

APWA-NC President's Message
By Gary Smith, APWA-NC Chapter President



The 53rd Annual North Carolina Public Works Conference and Equipment Show was held at the Benton Convention Center in Winston Salem, NC on June 13 -16, 2010. We had good attendance and a great program for all. Special thanks to [Keith Pugh](#) and everyone that played a part in making this a success! Many important things have happened since the Chapter annual meeting...

The National APWA Congress in Boston just wrapped up and was well represented by our chapter. The awards ceremony recognized [DJ Seneres](#) for the Charles Walter Nichols Award for Environmental Excellence, [Chris Thompson](#) for the Top Ten Public Works Leader of the Year Award, and our chapter received the Presidential Award for Chapter Excellence (PACE) once again. Congratulations to all!

I am pleased to announce that two of our chapter members have been accepted into the 2010-2011 APWA Emerging Leaders Academy! Congratulations to [Jason Damweber](#), Administrative Analyst with the Town of Chapel Hill Public Works Department and [Giselle Rodriguez-Villanueva](#), Engineer with the City of Fayetteville.

The Emerging Leaders Academy is a national program offered by APWA that provides intensive leadership and management training within the context of public works. It encourages professional growth through a strong network of peers, and offers an in-depth introduction to APWA at the national, chapter, and branch levels.

The Administrative Management and Solid Waste divisions recently held their annual meetings and I have received a lot

of positive feedback from the attendees. A big "thank you" to [Richard McMillan](#) (Administrative Management) and [Leonard Barham](#) (Solid Waste) and their board members for all of their efforts in putting these meetings together. A lot of hard work goes on "behind the scenes" and we appreciate all that was done to make these a success! The other division meetings are just around the corner. Take time to look at the chapter calendar on the website today to see if you can participate. You won't regret it! Thank you [Chuck Smith](#) (webmaster) for keeping this information posted and up to date!

As always, your Board of Directors and I are continuing to work to represent the best interests of our chapter members and to meet your professional needs. Please contact us at any time with questions, concerns, or suggestions on ways to make your chapter even better!

Best wishes and have a great fall season!



***2013 National APWA Snow Conference
to be held in Charlotte !!***

APWA-NC and the City of Charlotte have been selected to host the 2013 National APWA Snow Conference. We will need a lot of volunteers to make this happen, so be expecting a call or email shortly asking for your support! Congratulations again to everyone that helped to make this happen!

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A Personal Perspective - A Wonderful Trip Down Memory Lane

By D. J. Señeres, PE City of Archdale

I'm sitting here at U. S. Airways Gate B17 in Boston, Massachusetts on my return trip to North Carolina after attending the 2010 International Public Works Congress and Exposition at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, I find myself reflecting on the events of the last several days. For me, this conference was not only a reaffirmation that my colleagues employed in the various fields of the public works profession are truly the unsung heroes of this country. It also served as a wonderful trip down memory lane where my professional career had been launched over three decades ago. It has been over thirty years since I have been in this city which the New England Chapter of the APWA coordinated a fantastic event for myself and my colleagues. If my colleagues enjoyed the learning opportunities and networking opportunities 1/10 as much as I did, they are walking on the proverbial "cloud nine."



For those of you who had other commitments in your extremely busy schedule which prevented you making it to Boston this year, I ask that speculate on whether you might have not only a wonderful professional opportunity but also have a personal perspective to share next year in Denver, Colorado for the 2011 Congress.

For now, start preparing for the APWA Snow Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina in 2013.

News from NC League of Municipalities

by Erin Wynia

The League staff has spent the past month reflecting on the legislative actions of the 2010 short session as well as looking forward to fall elections. There are good reasons for APWA members to pay attention to both. I'll start by looking forward.

As I write this column, most members of the state legislature are gearing up for their fall elections. The results of those elections will determine more than just the course of lawmaking for the next two years.

Those state legislators in the political majorities will also redraw state and Congressional legislative district boundaries, a task called "redistricting." These district boundaries will play a large role in determining the political representation in our state and federal legislative bodies for the next decade. For this reason over all others, we expect this fall's races will likely be bitterly contested.

