

APWA-NC President's Message

by B. Keith Pugh, APWA-NC Chapter President

First of all, let me tell you what an honor it is to represent the North Carolina Chapter. I am humbled and thankful to have the opportunity to lead this vibrant group of professionals. As your President, I face the daunting challenge of following the innovative and courageous leadership of those who have held this position before me. I'd personally like to thank our immediate Past President; Mr. Gary Smith who tirelessly serves our chapter with great dignity, humor and servant leadership. Gary is a tremendous resource for me and eagerly tackles any issue deserving attention. He truly serves with our membership's best interests at heart.



I would also like to thank all of those who selflessly serve on the chapter board, the various technical divisions and our committees. These remarkable people give so much of their time, energy and resources to make our Chapter better. And they do this without expecting recognition or reward. I am honored and inspired to serve alongside each of you.

One of my personal goals during 2011 is to raise our service standards even higher. North Carolina is consistently recognized nationally as a strong chapter filled with dedicated professionals and innovative ideas. This is evident through the number of individual and corporate awards bestowed upon our membership. I hope to foster an atmosphere of professional excellence and service that continues and grows this national reputation.

One way to accomplish this is through simple acts of service. My parents stressed this simple concept to my brother and I, "If you see something that needs to be done, don't wait to be told to do it....just do it because it's the right thing to do." This applies to both our profession and our communities. Who has a greater impact on our quality of life than Public Works? Our ideas, our decisions, our acts of service directly impact lives every day. I ask that you find your community service niche and invite others to share your passion and participate.

Our Chapter will strive to meet your professional goals and promote the profession of public works service. Education, training, and membership will remain focal points of the chapter. We will continue to offer economical educational and networking opportunities for our members. We will also promote public awareness and outreach to attract new members.

If you want to get involved, simply ask. We are always looking for individuals with a heart and passion to serve. We still have committee positions open for 2011 in Diversity and National Public Works Week. All of our committee members work very hard to provide you numerous opportunities to learn and grow, network with peers, and celebrate public works.

In closing, I look forward to what we can accomplish during 2011. This can be the very best year this Chapter has ever seen. The real question we must ask ourselves is: "What am I willing to do to make sure this happens?"

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APWA-NC Student Scholar Uses Award Money to Combine Sustainable Development and Higher Education in Rural South Africa

By Tyler Confrey-Maloney and Scott Whalen

APWA Student Scholar and North Carolina State University sophomore Tyler Confrey-Maloney spent his \$2000 stipend on a trip to South Africa. Living in a Shangaan village as a Global Development Intern for the nonprofit organization ThinkImpact, Confrey-Maloney served as a catalyst and business advisor for local entrepreneurs.

ThinkImpact's work is based on the model of Asset-Based Community Development, which capitalizes on community skills and resources to create sustainable, revenue-generating programs led by members of the community. This model is a departure from development approaches that foster dependency, and approaches that are, in part, responsible for the lack of economic growth on the African continent over the past half-century.

Confrey-Maloney assisted a group of three women in the village who launched a social business dedicated to helping high school "learners" apply to universities and obtain financial aid. He worked alongside the women as they helped students complete applications and file forms in time to meet university deadlines.



"It was a bottleneck that the women themselves identified. Qualified students were passing through the high school, but very few attended university. Think back to when you applied college. Now get rid of your phones and Internet. Replace your parents, neighbors, and teachers with parents, neighbors, and teachers who were raised under an oppressive system, such as Apartheid. Lastly, discard any form of a college counseling system. These three women created a business that gathers the information for the learners, helps them write their

applications and fill out forms, all in a timely manner."

During nights and weekends, Confrey-Maloney worked with a group of students in the village who formed a study group called Learners Earning a Future (LEAF). The group pooled their money to pay for a unit of electricity, and worked at the local preschool each night. Under Confrey-Maloney's guidance, the students elected leaders, created a strict tardy and absence policy, and began studying together. Word of LEAF traveled quickly, and two additional study groups were founded in nearby villages modeled on the newly-designed system. Confrey-Maloney keeps in touch with the village and reports that LEAF student scores in the fields of mathematics and sciences have been raised by an average of three letter grades during the fall semester.

