

Volume 60, No. 2

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Issue Highlights

Russ Thomas Named Top Ten

Discover Exciting World of PW

Incident Command Maintains ROW



President's Message

By *Tim Blackwood*
Pali Consulting

Hello APWA Oregon Chapter! As I am writing this message, I'm enjoying a beautiful sunny spring day with the summer solstice barely a week away! It's always a bittersweet time of year in the Pacific Northwest. The long days of summer are here, but it also means that those days will be getting shorter from now on! My, how time flies, so don't delay. Whether it's your home remodel project or an epic summer trip you've been planning, there is no time like the present to put your plans into action!

And speaking of action, as I look back at the first half of 2024, we have accomplished so much as an organization, but still have much to do. Here are some of our accomplishments and what lies ahead for the rest of this year.

Accomplishments

Top 10 Leader — In my last message, I told you that our chapter was nominating **Russ Thomas** for the National APWA Top 10 Leader award. We all knew Russ was a well-deserving candidate, and we were right! The APWA Top 10 Committee agreed, and Mr. Thomas was chosen as a Top 10 Leader, joining eight other well-deserving Oregon APWA members since 2004! Congratulations Russ.

PACE Award Application – We have submitted our application for the national Presidential Award for Chapter Excellence (PACE) award in hopes that we can continue our 20+ year winning streak! Thank you to **Nancy Kraushaar**, **Ashley Cantlon**, and everyone who provided input for this application. Nancy, in particular, had to work around her vacation schedule to get it submitted on time! If you don't know what the PACE award is, it acknowledges the work that our chapter does each year to maintain or increase membership, provide service to our chapter members, advance public works and sustainability, and provide service to our community.

Spring Conference – We had an excellent Spring Conference in Seaside this year. Our keynote speakers addressed seismic resilience in the State, and we had outstanding technical sessions. Last but not least, of course, was the wonderful opportunity to network with our peers at the Exhibitor Social, breaks between sessions, and, of course, after hours. And who won the prestigious Gizmo award, you ask? Why none other than **Nick Polenske**, who proudly loaded up the Gizmo and took it back to his office at Kittelson! Congratulations Nick!

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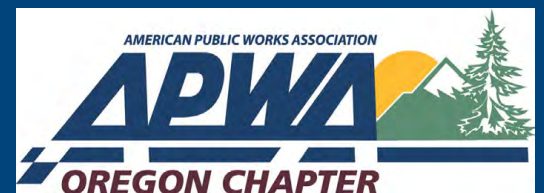
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President's Message (continued)

In addition to the extravaganza surrounding the award of Gizmo, don't forget that all of you who attended donated money to the Scholastic Foundation; \$10 of every registration goes to Gizmo in addition to the money from the auction items, raffle tickets, etc. All in all, we collected more than \$13,000, which will go directly to the Scholastic Foundation to fund our scholarship program! As I noted in my last message, the Foundation hands out about \$35,000 per year in scholarships to colleges and universities throughout the state of Oregon.

What Lies Ahead

Chapter Board Activities – Our chapter has been busy and has much yet to do this year. As I said earlier, the days are going to be getting shorter now, so we are forging ahead with a number of tasks:

Audit. Our annual audit is upon us, with the fiscal year ending this month. Every year a committee of chapter members audits the financials which are then submitted to national for review. This year, **John Jensen, Brittney Weinberg, and Krey Younger** will be our chapter auditors. We appreciate their help so much. It is not much fun, but very important that we check our books each year to be transparent and keep things in order. And special thanks to **Shannon Williams**, our Treasurer, who will be working along with committee during the process.

Management Company. The board has been very busy lining up a management company to replace Cameo, who will be retiring this year. We sent an RFP out to a number of firms and are in the final stages of selecting a company to work alongside Cameo for the balance of 2024 and take the helm in 2025. We'll announce our selection as soon as it is finalized.

