



**2023  
EXCELLENCE  
IN  
EDUCATION  
AWARD**

**GARY BROWNING**

**March 4, 2024**



March 4, 2024

APWA Public Works Selection Committee  
American Public Works Association  
1200 Main Street, Suite 1400  
Kansas City, MO 64105-2100

Re: 2024 Excellence in Education Award - Gary Browning

Dear Awards Selection Committee,

The APWA Ohio Chapter is pleased to nominate Mr. Gary Browning, Operations Administrator – Utilities with the City of Dublin, Ohio, for the 2023 APWA Excellence in Education Award. Gary is a talented and dedicated volunteer who is willing to lend a hand whenever needed. He has served on the Central Ohio Branch board for 2 years and is the current Vice President of the board. His commitment to planning educational events at the branch level that target a range of opportunities for different experience levels has helped to broaden the quality of the Ohio Chapter's educational opportunities and has assisted us with reaching additional communities.

An APWA member since 2016, Gary has since engrained himself as a valuable member to the Central Ohio Branch. Starting as a seasonal employee at the City of Dublin in 1996, Gary has since worked his way up to his current position. In 2007 Gary became a supervisor at the City and in 2016 took on his current role. Gary's current responsibilities as the Operations Administrator for Utilities include overseeing the sanitary and storm utilities and fire hydrant maintenance. He also oversees streets and is a key member in the City's snow and ice team. In this role, he is responsible for developing and training staff, assisting staff with obtaining their commercial driver's license (CDL), and operational training. Gary's understanding of the educational opportunities required for both "boots on the ground" staff and higher-level management has allowed our Branch to host a multitude of events such as: Wildlife in our Communities - Friend or Nuisance? and the Fire Hydrant Roadshow.

In addition to Gary's day-to-day responsibilities with the city, and serving on the Central Ohio Branch board, he also serves on the National Transportation Committee and recently was invited to join the Workforce Development Committee for APWA. In his role on the National Transportation Committee, he serves an active role in committee meetings, assists with writing blog posts and Reporter articles, and as a reviewer of APWA's *"Taking it to the Streets"* handbook. His role on this committee continues to exemplify Gary's commitment to APWA and dedication to disseminating information across different chapters and municipalities.

Attachments to this nomination detail Gary's many accomplishments. They reflect the care he has put into bolstering the Central Ohio Branches educational opportunities and his work towards sharing these unique training opportunities with other APWA Chapters through his work on his APWA Reporter articles. These articles have helped to exemplify the Ohio Chapter's emphasis on educational opportunities for a wide range of staff. We are excited to see what new and exciting training opportunities Gary has for 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Nina Duerk, P.E.  
Ohio Chapter APWA President-Elect



## PROFILE

I am a dedicated public servant with over 28 years of experience. I believe in a leadership-based management philosophy, striving to exceed organizational needs while working to maintain employee morale. The importance of continued growth is crucial to the positive, effective and efficient growth of the organization and self.

Currently I provide overall management and supervision of Engineering/Street and Utilities Operations supervisors and maintenance staff.

## CONTACT

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614.359.1604

WEBSITE:  
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EMAIL:  
[browgd@icloud.com](mailto:browgd@icloud.com)

## EDUCATION

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### John Glen School of Public Affairs (OSU)

I studied to earn my certification in Certified Public Manager (CPM). The CPM greatly developed my professional skills and abilities. I also obtained credentials in Lean Six Sigma.

### Ohio LTAP/TTAP

Road Scholar Level 1,2,3

I completed the program as the second in the state for Road Master. Topics of study included all items with Public Works with a focus on street and utility maintenance.

### Ohio University

Certificate classes at our Dublin Ohio branch for topics related to Human Resources and staff management.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

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### City of Dublin Ohio Operations Administrator

4/2016–Present

### City of Dublin Ohio Supervisor

4/2007–4/2016

### City of Dublin Ohio Maintenance Worker

10/1996–4/2007

### City of Upper Arlington Ohio Maintenance Worker

6/1994–1/1996

## DUTIES

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Primary duties involve management of maintenance operations of front line field supervisors and their subordinate staff in the Divisions of Engineering/Street & Utilities Operations.

Continued effort to ensure adherence to division rules, city/state/federal applied regulations, policies, and procedures.

## **SKILLS SUMMARY**

- Certified Public Manager
- Microsoft Office
- Cityworks
- KRONOS
- Confined Space Entry/Rescue
- Emergency Management
- Conflict Resolution
- CBA Management
- Training Instructor
- Equipment Operator
- Work Zone Traffic Control
- First Responder
- Snow and Ice Management
- Class A, B ELDT CDL training
- PACP/LACP/MACP certified
- Risk Management
- Volunteer

## **HOBBIES**

I enjoy spending time outdoors exploring and trying new things with my children and family members. I also work as an equipment operator for an Ohio farmer that manages 3000+ acres.

