-A Award Nominations - Part A](#)

Bill Rosener, Executive Vice President of the APAI  
[www.apai.net](http://www.apai.net)



**EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS** - Three tracks of seminars will be held and full conference attendees are welcome to choose what they would like to attend. The three tracks are geared to the interests of: APWA, ISOSWO and Managers/Supervisors Sessions (Thursday only).

**VENDOR EXHIBITS** - Expect a variety of exhibitor booths with the latest in equipment, technology, and information. Organizations interested in learning more about providing an exhibitor booth or sponsorship may select the EXHIBITOR BOOTH or SPONSORS tabs above for more information and to register!

**THURSDAY BANQUET!!** - This networking opportunity has become an extremely popular event! Tickets are required, which are included with Full Attendee Registration, and are available at a cost of \$60 at the time of registration for exhibitors, those attending the Thursday Only sessions, and for guests. A free shuttle service will be provided to and from the WDM Sheraton and Rube's. All meals must be consumed on the Rube's premises.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** - The Spring Conference has been planned in accordance with the criteria established by the IE/CSEB for professional development hours (PD's).



West Des Moines Sheraton  
800 50th Street  
West Des Moines, Iowa 50266  
515-223-1800

**APRIL 6-7, 2016**