A sophomore in environmental engineering, Confrey-Maloney plans to continue his work in the development sector.

"I am ecstatic to have the opportunity to learn from the fantastic professors at NC State University. I can only think that my education in a technical field will augment my ability to help. I believe that it is my responsibility to use this knowledge to benefit others. Isn't that what public works is all about?"

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Charlotte Snow Fighters "Best of the Best"

Submitted by Ken Martin, CDOT/Street Maintenance Division

Imagine snowflakes dancing in the sky, covering lawns, branches, cars, streets and sidewalks. As you look down the road, no one is leaving, afraid to disturb this Thomas Kincaid picture. You'd think you were in the North or mountains. This isn't the North; it's Charlotte, NC. While the snow covered roads can be treacherous, a team of "snow fighters" known as the Charlotte street maintenance crews work to keep the roads safe.

Charlotte is not immune to winter weather and over the past few years the City has been seeing more winter storms. The



crews begin training every fall, not knowing when the first storm will hit. The crews waited and received word on Christmas Eve that Mother Nature was planning a battle. While residents dreamed of a "white Christmas," the fighters were getting ready to report for duty.

For the first time in over 60 years, a storm attacked on Christmas Day. Crews geared up in layered clothing and jumped into snow plows and drove off into the streets of Charlotte. For the next three days, crews worked nonstop to salt, plow and

remove the ice and snow. Due to their hard work, the residents of Charlotte were able to travel safely to their holiday destinations. The fighters would have to wait to celebrate the holiday with their family.

The first battle ended, but Mother Nature fought back again and this time she added more ice. On January 10, 2011, another 4 - 4 ½ inches of snow and ice covered Charlotte. Once again the street maintenance storm fighters answered the call of duty. The crews never questioned their task. For the next four days, they worked tirelessly around the clock plowing and salting to once more clear streets throughout the City of Charlotte.

The crews' efforts did not go unnoticed. The Charlotte Street Maintenance Division received many compliments from The Mayor, City Manager, residents, business owners and many others for their exceptional work on these storms. It is during these types of storms that the exceptional performances of employees in Public Works stand out as they give their all to make sure they answer the call to respond to all types of emergencies and challenges.

Fighting ice and snow in Charlotte is just one thing we do and it can arrive at any time, including holiday and weekends. The City of Charlotte street maintenance employees truly are the "best of the best" in their dedication to safety, commitment, and hard work for CDOT and the City of Charlotte. They are waiting and ready to face the next storm and any other challenge.

APWA- NC Solid Waste Division Winter Workshop

By Hestella M. Redic

The Solid Waste Division held our first workshop for 2011 on February 2th. It was geared to assist in further development of the laborer classification; however, there was a mixture of employees in attendance including a manager, supervisors and equipment operators. The workshop was entitled, "Laborers - Remaining Enthusiastic in Tough Times" and took place at Lake Mackintosh in Burlington, North Carolina. Two very interesting and informative topics were selected which would benefit the employees as follows:

Morale Boosting/Team Building

How to Become Promotable in the Workplace

These were dynamite and very timely issues to review with employees during these tough economic times. The participants showed a lot of interest and had very stimulating questions to ensure them personally or collectively look for morale boosters. The attendees were really amazed at the session presented by the speaker sharing information on characteristics that assist employee's ability to be promoted in the workplace. This topic was presented utilizing a power point presentation and audience interaction. The audience was really amazed when they realized that many of the skills they already possessed were some of the same ones employers consider when interviewing candidates and then ultimately choosing an employee to fill vacant supervisory positions.

Overall, it was a very successful workshop that was information, interesting and appealed to the audience. We had thirty-one (31) evaluation sheets collected from attendees and they individually rated General Overview, Classroom Instruction, Workshop Location and Meal Functions on a scale of one (1) to five (5). We received seventy-eight five ratings and thirty-seven (37) 4 ratings. They also added additional comments such as, great presentation, loved it, thanks for informative info, very interesting, wonderful job, etc.

I thoroughly enjoyed the workshop and the employees and look forward to future endeavors.