Looking to the past, in the 2010 legislative Short Session, legislators found many ways to affect the operations of local governments. First, however, we should all thank our legislators for recognizing that municipal budgets are strained in ways similar to the state budget. Despite facing severe funding shortages, legislators this year did not cause adverse impacts to municipal budgets. While we are not optimistic for a similar result in next year's budget cycle, we hope legislators will continue this recognition.

As part of the 2010 state budget, legislators allocated additional dollars for transportation funding. Now, the N.C. Department of Transportation is accepting comments on the Mobility Fund, specifically on the issue of how to prioritize projects. Submit comments by September 9, 2010.

Legislators also passed several recycling bills, directed the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources to continue its river basin modeling, modified water and sewer project funding priorities, and expanded aspects of personnel records now subject to public records laws.

A Special Thank You from Dale Folwell

It was an honor to visit with you during lunch in Winston-Salem. A handful of participants asked if the "constituent" letter was online. I'm enclosing that within.



As stated earlier, you represent the billions of dollars of invisible assets that citizens don't want to think about or fund; until something goes wrong. We have disagreements about the level of government but we completely agree that we want the government that we end up with to work. The other major invisible asset is the brains of our state. We are wasting a lot of those through various means.

Citizens are tired of scorecards between political parties, they deserve outcomes. Thank you for allowing me to work on outcomes.

Sincerely,
Rep. Dale Folwell,
NC House of Representatives,

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What Will Your Retirement Plan Be?

By Stewart Sykes

Review of the two "Retiree Corner" articles in the summer edition of our Newsletter indicate the Future of Retirement Study Commission (FORS) is well on its way of meeting the specific directions given to them by the joint Boards of the North Carolina Retirement Systems. Reasons for the study commission include - it being time to review whether or not North Carolina's retirement benefits still meet the needs of public sector employees and employers, responding to the growing national discussion about pensions, and the need to perform a comprehensive, data-driven approach to recommending a plan design that will adequately prepare new employees for retirement. Specific directions include (1) Providing adequate retirement income at a reasonable retirement age after a reasonable period of employment, (2) Providing a proper system for managing risk, including eliminating risk through pooling wherever possible, (3) Encouraging employee behavior that best meets the workforce needs of the state and local governments, (4) Giving control over retirement planning decisions to those best able to make those decisions, (5) Funding benefits in a sound manner through an appropriate mix of employee and employer contributions, (6) Complying with applicable laws, keeping administration costs low, and provide an understandable plan for all stakeholders and (7) Determining whether or not it is possible and appropriate to extend this benefit design to any of the existing employees. Thusfar, most of the focus has been on issues 2, 4 and 5. While the study commission's work is primarily for future employees, as decisions are made in the last four meetings, it is expected more will be done regarding issue 7, current employees.

In the summer edition of the Newsletter, the article entitled "More Retiree's Corner" focused on the first five meetings of the FORS. At the June meeting (meeting 6), the commission allowed employee organizations to make presentations. To provide APWA Chapter input, the Executive Board approved a cover letter signed by President Gary Smith with a four page report attached that reviewed critical issues and concerns from the Chapter's Retirement Study Task Force. If you have read the previous articles, you are now familiar with the difference between the current Defined Benefit (DB) Plan and the Defined Contribution (DC) Plan that has been discussed the most by the FORS. If you have not read the articles, some of the key issues presented to the commission and provided below may not make a lot of sense.

Here are excerpts from the APWA Chapter's presentation, all taken from FORS meeting notes and minutes, studies by state and national organizations as well as retirement system staff information previously provided to the FORS: (1) Based on the fact that the retirement system hasn't had a thorough review since 1963, and based on the number of employees who retired in 2009, decisions the FORS makes has the potential of impacting the retirement lives of more than 600,000 teachers, state and local government employees. (2) On average for the U.S., total compensation is 7.4% lower for local government employees than for comparable private sector employees. Employers and current employees must keep in mind that a