Work includes assigning projects and prioritizing assignments in relation to daily operations of public services including the maintenance of public streets, snow/ice operations, sanitary sewer maintenance, storm water conveyance, residential solid waste, and hydrant maintenance.

Investigate and respond to citizen complaints regarding city services. Roadway concerns, flooding/drainage concerns, potential illicit discharge and sanitary SSO and WIB events.

Networking and communicating with other city and state support services needed to effectively maintain public roadways and utilities.

Assists in the development and preparation of the budget; monitors and assesses expenditures of operation funds.

Perform logistical tasks utilizing computer software; completing reports and specialized assignments by using job specific software - Cityworks, Esri Arcgis, MS Office.

Maintaining employee payroll and leave scheduling.

Conducting hiring and onboarding of new employees.

Addressing corrective actions up to and including termination.

Application of the local collective bargaining agreement.

Provide support of special events and city festivals.

## IDENTIFICATION OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Gary has focused on assisting with planning cost-effective training and educational opportunities for APWA members that may target varying level of staff. Gary has focused on providing thoughtful opportunities for “boots on the ground” staff. These opportunities have allowed staff members to network and share ideas to assist municipalities across the Central Ohio region with idea sharing to assist each other in solving very similar problems.

### ***Key Educational Events***

Gary has hosted many educational events for the Central Ohio branch throughout 2023. Two of these events are highlighted within this nomination: *Wildlife in our Communities - Friend or Nuisance?* and *The Fire Hydrant Roadshow*.

These two are specifically discussed herein, as Gary has worked to share these educational events with other members of APWA through articles he has had published in the APWA Reporter. (included as an appendix to this nomination). In December 2023, The Fire Hydrant Roadshow article highlighted the unique training opportunity. Gary hosted the event at the local Tolles Career & Technical Institute to engage students in the catering preparations for the event. Additionally, this allowed the Central Ohio Branch to invite fire and EMS students to participate in the event which ensured we were showcasing public works employment needs.

The Fire Hydrant Roadshow was not intended as a sales pitch, but it was an opportunity for public works employees to learn how to safely and efficiently disassemble hydrants and valves for repair and perform maintenance. To better reach participants and improve on the Fire Hydrant roadshow, Gary had all participants grade each presenter, the overall course, and course content on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). Gary’s workshop achieved an overall score of a 4.7, a huge success for the program! Feedback from the presenters and Tolles Technical Institute highlights the success of the educational offering:

- *Jamie Mathew, Core and Main: “The Hydrant Roadshow was a great opportunity for multiple municipalities to gather together with different manufacturers while providing operations training. It was a good opportunity to award credit hours to operators while also providing professional face time for me to represent my company.”*
- *Paul Thatcher, Ferguson Waterworks: “A big thank you to Gary for allowing us to help him assemble our vendors to participate in the Hydrant Roadshow! Any opportunity to assist and provide education and training is always welcome and consistent with our overall goals. Enabling our customers to work safer and more efficiently benefits everyone.”*
- *Chef Gregg Needles, Tolles Technical: “The opportunity for my students to participate in the catering request was very impactful and timely for them given our current curriculum. Currently, they are working on food safety and adapting a menu to meet class needs. This opportunity provided a real-world, hands-on application.”*

Additionally, Gary authored an article for the February 2024 APWA Reporter which highlights another educational opportunity he was integral in planning - *Wildlife in our Communities - Friend or Nuisance?* This article has been included in draft form as an appendix. Gary invited Dublin’s

Nature Education Coordinator, Barbara Ray, to teach important principles such as: supporting public education, reducing human-wildlife conflicts, and encouraging responsible behavior when interacting with wildlife. This event worked to teach public works employees how to address and manage encounters with wildlife effectively and safely and leads to sustainable management of wildlife in urban environments. This event was provided in a natural setting, the Scioto Grove Metro Park. Participants of the event were encouraged to BYOT (bring your own toys!). After the event, participants of the class immersed themselves in nature, taking advantage of the beautiful day at the Metro Park, partaking in the park amenities and networking with fellow attendees of the class.

