

PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES

PAVING THE WAY FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE BY EDUCATING, ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING OUR EMPLOYEES.

2012 April / May
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NATIONAL PUBLIC WORKS WEEK



May 20 through 26 is National Public Works Week, a time set aside to celebrate the hard work and dedication of Public Works employees across the nation. Lincoln Public Works and Utilities will hold a celebration in conjunction with [Waterfest](#) at Holmes Lake Park June 9. American Public Works Association (APWA) has set the theme for the week as "Public Works: Creating a Lasting Impression."

During National Public Works Week, we are encouraged to publicize the importance of Public Works to our community, the effort that we put forth for our community for a better quality of life and the benefits we provide each citizen. No one in this community goes through one day without using the services provided by Public Works and Utilities. The projects we build and maintain are designed to last our community more than a lifetime, "creating a lasting impression."

For more information, please visit [youtube.com](#) (Search: APWA Spotlight On)

Director's Corner

"We strive to add value to the community in such a way that makes the community feel valued."

- Miki Esposito



Every day, PWU provides core services fundamental to basic human needs – **water, waste management, transportation, flood mitigation**. That is **what we do**.

But, let's talk about **who we are**.

If you ask me, we are some of the most hard working and dedicated people money can buy. But, some feel otherwise. They call us stubborn, contentious and closed-minded. This bothers me because I know the perception doesn't match the reality of who we are.

But why is PWU perceived negatively when we provide such **high value** services to the community? Well, if you think about it, this is not unique to us. It is visible in public agencies across the nation. Ask yourself whether you, as a taxpaying citizen, have a positive perception of government. When was the last time you felt "valued" by a public agency?

No one can refute that PWU adds value to the community with services that are **safe, reliable, healthy** and **helpful** to people. But, that is just one side of the coin. We must do so in a way that makes the community **feel** valued. That means being **customer focused** and **solution minded**. It means we invest time, energy and resources to being **proactive** through **compliance assistance, customer service** and **public education, engagement** and **outreach**. It means we consistently recognize, promote, celebrate and **value** both the community and each other.

Now is the time for PWU to be defined for **who we truly are: kind, approachable, creative, respectful, flexible, responsive, reasonable, helpful, hard working** and **dedicated**. As ambassadors of PWU, I ask you to remember the importance not just of **what we do** but of **who we are**.

Thank you **all** for your dedicated service!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Miki Esposito".

Miki Esposito
Director of Public Works and Utilities

E-mail "ALERTS" In order to better communicate with all PWU staff, an **"Alerts"** e-mail will be sent to those with an e-mail account through PW_UAll. In an effort to keep employees informed, information will be sent on new projects, news conferences and news pertaining to PWU. For those who do not have e-mail, the information will be posted on workplace bulletin boards.

STRONG LINCS

"THERE IS NO 'DIVISION' AMONG OUR DIVISIONS."

Miki Esposito

PWU Director Miki Esposito has announced that the Strong Linc Awards will be issued every two months in conjunction with the production of the Department's newsletter. She is pleased to announce the February/March Strong Linc Award recipients listed below. This month's workplace principle and award focused on *compassion*. Be sure to thank these Strong Lincs for their valued service:

Toni Kent (*StarTran*) At the Gold's bus stop, Toni recently assisted a visually impaired woman who is a regular passenger. Toni made sure the woman, who was in the wrong line, made it to the correct bus. Toni is supportive toward her co-workers. She always circulates cards for everyone to sign and goes above and beyond to help, especially in making new drivers feel welcome.

Rock Krzycki (*Watershed*) Rock coordinates special staff lunches for new or departing staff. He also initiates get-well, sympathy, congratulatory and best of luck cards for staff.

Gary Lacy and Terry Ullsperger (*Watershed*) These two are Watershed's public face to developers, builders and contractors. They work diligently, one-on-one with clients, providing compliance assistance to the regulated community. They are wonderful examples of PWU ambassadors in implementing erosion and sediment control for the City's MS4 system.

Pam Gadenken (*Management*) and Gail VanSlyke (*Business Office*) This pair helped out with a minor medical emergency in the office last December.

Erika Nunes, Thomas Shafer, and Mark Miller (*Engineering*); Jim Tompsett and Doug Schwartz (*Street and Traffic Operations*) and Aren Papke (*Republic Parking*) These individuals were tremendous examples of quality customer service to Lincoln citizens before and during the Downtown Rehab Project. After a concerned citizen called about the loss of handicapped parking near the Capitol, these Strong Lincs quickly identified locations where meters could be

hooded with special handicapped parking designations or where temporary signs could be used to designate alternate parking options.