Climb for Water

By Scott Whalen and Kraig Kern, WK Dickson

In the wake of recent global disasters such as the flooding in Pakistan, the earthquake and subsequent cholera outbreaks in Haiti, and even the catastrophic results of hurricane Katrina along the gulf coast a few years ago, we are reminded that even the most basic human needs are often overlooked and taken for granted. Access to clean drinking water and sanitation facilities are becoming a serious worldwide threat. As engineers and water resources professionals we have the knowledge and resources to help make a difference.

In response to that, a group of people fulfilling a life-long dream to climb one of the tallest mountains on earth are using the experience to help save lives. Kraig Kern and Scott Whalen of WK Dickson & Co., Inc., founded the "Climb for Water" campaign last fall to raise money and awareness of the crippling effects of the global water and sanitation crisis.

Later this summer they will journey to Tanzania in eastern Africa to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro. Their goal is to raise approximately \$20,000, which works out to the equivalent of \$1 for every foot in elevation they achieve as a climbing team. As of today, the team is made up of a diverse group of people who are working in the water industry in some way. Besides WK Dickson, climbers also

include a hydrologist from CH2M Hill, and a nuclear specialist from Duke Energy.



The campaign's founders pointed out that around the world, nearly 1 billion people do not have access to safe drinking water and 2.6 billion are without adequate sanitation facilities. Every day 6,000 people who share our planet die from water-related illnesses, and the vast majority are children. According to the website they created, unsafe water and lack of basic sanitation cause 80% of diseases and kill more people every year than all forms of violence, including war.

The proceeds collected by the team will ultimately benefit Water for People, a global organization that helps people in developing countries improve quality of life by supporting the advancement of locally sustainable drinking water resources and sanitation facilities. And because Water for People is already an official beneficiary of NC AWWA-WEA, this campaign has received the full endorsement of that organization as well.

The Climb for Water team will attempt to summit the highest free-standing mountain in the world to help raise awareness of the global water and sanitation crisis.

According to Kraig Kern, just the goal of the Climb for Water campaign alone has the potential to raise enough money to give hundreds of people clean drinking water for many years through the use of water filtration, well drilling and rain capture devices. The potential to save lives in the generations who follow is incalculable.

"This isn't just a cause for us climbers and our respective firms. We are hoping that a lot of companies reading this will step up and adopt the campaign as well," Kern stated. "Most of us have never really been thirsty. We've never had to leave our houses and walk 3 hours to fetch water. We simply turn on the tap, and water comes out...clean. Yet there are a billion people on the planet who don't have clean water...that's nearly 1 out of every 7 people!"

Whalen agrees adding "When we take a sip of our bottled water from the fridge after a workout and don't think twice about it, there are people out there who have to go to remote areas just to pull water from a tainted pond or stream. When we're in Africa we will see that at every turn and as a water resources engineer, I feel it is my duty to help change things. I'm challenging other companies to join us."

You can get more information on what you can do to help the cause, become one of the climbers, or simply follow the team's progress, by going to www.climbforwater.org. They have also started a popular [Facebook](#) page which provides real-time updates and information related to the journey. In fact, this will be Water for People's first fundraiser managed primarily by social networking technology. The hope is to have at least 1,000 Facebook fans by the time they start the climb, and the team is asking everyone to spread the word.

Retiree's Corner
Submitted by Stewart Sykes

Retirement issues are beginning to heat up with the General Assembly in session; but let's go back and pick up where we ended in the last edition. The Retirement Systems Board of Trustees had met in October and approved the five year "Experience Study". This was very positive for our governing agencies in that their contribution rate, previously estimated to rise to 7.55% effective July 1, 2011 was recommended by the actuary to rise much less, from 6.35% to 6.88%.

In addition, with the Future of Retirement Study Commission (FORS) approving their report on November 16, the recommendations they made were provided to the Board of Trustees for their consideration. Both the contribution rate increase and the FORS report were addressed at the Board's January meeting, but the outcome was not quite like many anticipated.