Fall Conference – Be sure to join us at the Fall Conference in Pendleton. You'll receive a notification when registration is open and can always check the website for the dates and current information. Rumor has it this will be **Bob Patterson's** last ride on the bucking bronco that is our conference. Bob usually pulls out all the stops, so it should

be a great conference. Our President-Elect **Doug Singer** is working with the conference committee and Cameo to support Bob and his colleagues from Pendleton. The conferences are a lot of work and we thank Bob, Doug, the committee, and Cameo for their efforts!

Chapter Website Update – Although the national website is getting more functional, National APWA realized that there is still work to do and that the current vendor just isn't up to the task. So they recently hired a new project manager to see the website to full implementation. This is a positive step forward and we appreciate your patience. With this renewed effort and additional personnel assigned to the task, the website should be improving shortly and back to full function. Again, we thank **Andy Sheehan** and **Eric Jones**, for working with National to get the information we need and restore our chapter website as soon as possible, as well.

Other Events – In addition to the fall conference, don't forget the many other events that are going on. You can check them out on our website <http://oregon.apwa.org/>

- National PWX (September 8 – 11 in Atlanta, Georgia)
- Fall Street Maintenance and Collection Systems Fall School (November 5-7 in Newport)
- Public Works Leadership (November 19-22 in Tigard)

Thank you all for the hard work that benefits our society. Keep up the good job as we transition into the second half of the year! Work hard, play hard, and I hope I see you all in Pendleton! Let 'er Buck!



APWA Taps Thomas National Top 10 Leader



Russ Thomas, Public Works Director for the City of Newberg, has been named a 2024 Top Ten Public Works Leader by the National American Public Works Association. The Top Ten Public Works Leaders award focuses on outstanding career service achievements of individual public works professionals and officials from both the public and private sectors in North America.

“They are the cream of the crop and the best at what they do, said APWA President W. Gary Losier, PEng. “They have committed to serving their communities with honor and dedication. We congratulate these outstanding professionals who are advancing the quality of life for all.”

“Russ has dedicated his life to public service, beginning with his enrollment in the US Navy in 1973, finding his way to the City of Newberg as a laborer in 1979, and then working his way up the ladder to his current position as Newberg’s Public Works Director.” said Oregon APWA Chapter President Tim Blackwood. “That is 45 years of continuous service at the same City and over 50 years of public service.”



Thomas currently is Oregon APWA’s National Delegate. He served as Chapter President in 2017, and has contributed countless hours as a mentor and teacher at the semi-annual Oregon APWA Street Maintenance and Collection Short School and as fundraiser for the Oregon APWA Scholastic Foundation. He received the chapter’s highest honor, the William A. Bowes service award, in 2014.

In addition to being actively involved in APWA, Thomas is actively engaged in his community. He serves as a member of the St. Paul Rodeo Association, with responsibilities ranging from facility improvements and maintenance to directing the annual 4th of July parade. Thomas’ other community-building successes include obtaining \$400,000 in funding to install ADA ramps between a senior living facility and the downtown area, establishing a public/private partnership to give city-supplied sandbags to Newberg residents, and coordinating the donation of Class A compost from the Newberg treatment plant to a volunteer group in Sheridan to grow vegetables for their community garden.

“Whether it’s dealing with the aftermath of a flood, fire or ice storm, Russ is always there motivating the staff to deal with challenging situations for the greater good of our town,” said Newberg City Manager Will Worthey. “Russ has always been a problem solver and has also been on a personal quest to learn as much as possible about the industry, leading to his current status as a past master of all things public works.”

[Read the National APWA news release](#)

[View Russ Thomas’ winning application prepared by Nancy Kraushaar](#)

Training, Tours, Networking

Spring Short School

The street maintenance and collection systems spring short school was held March 19-21 in Bend. The semi-annual training event drew 219 attendees. Melissa Robinson, City of Eugene Safety & Emergency Analyst, gave the keynote presentation - a "Crash Course" in Safety Training. Billy Derry and Arta Workman, both from Jefferson County Roads, won the ROAdeo competition.