strong retirement system plays a major role in the total compensation package. (3) With the challenge of filling various local government vacancies, especially certain specialized ones, if even a small percentage of younger workers prefer the features of a Defined Contribution Plan, such as portability or perhaps more control over one's investments, offering some form of this type plan as an option could perhaps serve as a useful recruitment tool. (4) Generally speaking, individuals (government and non-government workers) find investing very difficult and generally do not do a very good job. (Moving investment risks from the employer to the employee is a major disadvantage for participating in a DC plan.) (5) Retirees without DB plans not only have to plan for their retirement, but also to live off their account after retirement. Market lows and other uncertainties make planning withdrawals from a Defined Contribution Plan very challenging. The distribution phase and the loss of longevity risk pooling in retirement is probably the most difficult obstacle for DC plans to overcome. (6) At the February FORS meeting, 80% of the commission members indicated Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA's) should be the same or greater than increases in the Consumer Price Index. (In the last 7 years our DB plan COLA's have lagged behind CPI increases by over 8 %.) (7) There is a reduction in average tenure for U.S. employees related to the shift from DB plans to DC plans, implying that the portability of DC plans increases worker turnover. However, various forms of combined DB/DC plans increase tenure by 5.8 years vs. 4 years for a DB plan when they are compared to having no retirement plan. (8) DC plans do not solve funding problems. (9) DC plans generally have higher investment and administrative expenses over DB plans. (10) North Carolina and Local Government employers must recognize their employees are their most valuable asset.

Based on the facts from the entire report, the Executive Board voted to request the FORS consider a strong educational effort coupled with a Defined Benefit/Defined Contribution combination plan. The DC plan would be voluntary at the discretion of the employee. This type of hybrid plan would provide maximum flexibility to the varied generations of employees, whether they are young or old, like to change jobs or stay put, or are well educated in investment finance or not.

After hearing presentations from five employee associations, the chairman asked commission members to vote on which types of retirement structures they would be most interested in for further study.

Meeting 7, on July 12th, opened with the Chairman proposing the Commission focus their attention on three retirement design types. They include Defined Benefits, the current plan, a Defined Benefit/Defined Contribution Choice plan and a Defined Benefit/Defined Contribution Combination plan. Core readings (the "really important" homework for the commission members) included 18 questions and issues regarding the Defined Benefit (DB) plan. The commission looked at each one individually and chose four for further discussion. While 80% of the commission had voted in the second meeting that

COLA's should be the same or greater than Consumer Price Index increases, we were disappointed that neither one of the two COLA issues were included. Based on the draft minutes, the Chairman then reviewed Defined Contribution choice and combination issues, suggesting the commission consider a choice arrangement similar to what university professors now have, and later suggested a combination Defined Benefit/Defined Contribution Plan. This is where the commission will start their August 23rd meeting, which of course will have occurred by the time you read this article. The commission continues to have a tremendous amount of reading to do for each meeting, including national studies of retirement programs by state, many broken down between teachers and "regular" employees. If you'd like to see details, go to the following WEB site: www.nctreasurer.com/DSTHome/RetirementSystems/Future-of-Retirement+Meetings.htm There are a lot of decisions to be made between now and November 15th when the Commission is to have their report to the Retirement Systems Board of Trustees. At this point, we can only assume the Board will study the recommendations, discuss them at their January, 2011 meeting and then send the results of their work over to the General Assembly for final decisions.

Retiree's Corner
By Stewart Sykes

If you have read the article entitled "What Will Your Retirement Plan Be?" and are concerned, you may rest easy, knowing that your retirement benefit will not change as a result of the Future of Retirement Study Commission's work. Unfortunately though, there continues to be no discussion at Retirement Systems Board of Trustee meetings regarding a possible COLA for retirees to deal with the continuing negative effects of inflation. The annual "reasonable rate of inflation" as stated in the report referred to below is set at 2.5 - 3.5%.

In addition to the above, most of you know that some in our legislature feel that local government retirees should not get a COLA unless the teachers and state retirees get the same. For the first time in the 69 year history of the Teachers and State Employees Retirement System, the Legislature did not provide the "Annual Required Contribution" (ARC), \$181 million this year, to keep the retirement system fully funded. However, the approved budget provided a contingency plan or "link" whereby, if Congress appropriated additional Medicaid (FMAP) funding, a large portion of the funding needed for the Teachers and State Employees Retirement System, \$139 million, would be released to cover a large portion of the shortfall. Fortunately, Congress approved the additional FMAP funding on August 10th and preliminary estimates indicate sufficient moneys will be available such that the retirement funding can be released as soon as the Federal funds are received. Still, since the ARC has not been fully funded, there will be no COLA any time soon.

