

APWA REPORTER



In Lenexa, Kansas, trees are at
the root of rethinking stormwater

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Five Heart of America chapters drive the “Mid-Am” tradition

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Planning is nearly complete for the **2014 APWA Mid-America Conference & Exhibit Show**, to be held May 21, 22 & 23 at the Overland Park Convention Center, Overland Park, Kansas. 2014 marks the eleventh edition of what many of us affectionately refer to as the **Mid-Am**, and it has been a growing tradition with its members since it first appeared 31 years ago in 1983.

Common chapter issues spark Mid-America Conference

How did this tradition start? The idea began late December 1981 with the Chairman of the Missouri Chapter’s St. Louis Branch, Bryan Pearl:

“On December 17, 1981, Branch Chairman Bryan Pearl, wrote to the Kansas City Metropolitan Chapter President Kenneth Cardwell to invite representation at an exploratory meeting to discuss possible chapter interaction. Letters also went to the Kansas, Missouri and the Illinois Chapters inviting them to a two-day meeting on January 10-11, 1982 in Berkeley, Missouri. Ken Cardwell, Mike Asbury and Dave Holland represented the Kansas City Metro Chapter at the meeting.

In particular, Pearl and Cardwell outlined three issues

of concern to the Metro St. Louis Branch: support for continuing education events, joint chapter meetings, and expanding membership to utility and county public works officials. They cited difficulty in obtaining solid support for joint programming and abortive attempts to conduct joint meetings as rationale for holding the face-to-face meeting to discuss the chapters’ common interests.

Meeting outcomes included a plan for coordinating continuing education requests among the chapters and the APWA Education Foundation and agreement to hold two joint meetings. The first meeting was the Fall Meeting of the Missouri Chapter in October 1982, which was to include participation by the Missouri and Kansas City Metropolitan Chapters, the St. Louis Branch and the Illinois Chapter (although its representatives had not been able to attend the January meeting). The second meeting agreement was that KC Metro would host a joint meeting in April of 1983, which would include the Missouri and Kansas Chapters and the St. Louis Branch.

Within six weeks of the initial exploratory meeting, plans were underway for the new joint venture—the Mid-America Regional Conference and Equipment Show. Tentative dates of April 27-29, 1983, were reserved; the Glenwood Manor in Overland Park, Kansas, had been chosen; room rates were secured and a tentative agenda was set.”

(excerpt from: *Service in the Heartland, A History of APWA’s Kansas City Metropolitan Chapter*; Connie Hartline; ©2002)

Moving the ball forward

Probably the most important task in order to make the first conference a certainty was to gain approval from the APWA Board of Directors. The Kansas City Metropolitan Chapter set up a meeting in June 1982 with the participating chapter representatives and the national office of APWA. The chapter representatives focused on the mutually beneficial educational opportunities for those in attendance and the fact that the conference would not conflict with any of the National APWA activities. The APWA Board of Directors approved the request to hold the conference.

After several months of planning, the first conference was a successful event, with attendance approaching

500. The theme for the conference was **For Those Who Serve** and was held on April 27, 28 & 29, 1983 at The Regency Park Resort & Conference Center, Overland Park, Kansas. Two national education workshops were offered along with numerous other educational sessions of public works interest to include an impressive equipment/exhibit show.



Subsequent Mid-America Conferences proved to be successful as well:

Year	Conference Theme
1986	Serving with Excellence
1989	Managing the Future <i>(1989 marked the year that the Iowa and Nebraska Chapters joined as Mid-Am sponsors)</i>
1992	APWA/Environment – A Partnership for the '90s
1995	Taking Pride in the Service We Provide
1998	Infrastructure-Investment for the 21st Century
2001	APWA @ 2001.IPW-Interactive Public Works <i>(Due to the planning for the 2002 APWA Congress in Kansas City, the 2001 Mid-Am was moved to Columbia, Missouri – the only time it hasn't taken place in the KC metro area)</i>
2004	Public Works in a Challenging Environment <i>(With Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the subsequent relocation of the 2006 APWA Congress from New Orleans to Kansas City, it was decided to add a year to the Mid-Am's traditional three-year cycle)</i>
2008	Learn from the Past – Prepare for the Future
2011	Think, Build, Share

The Mid-America Conference and Exhibit Show offers excellent opportunities to network with the public works community, design professionals, construction contractors, and industry suppliers and vendors. It has consistently provided a wide variety of interesting programs and continuing education. In addition, the conference is complemented by an impressive regional equipment/exhibit show, with over 100 exhibitors in 2011. Sponsored by five chapters in four

states, the conference is structured for the benefit of all members of APWA and the public works industry in the region.

Mark these dates on your calendar!!

May 21, 22 & 23 in Overland Park, Kansas, is when the triennial tradition of the Mid-Am returns, bringing our fellow APWA members, suppliers, design professionals, and friends from across the public work industry to the metropolitan Kansas City area.

Members from each of the “Heart of America” Chapters have been meeting for several months to plan what is sure to be another successful conference.

Details about exhibitor and conference registration will be posted on the KC Metro Chapter website as the information becomes available: <http://kcmetro.apwa.net/MenuHomepage/144/2014-Mid-America>.

We invite you to join your Mid-America public works industry peers next May!

The 2014 APWA Mid-America Conference Co-Chairs

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