Water Resources Tours Columbia Slough Regional Water Treatment Facility

Six members of the APWA Water Resources Committee spent a sunny afternoon on May 17th touring the City of Gresham's Wastewater Treatment Plant and Columbia Slough Regional Water Quality Facility. The Wastewater Treatment Facility has two parallel treatment trains; a past decision to address plant expansion for future capacity. By capturing methane and collecting fats, oils, and grease, the plant converts these waste products into energy resulting in an Energy Net Zero status! If APWA members weren't already suffering from facility-envy, they then toured a stormwater treatment facility that felt like a nature walk. The Columbia Slough Regional Water Quality Facility serves 965 acres of industrial, commercial, and residential area, originally cleaning stormwater runoff as a giant flow-through swale. The local beaver population was impressed, moving in and remodeling the facility into more of a ponded system. The City has had a unique opportunity to study the impacts of beavers on the water quality treatment ability of these different systems, and found the beaver's work actually improved the water quality! The tour concluded with networking and pretzels at Migration Brewing.

If you missed this opportunity to learn/network/eat pretzels, keep an eye out for upcoming events hosted by the APWA Water Resources Committee. We are anxiously awaiting construction to be completed this summer at the City of Beaverton's stormwater ASR system, where City residents will use treated & injected stormwater for irrigation via the purple pipe system!

Young Professionals Network for Fun and Games

On Thursday, May 30, the Oregon APWA Young Professionals hosted a networking event in Portland at the Birdie Time Pub. Sixty-two amazing young professionals from APWA, ASCE, AWWA, SAME, and YPT enjoyed great food, drinks, putt-putt golf, and stimulating conversation. We hope to see you at the next Young Professionals event! Stay tuned for more info.



Incident Command Team Manages Unhoused Issues

City of Eugene Public Space Team Spans Departments to Maintain Right of Way

Homelessness, housing costs and housing scarcity have been critical issues in the city of Eugene in recent years, affecting livability and community perception of the area. It is clear that residents agree, because these topics were top concerns in a 2022 community survey.

During the pandemic, there was an explosion of local homelessness and camping in public spaces. In response, Eugene invested \$25.4 million in site and facility infrastructure, lower-barrier emergency shelters, and safety and sanitation work. The heart of this effort used \$8.4 million from one-time state and federal funds to add 250 new sleeping spaces for the unhoused, adding to some 450 spaces already funded or overseen by the City. To address recurring community concerns about safety, sanitation and access in public spaces, the City employed an incident command model for faster, more efficient response across multiple field teams.

In an effort to move out of crisis-response mode and into a long-term management structure, in FY22 the City established a permanent Public Space Team to address safety and sanitation concerns. The Public Space Team is led by a full-time incident commander who coordinates regular and specialized response to community issues related to unsanctioned camping and related debris or disruption. The team includes staff from Public Works (including the Maintenance and Parks and Open Space divisions), Eugene Police, Eugene Springfield Fire, Parking Services, Code Compliance, Homeless Services and Economic Development.

The team responds to community reports submitted online and by phone, identifies and mitigates high intensity or recurring situations, enforces City code, and moves and cleans camping installations when necessary while upholding state laws that protect unhoused people. While doing this work, team members also share info about shelter and services to unhoused community members. The team constantly assesses and refines its response practices, adds training for team members, and coordinates with other agencies in government, the private sector, and non-profits.

“The work is always challenging,” Public Spaces Team Incident Commander Michelle Parkins said. “Our field staff daily face a community in crisis, from people with nowhere to go to the city-wide effects of 3,500 unsheltered people. But our team at all levels cares about people and the health of the city; their commitment and perseverance make a difference every day.”



Eugene Public Works Maintenance Right of Way team member Ricardo Salas assesses an unsanctioned camp for cleanup needs



Eugene Public Works Maintenance Right of Way team members Braden Klinko and Eric Langeliers partner with Eugene Police Department's Housing Support Officers for code enforcement before cleanup

Gizmo Makes a Move

In the past year, the [Gizmo](#) has traveled less than 12 miles but has raised more than \$30,000 for Oregon APWA's statewide scholarship program.

At every spring and fall conference since 1987 a "lucky" chapter member receives the Gizmo (aka the Golden Knuckle) and adds his or her own embellishments to it as a fundraiser for the Oregon APWA Scholastic Foundation. Over the years good-natured Gizmo rivalries have raised more than \$500,000 for scholarships.