The July Retirement Board of Trustees meeting included a presentation entitled "Review of Economic Assumptions and Actuarial Methods" by Buck Consultants, the Retirement System's consulting actuary. This is one step in the process of performing the "five year experience study" with demographic assumptions to be presented at the October meeting. Historically, I am told the experience study is used to assure the retirement systems are staying actuarially sound and provide guidance for making retirement system decisions. With the country recovering from a significant recession, a report as important as the experience study is needed ASAP!

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Thanks !!!

I would just like to say thanks to the NC Chapter Board for the nomination as your 2010 Top Ten Public Works Leaders candidate and thanks to the entire membership for your support over the last many years of my career in Public Works. I must say that just being nominated by my peers was a very humbling experience; but being selected and representing you at the National Congress was truly an honor where I cannot express the gratitude that I have for this organization and the many friendships that I have gained by being a part of it. May the NC Chapter continue to excel as our younger membership moves into the leadership positions. We are fortunate to have so many well qualified folks involved. I am very proud to be a part of public works and particularly this Chapter.

May God bless each of you,
W. Chris Thompson, 2008 Chapter President

APWA-NC Solid Waste Division News

The APWA-NC Solid Waste Division Annual Conference was held August 11-13, 2010 at the Atlantic Beach Sheraton.

We had members and vendors participate in our annual bowling tournament hosted by Mr. *C. T. Clayton, Sr.* P.E. and our annual David Wills Memorial Golf Tournament hosted by *Maxwell Taylor* with Carolina Environmental Systems and *Van Lucas* with Cavalier Equipment Systems. The group of 75 was welcomed to Atlantic Beach by the Town Manager, *David Walker*. The technical session Thursday and Friday addressed "Landfill Ban Updates", "Drug and Alcohol Detection", "FMLA and OSHA Issues To Keep Us Out of Court", and our famous "Trashy Games". The conference was a big success. Attendance was up slightly and we saw some new/first time faces.

Our next board meeting is scheduled for September 1, 2010 and our Fall Workshop will be held on October 27, 2010 in Burlington,



2010 APWA-NC Awards

2010 has been another banner year for the APWA-NC Awards Committee. The chapter endorsed five nominations for national awards, two of which were selected. While all five applicants were well deserving, the following individuals were selected to receive national recognition:

W. Chris Thompson, Director of Public Services, City of High Point, has been selected by APWA as one of the Top Ten Public Works Leader of the Year for 2010. This award is among the most prestigious presented by the national organization.



D. J. Seneres, Stormwater Program Manager for the City of Archdale was selected to receive the Charles Walter Nichols Award for Environmental Excellence. It should be noted that this is the second year in a row that D. J. has received a national award related to his leadership in implementing Archdale's Stormwater program.

NC Chapter PACE Award: *Flip Bombardier* Assistant City Manager for the City of Gastonia and NC Chapter Delegate to Congress, with the invaluable support and assistance of *Elizabeth Treadway*, Vice President of AMEC Earth and Environmental and the Region III Director on the APWA National Board of Directors, made another spectacular submission for the Presidents Award for Chapter Excellence, affectionately known as the PACE Award. This is the ninth year that our chapter has been so honored!!! Special kudos to Flip and Elizabeth for their countless hours, and hard work on this prestigious award and their tireless service to the Chapter at the State and national level!!!