Chris Koll (*Management*) and Amber Null, Leroy Heier and Mickey Griffin (*Street and Traffic Operations*) When a man dropped a binder holding his iPad and it slid into a storm drain inlet, this team showed great compassion and responsiveness. Chris took the call and forwarded it to Amber, who quickly coordinated a successful recovery. In an e-mail, the appreciative man wrote, "I am sure you and your team do not receive the recognition you deserve."

Councilman Doug Emery, Rick Hoppe (*Mayor's Office*) and Roger Figard, Randy Hoskins, Thomas Shafer, and Holly Lionberger (*Engineering Services*) During a public meeting for a street widening project, they demonstrated compassion for the 56th and Randolph neighborhood and support for each other.

Craig Aldridge (*Engineering Services*) After a recent open house regarding the Old Cheney widening project, Miki personally received more compliments from citizens about Craig than any other government employee she has known. Under difficult circumstances and with a tough project, he found a way to relate compassionately to the affected neighborhood.

Finally, inadvertently omitted from last month's "initiative" Strong Lincs is Jesse Hoage (*Street and Traffic Operations*). Jesse assisted with the 10th and "O" Street water main break and definitely deserves recognition for all his efforts!

The next workplace principle will focus on **professionalism**. Nominations are due to Miki by May 11.

Service Awards

The City of Lincoln Service Award ceremony honors employees who have completed 10 or more years of City service. A total of 64 PWU employees will be recognized at this year's ceremony, to be held at 8 a.m. Tuesday, May 15 at Windsor Stables, 1024 "L" St.

Top PWU honorees include:

45 years of service:

Bill Nass – Engineering Services

Jerry Hockemeier – Water

40 years of service:

Karen Sieckmeyer – Management

Wayne Burcham and

Rod Edson – Engineering Services

Keith Luedtke and

Stanley Roberts – Water

Rick Shibata – Wastewater

Other employees recognized for their years of service include: seven employees for 35 years, 10 employees for 30 years, seven employees for 25 years, eight employees for 20 years, six employees for 15 years and 19 employees for 10 years.

Thank you to all of our award recipients!

February Mayor's Award of Excellence

PWU Street Operators Douglas Miller, Gale Ogg, and Lance Sittner were awarded the Mayor's Award of Excellence for February at the March 12 City Council meeting. The team has a combined total of 60-plus years of City service.

Supervisor John Rausch nominated the team in the category of valor for their helpful actions concerning citizens in distress on two separate occasions – one involving the search for a missing toddler, the other was a traffic crash involving a mother and child. Rausch wrote in his nomination: "These men show the best kind of initiative. They are alert and responsive to the needs of the community we serve. I am very proud of them and feel they highly deserve the recognition of this award."



Wednesday and Thursday
APRIL 25 and 26
 Spring Safety Workshop
 Firefighters Hall

Tuesday
MAY 1

StarTran's "Star Pass" available
 Summer Youth Bus Pass
startran.lincoln.ne.gov/programs

Tuesday
MAY 15

Service Award Ceremony
 8 a.m. at Windsor Stables
 1024 "L" Street

Tuesday
JUNE 5

KFOR Taste of Home
 StarTran free shuttle service
 between Lincoln High parking
 lot and Pershing Center

Saturday
JUNE 9

Waterfest and
 Public Works Day at
 Holmes Lake Park

UPCOMING CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

The 2012 construction season
 has arrived! Stay informed on
 City projects at [lincoln.ne.gov/
 pworks](http://lincoln.ne.gov/pworks) (keyword: **projects**).



PWU participated in the annual Earth Wellness Festival March 26 and 27 at Southeast Community College. This event fosters year-round opportunities for fifth-grade students and teachers to link environmental issues with science-based curriculum in an effort to educate future stewards of the earth.

The sustainability conversation continues with the celebration of Earth Day Sunday, April 22 at several locations in Lincoln. During the afternoon celebration at Antelope Park, Watershed Management staff will coordinate a [rain barrel auction](#) to benefit the Lincoln Children's Zoo. Over 5,000 were expected to attend the Earth Day events. PWU employees developed educational activities and messages for both events that celebrate and promote Lincoln as a sustainable city.

Additional event information can be found at lancaster.unl.edu/ewf and lincolnearthday.org.

Find out more about City Departments being clean and green at lincoln.ne.gov (keyword: **Green City**).