The first item of official business was for the Board to adopt a Resolution of Appreciation for Michael Williamson's 11 years of outstanding service as Director of the Retirement Systems Division. This was a great loss, and Treasurer Cowell will be hard pressed to find someone as qualified as Mr. Williamson. In her December 14th email, she indicated the position had been posted both internally and externally nationwide, and she expected interviews to begin soon. She also stated "I know how many people in this state rely on the smooth operation of the Retirement Systems and want to assure you that I am committed to giving the dedicated public servants in the Treasurer's office the support they need as we go through this transition". Treasurer Cowell has appointed Ms. Kitty McCollum as Interim Director.

The FORS Commission final report was then presented by Dr. Robert Clark, chair of the Commission. Dr. Clark is a professor of Economics at NCSU specializing in pension and retirement policies, and previously served as Director of Research with the TIAA-CREF Institute. While Dr. Clark led discussion, it was clear the Board was not prepared to vote on the many issues with some members expressing concern about how some issues might possibly impact others. The following recommendations were approved:

- * Change the way interest on employee contributions is accumulated and paid on withdrawn accounts using current market interest rates.
- * Study centralizing the administration of 403(b) plans in the local school system.
- * Adopt automatic enrollment policy for supplemental Defined Contribution plan with the ability for the employee to "opt out".
- * Grant the Local Government Employees Retirement System (LGERS) Board of Trustees the full authority to implement any Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) up to the current 4% cap, regardless of the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), with the authority to use only actuarial gains to fund the COLA's. (This removes a major obstacle the Board of Trustees has recently faced in being able to grant COLA's that would allow retirees to "catch up" from being behind CPI increases from previous years when insufficient actuarial gains existed. The reality of the situation is that a zero COLA is still projected for this year putting retirees almost 10% behind CPI increases over the past 8 years.)

The following recommendation failed from lack of a second to the motion for approval: Establish minimum unreduced retirement age of 55 with 30 years of service for future hires.

Finally, the Commission's recommendation to offer all new and current employees a choice between the current Defined Benefit Plan and a Defined Contribution plan was "tabled for further discussion". The next regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting is set for April 21st.

However, this writer has noted the North Carolina Retired Government Employees Association reported 'the House Committee on State Personnel and the Senate Committee on Pensions, Retirement, and Aging met jointly on Wednesday', February 9th. Among other pertinent questions, 'members asked about retirement system changes being considered or already enacted in other states to control pension plan costs. These include minimum retirement age requirements. The State Treasurer likely will make a presentation to the committees this month'. Based on this, we will be keeping a close eye on how the FORS Commission recommendation for a choice plan is handled. Will the Legislature act on this extremely important issue this session? If you are a current employee, how much are you willing to get involved when your retirement plan is possibly up for a major change?

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League of Municipalities News by Erin Wynia

Just a few weeks into the 2011-2012 N.C. General Assembly legislative session, there are no doubts that a new party is in leadership. After winning majorities in both houses in last fall's elections, the Republican Party leadership wasted no time preparing for a session that will consider many issues that have long been priorities of the party.

Municipalities have been most immediately impacted by the new majority's annexation reform proposals. Current N.C. annexation laws serve as the primary growth management tool for cities and towns, including requirements for providing municipal services such as water, sewer, and solid waste collection. Cities in other states without similar laws find themselves surpassed by others - like North Carolina cities - that can continue to grow.

Yet over the past several legislative sessions, opponents of this growth manage-

ment tool have voiced strong opposition, and the new majority has prioritized reform of these laws. Committees in both houses have already heard *bills to alter current annexation laws*, from several angles: a moratorium on all city-initiated annexations, repeal of annexations in progress, repeal of recently completed annexations.

The League's Department of Governmental Affairs has responded with an offer to negotiate meaningful reforms to the current process, modeled on *last year's 20-point proposal*. This issue matters more to the League membership than any other, and the membership has prioritized the issue as its *top advocacy goal*.

Both chambers of the legislature have also undertaken the state budget process. Revenues will fall well short of currently-budgeted expenses, but the full extent of the shortfall will not be known until after spring tax receipts are

collected. Regardless of that number, however, legislators will search for significant cuts and structural changes to state government as they craft a balanced budget.