This event was unique in the delivery of information as class participants were given the opportunity to share their current wildlife-encounter issues in a round-table type discussion. Ms. Ray then helped the class with identifying strategies for prevention of these issues and mitigate future concerns. As urban sprawl continues to expand into more natural settings across Ohio, the Central Ohio Branch would like to continue to build upon these teachings of conservation, habitat protection, and sustainable practices to protect the public and wildlife and the role that public works employees have in this effort.

At the conclusion of the class, additional wildlife resources were provided to attendees to continue their learning and process improvements. These resources included the Ohio Community Wildlife Cooperative, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Beaver Institute, and the National Wildlife Federation. Additional trainings were also passed along to our members, included in the appendices.

Gary is an instrumental part in providing key training annually to Dublin employees including Commercial Drivers License training for class A and class B CDL. Training is completed as identified in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration – Early Level Driver Training (FMSCA ELDT) guidelines.

The second largest training opportunity that Gary also assists with is the City of Dublin's Snow Go program. All employees' that are assigned roles in snow and ice duties complete one day of training at the beginning of each snow season. This day is referred to as Snow Go Day. Snow Go Day begins with a 2-hour class presentation covering many topics such as operator safety, equipment operations, best practices and communication. Training is communicated in an instructor led environment by power point presentation. Senior team members are also engaged in knowledge transfer sharing real life examples to new/less experienced operators. Following the in-class presentation trainees are then guided outdoors where they are able to participate in the annual snowplow Road-eo. Road-eo activities include a snowplow operator's course for CDL operators and non-CDL operators, front-end loader operator's course, backhoe operator's course, polartrac operator's course and a Fleet Maintenance activity. These challenges provide a great opportunity for operators to brush up on their skills, familiarize themselves with the trucks, show off their maneuverability talents, and have a little fun. Judges score the participants' performance and prizes are awarded. Gary is essential to ensuring these trainings are completed yearly for the City's staff and is plays a key role in disseminating knowledge.

### ***Educational Challenges***

The APWA National website was a huge hurdle to overcome when organizing these educational opportunities. The original date for the Wildlife in our Communities - Friend or Nuisance? event was in August. When the website was still not back up and running by mid-July, the Central Ohio Branch Board had to make the tough decision to postpone the event. Due to availability of Tolles

Technical and Scioto Grove Metro Park, and deposits for rooms already being paid, both events occurred in October. Based on past experience, the Central Ohio Branch see's best attendance at events when they are spaced approximately a month apart. The fact that both events were so successful, despite the proximity of the events to one another and issues attendees had when registering on the website, speaks volumes to the quality of educational opportunities that Gary is hosting.

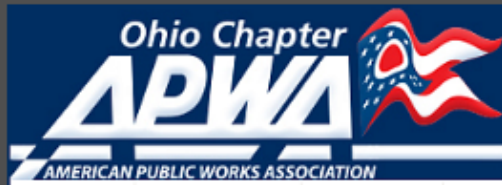
Educational challenges faced and their approach have been detailed in Gary's APWA Reporter articles.

Gary also faced challenges with education at the City of Dublin when the CDL requirements were changed in 2022 and he was responsible for ensuring the City's drivers met the current requirements and any new drivers were trained meeting the new requirements. Once implementing these changes at the city, he has assisted the Central Ohio Branch with hosting multiple webinars to educate other municipalities on the new requirements. These trainings were hosted with assistance from the Ohio Department of Transportation's Learning Technical Assistance Program. Gary also wrote an article for the APWA Reporter to aid in guiding other entities effectively through the process. Many communities across Ohio have personally reached out for guidance and have successfully completed the steps due to Gary's effort.

### ***Conclusion***

As highlighted in the APWA History section of the website, APWA was founded as the merger of the American Society of Municipal Engineers (AME) and International Association of Public Works Officials (IAPWO). As such, and due to the makeup of the Central Ohio Board, a lot of the educational opportunities being provided were focused on Professional Development Hours for Engineers. Gary has worked, and continues to work, to provide equal opportunities for public works staff. He even works to suggest small tweaks to other events, such as our social events, to engage other facets of the public works community. Having a multi-dimensional APWA Chapter is important to the future growth and longevity of the Chapter. Through Gary's educational opportunities, he has helped to highlight the need of engaging "boots on the ground" staff in APWA to managers and continues to build a more diverse membership for our chapter.