StarTran – in cooperation with Wal-Mart, Sam's Club and Three Eagle Communications – held the 13th annual "Stuff the Bus" for Friendship Home April 13 through 15. Friendship Home provides safe and confidential shelter and support and provides women and children with the necessities to start a new life free from violence.

During Stuff the Bus, the community donates items at any one of the Lincoln Wal-Mart or Sam's Club locations. All donated items are given to domestic violence survivors through Friendship Home. In 2011, Stuff the Bus collected over \$45,000 in cash and goods for Friendship Home.

Double Roundabout Wins Prestigious ACEC Honor Award

The [double roundabout project](#) near Memorial Stadium received the prestigious Honor Award from the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) of Nebraska. The award was presented at ACEC's Engineering Excellence Awards banquet February 21. The roundabouts along Salt Creek Roadway at 9th and 10th streets opened August 13.

The project was finished three weeks ahead of schedule despite several challenges. Through the outstanding efforts of Olsson Associates, Ourston Roundabout Engineering and PWU, the double roundabouts have maximized traffic flow functionality and safety. More information is available at acecnebraska.org.

56th and Elkcrest Water Main Breaks

On average, 120 water main breaks occur each year. Response to water main breaks and customer issues is a 24/7 job. Lincoln Water System staff take this responsibility very seriously, knowing that being without water for domestic and fire protection purposes is a serious health and safety issue. This



Photo is an example from Public Works file.

responsibility requires staff to be on call and able to respond quickly. It is this care and concern for Lincoln residents that motivates staff to be available, to respond and to remain on duty until water service is restored.

An example of this dedicated service occurred in February. What started as a routine response to a water main break, ended 22 hours later after lengthy repairs in the 56th and Elkcrest area. While isolating a section of water main on Elkcrest for repairs, a connecting valve to a 30-inch transmission main buried 15-feet underground ruptured, releasing a large quantity of water. Crews worked quickly and creatively to contain the rupture and shut down the transmission main. Staff worked continuously until repairs were completed and water was restored to the area.

Larry Wichtendahl, Utility Supervisor, was responsible for coordinating and performing the repair work. His crew consisted of Roger Borchers, Kevin Mattox, Chuck Seuferer, Tony Robinson, Kelly Frazier and Andy Walker. Wastewater Division staff also assisted with the repairs. Through combined efforts, persistence and tireless response, the work was finished as quickly as possible in a safe manner.

Clean Water Program



We don't think about stormwater unless it is raining. Even then it doesn't seem like a big concern because it usually goes away fairly quickly. However, the water quality of stormwater runoff does have an impact on our streams and lakes.

In compliance with the Clean Water Act, the City holds a [permit](#) to discharge stormwater. That permit has requirements relating to water quality, including to present recommendations

to the City Council for enforceable water quality standards. To accomplish this, the Clean Water Program was initiated, and the Mayor appointed an 18-member task force representing a wide variety of citizen interests. The task force is meeting to consider different aspects of the stormwater quality issue and come up with recommendations for the Mayor and eventually the City Council to review and approve.

To improve the water quality of our streams and lakes, post-construction [Best Management Practices](#) are incorporated into the design of new development and redevelopments to capture and treat stormwater before it leaves the site. For more information, [visit lincoln.ne.gov](http://lincoln.ne.gov) (keyword: [clean water program](#)).

GOLDEN SHOVEL AWARD

Lipsey Construction was awarded Engineering Services' first Golden Shovel Award for outstanding construction services on the North 56th Street Water and Sewer District project. The award was presented at the PWU spring meeting March 27. This new annual award will be presented to a contractor each spring. Lipsey Construction was recognized for its teamwork, problem solving, quality product and public relations.



PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES

MARKETING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Newsletter Committee Member

Ellen Wright

ewright@lincoln.ne.gov

***Amy Cornelius-Jones**

acomelius@lincoln.ne.gov

Curt Weber

cweber@lincoln.ne.gov

Gene Hanlon

ghanlon@lincoln.ne.gov

Joshua Meyer

jmeyer@lincoln.ne.gov

Karen Sieckmeyer

sieckmeyer@lincoln.ne.gov

Kitty Elliott

kelliott@lincoln.ne.gov

***Meagan Pratt**

mnpatt@lincoln.ne.gov

Michelle Zuhlke

mzuhlke@lincoln.ne.gov

***Nick McElvain**

nmcelvain@lincoln.ne.gov

***Pam Gadeken**

pgadeken@lincoln.ne.gov

Rock Krzycki

rkrzycki@lincoln.ne.gov

Roger Tiedeman

rtiedeman@lincoln.ne.gov