Nick Polenske, senior transportation engineer for Kittelson and Associates, won the Gizmo at the spring 2024 conference in Seaside, helping raise nearly \$8,000 for scholarships.

When asked how he feels to get the Gizmo, Nick replied, "Well it's for the children, so how can I be upset! I did everything I could to throw it at Gary (Stockhoff) or Russ (Thomas), but I guess for whatever reason it was my day."

"But being slightly serious, it's a huge honor. This was really my first round of actually being a candidate, so to have a grass roots movement come in and get the job done, it's pretty incredible. I look forward to welcoming the next wave of Gizmo winners into this prestigious club for years to come."

Prior to moving to Nick's office in downtown Portland, the Gizmo lived for a year at 3J Consulting in Beaverton. 3J project manager Chase Welborn received the honor at the fall 2023 conference in Canyonville, and Barbara Duda, 3J administrative project specialist, got Gizmo'd at the spring 2023 conference in Bend.

"I added a Barbie Bride Doll to the Gizmo because I was finally no longer a bridesmaid!" said Barbara, who had been a Gizmo runner-up several times over the years. Chase had a coin engraved to look like a manhole cover and highlight the APWA conference with the Gizmo award.

"Gizmo resided in the 3J lobby for a year and greeted/entertained many visitors, Barbara reported. "3J prepared a PowerPoint slide show that provided staff and visitors with some background information to help answer all the questions! While at 3J Gizmo attended our Open House Fiesta Party, participated in 3J Friday@4s, and the 3J Deck the Walls festivities during the holidays. At 3J, we believe that Gizmo enjoyed the time spent here."

As for what Nick plans to do with the Golden Knuckle while it's in his possession, "my contribution will definitely be a surprise," he said. "I'll likely have something pulled together slightly larger than a super tiny coin that nobody will ever notice but not quite as outrageous as a full bronze tricycle."

Nick's advice to potential Gizmo recipients at the fall conference in Pendleton: "Make sure you carpool with someone with a truck. Not quite sure how I would've gotten that monstrosity back with me otherwise. And for those looking to avoid the darn thing altogether, make sure you make friends with the geotechs, and mobilize them and their deep pockets towards another victim."



Scholarship Specifics

- Foundation assets as of March 2024: **\$795,000**
- Foundation donations from spring 2024 conference: **\$13,680**
- Scholarship recipients through 2023-2024 school year: **322**
- Number of scholarships offered in 2024-2025 school year: **22**

Advancing Quality of Life for All

Springfield Third-graders Discover the Exciting World of Public Works

The American Public Works Association's 2024 National Public Works Week was celebrated from May 19-25. NPWW acknowledges the countless individuals nationwide who contribute to the upkeep and development of vital public infrastructure. This year's theme, "Advancing Quality of Life For All," highlighted the important role played by public works experts in building and maintaining infrastructure and fostering inspiration through dedicated service to the community.

The City of Springfield marked the occasion by holding an NPWW Carnival and Equipment Rodeo. Springfield's Development and Public Works (DPW) Department invited Springfield school district third-grade students to attend the event.

The event taught students about the role DPW plays in the community with over 600 students from ten Springfield schools participating this year, more than ever before. Each school rotated through 10 booths at the "carnival" in the City Hall lobby. The booths are based on classic carnival games and activities, but with a DPW twist. Students also got to see first-hand how the



Springfield equipment operator demonstrates precision skills by picking up a rubber ball balanced on a traffic cone and placing it in a 5-gallon bucket.

operations division maintains the City using various equipment at the "equipment rodeo" held in the library parking lot.

Variety of Events Celebrate NPWW in Lake Oswego

To celebrate National Public Works Week and this year's theme of "Advancing Quality of Life for All," the City of Lake Oswego held a variety of events and activities:

- Public Works first responder flag-raising ceremony
- City Council proclamation
- [Video of behind-the-scenes staff: Advancing Quality of Life for All](#)
- Public Works Department luncheon
- Public tours of the Water Treatment Plant
- Book displays, Public Works storytime and Children's Library activities at the Lake Oswego Public Library



Award Nominations

Celebrate Success

The Awards Committee needs your help finding outstanding public works projects and awesome individuals we can all celebrate at the Fall Conference in Pendleton.