At the Chapter level, the Awards committee received several deserving nominations for Chapter awards. The winners of these include:



Greg Turner, Assistant City Manager, City of Winston-Salem, recipient of the Robert S. Hopson Leadership Service Award

Kathy Blake, Engineering Services Construction Inspector, City of High Point, recipient of the H. W. Keuffner Award



Malcolm Lewis, Assistant Streets Director, City of Winston-Salem, recipient of the Samuel A. Greely Local Government Service Award



Sharon Lewis, retiree, City of Winston-Salem, and spouse of Malcolm, recipient of the Jean Seals Chapter Service Award

Steve Nichols, Vice President of Operations for Telics, recipient of the Robert E. Linkner Private Sector Service Award



Kathi Willis, Public Works Administrative Assistant for the City of Asheville and Chapter Secretary and *Keith Pugh*, Engineering Services Director for the City of High Point and Chapter President Elect, recipients of the Presidents Award

W. Chris Thompson, Public Services Director, High Point was the recipient of the Robert B. Seals award.



Charlotte, North Carolina to Host 2013 APWA North American Snow Conference

by Keith Pugh, City of High Point, APWA-NC, President Elect

On Wednesday, August 18th, the APWA Board of Directors voted to award the 2013 North American Snow Conference to Charlotte and the North Carolina Chapter. The North Carolina Chapter was successful this year after finishing as a runner-up to Milwaukee, Wisconsin for the 2012 Conference.

The Chapter will organize a Host Committee and begin planning for our involvement in this event. We will need volunteers, sponsors, speakers and a multitude of other things in order to be successful. We've partnered with Visit Charlotte in this endeavor and will rely on them to help us with accommodations and convention arrangements. We know that it will take a lot of hard work to make this conference a success!!

If you are not familiar with the Snow Conference, the following is an excerpt from the APWA website concerning the 2010 Conference held in Omaha:

If you have the desire to gain new ideas to improve your agency's winter maintenance program, the North American Snow Conference is the place to be! Acquire insight into the latest snow equipment and technology. Discover new ways of interpreting weather forecasts. Explore ways of improving community relations. Learn how to plan for effective snow and ice removal. Network with top snow and ice experts from across North America. The American Public Works Association is the public works community's number one resource for information and expertise on winter operations. The 2010 Snow Conference will

showcase four days of quality programs and technical tours with opportunities to interact and exchange ideas with manufacturers, distributors, consultants, and other public works professionals. The Snow Conference Exhibit Floor is bigger and better than ever, with more than 120 companies participating! Everything from innovative new equipment and technology to ground-breaking new products and services focused on snow & ice removal and winter operations will be on display. Come kick some tires at The Show for Snow!

Exact dates and schedule for the Charlotte show will be announced as details are available. This event will take place in the spring of 2013! So, North Carolina.....get ready for some SNOW !!

Dates to Save . .

Solid Waste Division Fall Workshop
October 27, 2010 Burlington, NC

*Advanced Construction Inspection
for Public Works Projects
(12 PDH credits)*
November 17-18, 2010, Raleigh, NC

*Construction Inspection for Public Works Projects
(formerly Introduction to Construction Inspection)
(18 PDH credits)*
January 24-26, 2011, Raleigh, NC

PDH Committee Chair Steps Down

The PDH Committee is a sub-committee of the Education Committee. The purpose of the PDH Committee is to review course materials submitted by the Chapter Divisions, determine if the course content is eligible for professional development hours (PDH), collect and maintain attendance records from annual conferences, distribute certificates of attendance from the conferences, and provide quarterly reports to the North Carolina Board of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors (NCBELS). For the past two + years this committee has been chaired by [Brian Dehler](#), PE (WSP SELLS). His committee consisted of "The Gregs", [Greg Wells](#) (Willis Engineers) and [Greg Shuler](#) (City of Ashville). Over the past two years, the committee has reviewed course materials for 163 sessions for 14 conferences and mailed 514 Certificates of Attendance for over 4,500 PDHs.

[Donald Arant](#) (STV/Ralph Whitehead Associates) has agreed to take over as Chair of the PDH committee.

Brian will continue his involvement in the year ahead as President-Elect of APWA-NC.

Newsletter Submission Dates

By D. J. Señeres, Newsletter Chair

Please mark your calendars with the newsletter deadline of November 15 for submission of articles for the December 2010 Newsletter.

Thanks for the past submissions from Division Presidents. Please remember to attach your article text and any supporting photographs; Include below the title of the article who the author of the article is and the organization he or she represents i.e.,

Article for Newsletter
By John Doe or Jane Doe, Name of Organization



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SEND US YOUR NEWS!

Thanks to all who have contributed to APWA-NC News.
Please send your news to:

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