

## **Good Day Fellow APWA Illinois Chapter Members!**

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to the Chapter at large and thank you for your dedication to APWA and to the Public Works Profession. I am from the far reached of Southern Illinois, born and raised in Carbondale. I left the state for a few years while I was pursuing a BS in Civil Engineering at Missouri S & T (which will always be UMR in my heart and mind). After graduation something inside of me just pulled me back to my roots in Carbondale where I began my public works career as an entry level Civil Engineer for the City. A few years later an opportunity came my way and I left public service to take a job in a local multi-discipline Engineering & Surveying firm in Carbondale. As luck would have it, or perhaps destiny, 10 years later I was called back into public service and became a Public Works Operations Manager for the City. Since 2011 I have been fortunate enough to serve as Director of Public Works for Carbondale. I can tell you without hesitation that I enjoy serving my community and am so very proud to be a part of the best team around... Carbondale's Public Works Department! I am so blessed to have such a dedicated, caring, and talented team of nearly 90 full time folks that keep our City running without asking for any accolades.

So that's me in a nutshell. You might wonder why I started out giving you some background on myself. The reason I provided a quick history of myself is to that you can get to know me, in the same way that I would like to get to know you! The better we know each other the better we can grow our collective teams. I strive to get out of my office and visit with Carbondale's elite Public Works team members at their worksites and offices all about the City. I do this so that I can get better perspective of what their needs are, who they are, and what makes our team tick. Over the years I have gotten to know quite a few folks and truly enjoy all the conversations we have. These conversations bring so many facets to light and help arm me with all kinds of good information and stories to toot the Public Works horn at every chance I get! I guess that's my rambling introductory message: Public Works needs advocates and each of us surely has some great stories of triumph, perseverance, and dedication to share with those who don't know what a great and humbling profession Public Works is.

Onto some information about APWA and what the Illinois Chapter has in its sights for 2020! The Illinois Chapter is strong with around 430 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](http://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 2020 including:

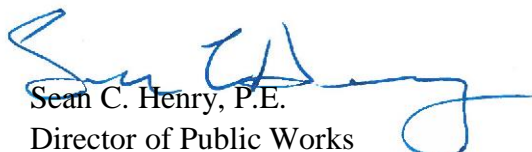
- Chapter Executive Board Meetings – Begin in January and are held every other month at different locations around the State. It is always great to see some new faces at these meetings, so please join us when you can. If you have an interest in joining the Chapter Leadership Team, please get in touch with me and I will find a committee for you to join.
- APWA IL Chapter Conference – Our annual Chapter gathering is in Peoria from May 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>. We have a new schedule and feel to the conference this year so please join us for a couple days of education and fellowship with your peers. As in years past, we are again partnering with the International Municipal Signal Association (IMSA) certificate and training programs which begins on Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup> with the Executive Committee Meeting at 2pm, followed by the new Exhibit Hall Social Hour at 4:00pm, and the Chapter Awards Dinner and Annual Meeting at 6pm.

- Fill-a-Truck Food Drive – 2020 will be the second 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 – Will be held September 11<sup>th</sup> this year. We will be back at the Shoppes at Grand Prairie in Peoria. This is a great opportunity for your team to show off their snow plowing skills. Checkout the chapter website for more information.
- 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](http://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](http://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 2020 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 2020 we also have two great opportunities to attend APWA National Events including Public Works Expo (PWX) in New Orleans this year August 30<sup>th</sup> thru September 2<sup>nd</sup> which is an easy Amtrak ride south (Amtrak stops in Carbondale if you want to say hi!). The Annual Snow Conference is located in Columbus, OH in April which is a pretty easy drive for us Illinois folks. I have attended both of these APWA National events in the past, and I can tell you first hand, it’s worth the time and money. The educational sessions and exhibit hall are second to none!

It seems like I have probably rambled on for too long so I will leave you with one last thought... 2020 brings a new decade to us all. Let’s begin it together by being advocates for our team and Public Works! As you know, Public Works is a very satisfying career so be sure to share your experiences and stories every chance you get. Y you never know you might be the one who provides that spark that someone who wants to serve their community needs to find a career in Public Works!

Have a wonderful and safe 2020!

  
 Sean C. Henry, P.E.  
 Director of Public Works  
 City of Carbondale

APWA IL Chapter President 2020-2021