Nominations are due Thursday, August 15, 2024. See the [Award Forms webpage](#) for more information. Here are the various types of awards for which the Awards Committee is seeking nominations:

Project of the Year Award

Have you wrapped up a construction project and would like to share your accomplishment with other APWA members or just want to show off your firm's/agency's awesomeness? If so, the Awards Committee would like to see and hear about these awesome public work projects, the challenges that were encountered, and/or the creativity and uniqueness.

Awards are given in four project dollar divisions and five different project type categories. Find the division and category that best fits your project so we can celebrate your hard work this fall in Pendleton (rumor has it, there may be some whiskey involved). More information on the award divisions and categories and previous awardees can be found on the [Projects of the Year webpage](#).

Communications Award

Is there a "Bulldog Award" nominee in your agency or firm? If so, let us know so that this person can be officially recognized. The Awards Committee is looking to recognize those individuals who are outstanding in the public works field for their communications skills or techniques that bring educational awareness to public works and related projects. More information on the award can be found on the [Communications Award webpage](#).

Everyday Heroes Award

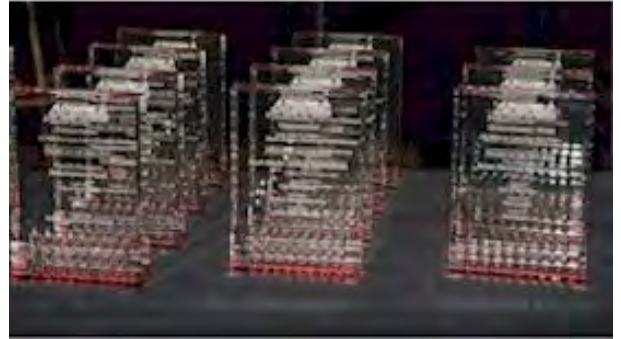
The Everyday Hero award recognizes an employee or group of employees who are identified by their friends, co-workers, and even the public in providing good customer service (responsive, consistent, courteous), making the best use of public resources (efficient, innovative), helping co-workers succeed (mentoring, assistance, cooperation, solution oriented), and being a great person to work with (friendly, respectful). More information on the award can be found on the [Everyday Heroes Award webpage](#).

Young Leader Award

Do you work with a young (under the age of 35) APWA member who has demonstrated a commitment to either the public works profession or our association? Someone who has demonstrated the potential as a future leader, contributed to their public agency or company by coming up with innovative ideas, identifying solutions to complex design issues, or instituting cost-saving measures? This award promotes the concept that length of career does not necessarily indicate leadership abilities or potential for service. If you know someone who fits this description, the Awards Committee would like to celebrate these Young Leaders! More information can be found on the [Young Leader Award webpage](#).

Sustainability Practices Award

With rising material costs, fuel prices, and supply chain issues, consultants and agencies are increasing their sustainability practices and lessening the impacts on the environment. The Awards Committee would like to hear from you and learn about your goals and objectives, short- and long-term design practices, and green infrastructure that will sustain our society in the years to come. More information can be found on the [Sustainability Practices Award webpage](#).



Upcoming Events

October 15-18, 2024

Pendleton, Wildhorse Resort Casino

As always, Pendleton packs in many activities for attendees to enjoy.

Conference registration is projected to open in mid-August. Details coming soon!



November 5-8, 2024

***Fall Street Maintenance & Collection
Systems School 2024***

Best Western Agate Beach | Newport, Oregon

More information coming soon!

November 19-22, 2024

Public Works Leadership 2024

Tigard, Oregon

More information coming soon!