You can expect to see discussion of layoffs of state employees, other cuts to and consolidations in state agencies, different health and pension benefits for employees, and discontinuing various state programs. You may also see proposals to pass costs currently assumed by the state down to local governments, particularly county governments.

Throughout all the challenging discussions happening this year in Raleigh, you may find up-to-date information about bills and general legislative activity [here](#) and [here](#) on the League website. Please visit to stay informed.

You may contact me with questions at ewynia@nclm.org.



AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION
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Administrative Management & Technology Divisions Conference
Sea Trail Conference Center
Sunset Beach, NC

**Management & Technology:
R U Integrated?**

Save the Date!
July 27-29, 2011



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Technology Division News

by L. Eddie Staley

The Technology Division is gearing up for a great year of growth and learning opportunities for our members. First, we have teamed up with the Administrative Management Division to develop an exciting conference to be held at Sea Trail Resort in Sunset Beach, NC. The theme of the conference is "R U Integrated" (note the use of R U "texting" language in the title). We are going to explore various topics of technology advancements that improve our ability to manage work orders, staff, resources, and communication with stakeholders. This conference will talk about "Benchmarking" and "Executive Dashboards" and "Integration". Be sure to attend this conference, because it will have something for all levels of management.

Also, the Technology Board has set a goal of expanding our membership. We have begun to reach out to the Geographic Information System (GIS) professionals throughout the State. This community of professionals provide vital information to our Public Works Departments. It is our desire to develop valuable learning opportunities through our Division that will encourage this community to join APWA. We have already spoken with the GISCI (GIS Certification Institute) to develop a workshop that will assist GIS technicians in their goals of GIS certification or renewal of their certification. More details will be coming in the future.

Equipment Services Division Winter Equipment Repair and Storage Workshop

Submitted by Robert Wayne

The Equipment Services Division will be holding three one day workshops across North Carolina starting March 15th, 16th, and 17th covering repair and storage of winter equipment (snowplows, salt spreaders and brine sprayers). Come join us for a session packed full of valuable information. This will be the first of two workshops on winter equipment to be offered by equipment services this year. We plan to have an operator's session on the proper use of winter equipment in the fall. I have attached the workshops agendas, registration form and address where the sessions will be held along with a contact person for each location from the Equipment Services Division. If you prefer to bring payment with you, that's fine, but please register in advance so we may have a good head count.

Mark your Calendar

March 15th -2011 City of Wake Forest

March 16th - 2011 City of Charlotte

March 17th -2011 City of Lenoir

Please come and join us! We believe this will be a very good opportunity for you and your employees to learn the proper procedures in maintaining your winter equipment for year-end repairs and storage protecting your capital investments and reducing costly repairs in preparing for the next winter season.

Hope to see you at the next upcoming events.



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Newsletter Submission Dates

By D. J. Señeres, Newsletter Chair

Please mark your calendars with the newsletter deadline of May 16 for submission of articles for the Summer 2011 Newsletter. Future deadlines are: August 15 for the Fall issue and November 15 for the Winter issue.

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

SAVE THESE DATES



National Public Works Week
Public Works: Serving you and your community
May 15 - 21, 2011

APWA NC Chapter - 54th Annual Equipment Show and Conference, Asheville
June 12-15, 2011

2011 Administrative Management Division and Technology Division, Sunset Beach
July 27, 2011

2011 Solid Waste Division Conference, Sunset Beach
August 10-11, 2011

2011 Water Resources Division Conference, Wilmington
September 12-13, 2011

2011 APWA International Public Works Congress, Denver.
<http://sites.apwa.net/congress/2011/home.aspx>
September 18-21, 2011

2011 APWA-NC Combined Streets and Equipment Services Division Conference, Concord
September 28-30, 2011

2013 APWA North American Snow Conference, Charlotte
April 7-9, 2013



The American Public Works Association is dedicated to education in the related areas of public works. We help our members, the public, and policy makers work together to provide the public works services needed to keep our communities operating smoothly and safely in concert with the latest environmental and public health standards. Through the national association and our 67 chapters in the US and Canada, we offer a comprehensive array of services to meet this educational mission.

SEND US YOUR NEWS!

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

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