

Hello Illinois Chapter Folks!

What a long strange trip it's been... **2020** threw a few curve balls out for us to try and hit, if you are like me you may have had a few swings and misses this past year. **But one think about Public Works folks like you and me, is that we somehow make connect and get it done no matter what pitch it thrown as us. Truth be told, I am not much of a sports guy but the challenges of the past year have allowed my team, family, and myself become stronger, more resilient, and more connected than ever. Together we tackled one of the toughest things we will hopefully ever in our lifetimes, a worldwide pandemic that has changed our lives, the way we work, and the way we interact. For better or worse we are all stronger, "Stronger Together" as this year's PWX slogan says. Stronger Together is something we need to concentrate more on, individually, community wise, and our country as a whole.**

To me this statement is both insightful and reflective. Insightful as Public Works professionals excel at teamwork and concentrating on our duties to life, health, safety and community. Reflective as without you and your teams efforts to keep water treated & flowing, refuse & recycling removed, roads patched, signals & signs fixed, equipment operational, grounds kept, sewage collected & treated, and meters read (amongst other things); without Public Works, you and your teams, 2020 would have been much tougher for everyone.

So, how do we begin 2021 and when will this all end? This question may have been on many of your minds as well, at least in the background. It's a good question and the answer is likely different for all of us. For me, I am looking forward to some normalcy and am so very thankful for my family, friends, staff and the health of all the above. It's hard to convey how proud I am of the Public Works Team I am fortunate to be a part of, COVID-19 tried to stop us, but you heard a resounding "not us" in the Public Works halls. While many people worked from home or remotely, Public Works did not, our professions dedicated folks showed up for work every day, and without complaint (unless they were told to stay home for a day or two that was troublesome for many staff).

Onto some information about APWA and what the Illinois Chapter has in its sights for 2021. The Illinois Chapter is strong with around 410 members from Rockford to Metropolis spanning 400+ miles of our great State. We have several avenues for keeping up on chapter and branch activities, most notably the Chapter website illinois.apwa.net, our Facebook page "APWA Illinois Chapter", and our constant contact email system. Like many Chapters across the country we are challenged by geography which makes it difficult for us to interact on a regular basis and get to know each other. Fortunately, we have several chances for us to connect during 2021 including:

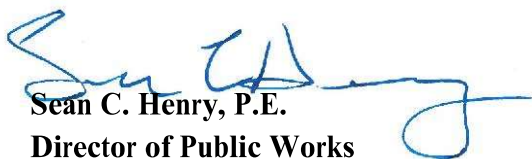
- **Chapter Executive Board Meetings – Begin in January and are held every other month at different locations around the State. It is always great to see some new faces at these meetings, so please join us when you can. If you have an interest in joining the Chapter Leadership Team, please get in touch with me and I will find a committee for you to join.**
- **APWA IL Chapter Conference – We had to cancel our 2020 conference, but this year we are back in a Virtual format on May 5th and 6th. In 2022 we are planning on being back to normal and in-person.**
- **Fill-a-Truck Food Drive – 2021 is the 3rd year for this Statewide Chapter Food Drive program. This program is designed to be easy to implement in your respective towns and entities; so please take a look at it and let's all do what we can to help fight hunger in our State.**

- **Snow Rodeo** – this event was also cancelled in 2020, but if it all works out we will be back at the Shoppes at Grand Prairie in Peoria this September. This is a great opportunity for your team to show off their snow plowing skills. Keep an eye on the chapter website for details on if we can hold this event in 2021.
- **Illinois Public Service Institute (IPSI)** – In partnership with the Chicago Metro Chapter, IPSI is our flagship leadership training program for any level of public works employee who is looking to improve their leadership skill set. This is a three (3) year program that meets for one week each year. Graduates of this program consistently say it's the best experience and training they have ever had! See www.ilpsi.org for more information.
- **Midwest Advanced Public Service Institute (MAPSI)** – Is an advanced Leadership Training opportunity for graduates of IPSI. This program is also an inter-chapter partnership between the Illinois Chapter, Chicago Metro Chapter, and Michigan Chapters of APWA. It is held in New Buffalo, Michigan in April of each year and is geared towards advanced skills needed for Managers and Directors. See www.themapsi.org.
- **Branch Meetings** – The Illinois Chapter is divided into five separate branches. If you have not been involved at the Branch level, be sure to take a look at the meeting schedules which follow and join your fellow Public Works professionals at a meeting or event.
- **Chapter Leadership Retreat** – In 2019 we held our inaugural Chapter Leadership Retreat. In 2021 we will continue this important event in November at Starved Rock State Park so be sure your Branch Officers block out the dates on their schedules!

In 2021 we also have two great opportunities to attend APWA National Events including Public Works Expo (PWX) in St. Louis August 29th thru September 1st which is an easy drive for us Illinois folks! This is a great opportunity to have some staff attend PWX who typically can't due to the costs and long distance travel.

I will leave you with wishes for a great 2021, remember we are all “Stronger Together” so let's continue showcase our strength, vault and commitment to Public Works!

I sincerely with you all a safe and healthy 2021,



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APWA IL Chapter President 2020-2021