August 20-22, 2024—GTSE24 "Accelerates to ZERO"

The 2024 Green Transportation Summit & Expo (GTSE) will be held at the Greater Tacoma Convention Center. The 13th Annual Green Transportation Summit and Expo is the region's best resource for fleets, community organizations, industry, policymakers, and thought leaders to join to advance green transportation. Keynotes, workshops, and demonstrations focused on transportation decarbonization and collaboration in the clean transportation industry. Attend events like their Ride and Drive, Receptions, and Curated Content at this year's show. The event features a technology showcase, more than 60 virtual tech talks, over 1,000 attendees, over 40 cutting-edge vehicles, 60 industry booths, and 135 industry speakers.

Oregon APWA has helped co-sponsor GTSE for a number of years, for more information about registration for this year's event, [visit GTSE](#).



Oregon APWA Listings

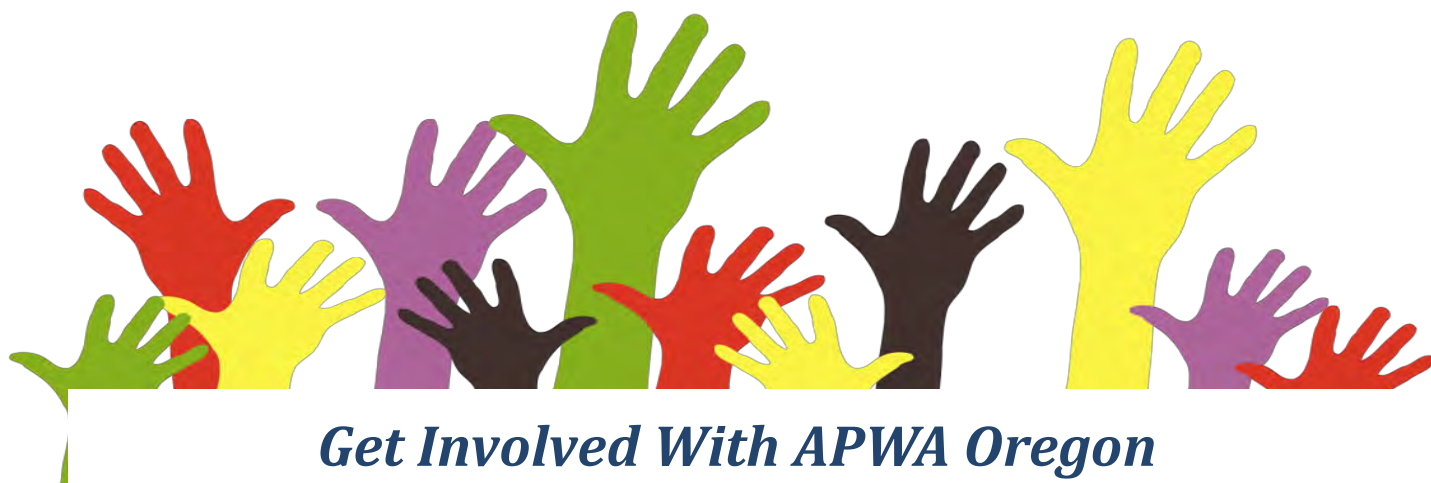


Looking to fill a position?

Look at what Oregon APWA offers.

- Free listings for public works jobs in the Pacific Northwest.
- Wide range of positions in the public and private sectors.

More information [online](#) or email oregonapwa@gmail.com



Get Involved With APWA Oregon

The Oregon Chapter is an association of more than 800 professional engineers, technicians, operations staff, public works directors, business people, contractors, consultants and many others who join together to exchange ideas and information, promote education and training, and work as a team to meet professional and community needs.

Ways to Get Involved

Step 1. Become an APWA member. More information on becoming a member is on the [Chapter website](#).

Step 2. Find the right spot to plug in. What's your passion? What's your level of availability? There's a spot for you! Here are some options:

Join a Committee! Check out [Committee Central](#) webpage to see all the Chapter's committees. [Contact the Chair to get plugged in](#).

Know someone who would exceptionally serve the Chapter? Nominate them for the Chapter Board. [Contact current board members](#).

Have more questions?

Contact Leslie Finnigan (lfinnigan@ufsrw.com) to find out more about joining APWA and getting involved.