## Hydrant Roadshow



Location: Tolles Technical Center 7877 US-42 Plain City, Ohio

Class Time: 8 am - 3 pm

Cost: \$25 (includes boxed lunch) **Please note if you require a vegetarian option.**

Date: October 12th

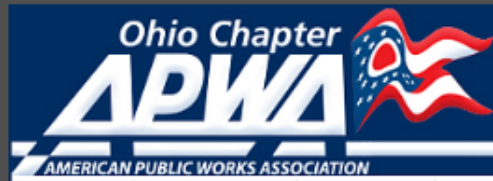
Please come join us for the first ever Fire Hydrant Roadshow!! We are presenting a day of operation training on fire hydrant and valve maintenance, repair and replacement. Representatives from Mueller, Kennedy, Clow Eddy, will be present providing overview on their individual products.

This will be a great opportunity for your hydrant technicians that are just learning as well as seasoned hydrant technicians. Representatives from Core and Main and Ferguson Waterworks will be onsite to answer any purchasing questions as well. Class is limited to the first 50 attendees so sign up fast!

Questions? Contact Gary Browning at [gbrowning@dublin.oh.us](mailto:gbrowning@dublin.oh.us)

[Register Here!](#)





## Wildlife in Our Communities: Friend or Nuisance



Location: Scioto Grove Metro Park, 5172 Jackson Pike Grove City, OH 43123

Speaker: City of Dublin Education Coordinator, Barbara Ray

Class Time: 11 am - 12:30 pm

Cost: \$20 (includes boxed lunch) **Please note if you require a vegetarian option.**

Date: October 26th, 2023....  
**Sign-up soon!**

Questions? Contact Gary Browning at [gbrowning@dublin.oh.us](mailto:gbrowning@dublin.oh.us) or Nina Duerk at [nina.duerk@strand.com](mailto:nina.duerk@strand.com)

**Come join APWA for a day of nature education and an opportunity to enjoy Scioto Grove Metro Park!**

Come enjoy a day of nature education with Barbara Ray at the beautiful Scioto Grove Metro Park Lodge in Grove City Ohio. Discussion items may cover National Wildlife Federations Community Wildlife Habitat Certification information, Typical residential calls regarding nuisance wildlife, Nuisance wildlife control tactics, ... How to protect both wildlife and residential interest, Geese mitigation, Beaver dams, Coyote dens, plus any questions that you want to ask! Class will be 11am to 12:30pm with lunch served, learning and time for your individual questions and community concerns.

Networking: 12:30 PM - 2 PM BYOT (Bring Your Own Toys!!) and stay for the day with other APWA Member to enjoy all the park has to offer including hiking, kayaking, fishing, biking, etc.

**[Register Here!](#)**

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## The Ohio Community Wildlife Cooperative Conference

November 15, 2023 @ Nationwide & Ohio Farm Bureau 4-H Center

Is your community dealing with wildlife issues? If so, this conference is designed for you.

Join Ohio community leaders and planners for a conference focused on the role of local government in managing human-wildlife conflict. This year's topics include *addressing beaver issues, urban pond and goose management, the conservation value of wildlife, best practices for backyard design to avoid conflict with wildlife, and managing pollinator plots in town.*

[Register here!](#)

*The Ohio Community Wildlife Cooperative is a partnership between The Ohio State University Extension, The Ohio Division of Wildlife, USDA-APHIS, Wildlife Services, The Great Parks of Hamilton County, the Lake Erie Allegheny Partnership, the Cleveland Metroparks, and the City of Cleveland Mayor's Office of Sustainability.*

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## Public Visibility Column

### **Wildlife in our Communities: Friend or Nuisance**

By Gary Browning, Dublin, Ohio, operations administrator

Public education about wildlife issues is crucial to foster awareness about biodiversity, conservation, and the delicate balance of our ecosystem. As it grows the public visibility of public works, it empowers individuals to make informed decisions, participate in conservation efforts, and advocate for policies that protect wildlife and their habitats.

Public education also helps to dispel myths, reduces human-wildlife conflicts, and encourages responsible behavior that contributes to the overall well-being of our counties, cities and villages.

Dublin, OH, Nature Education Coordinator Barbara Ray teaches these important principles at every



opportunity.

Ray, who received her BS in Animal Science from Ohio State University, has been Dublin's nature education coordinator since 2015. Prior to Dublin, she served as the director of education for the Ohio Wildlife Center, and she was animal programs coordinator for the Columbus Zoo from 1989-2001. As an adjunct professor at Otterbein University, she guided the captive wildlife management and environmental interpretive curriculum for the zoo and for a conservation science 4-year degree program.

The Central Ohio APWA board reached out to Ray to share her wildlife education knowledge with public works employees around Central Ohio. We felt that training public works employees on wildlife nuisance issues is vital to ensure they can address and manage encounters with wildlife effectively and safely.

With this knowledge, public works professionals can better respond, minimizing risks to humans and animals. It also prevents unnecessary harm to wildlife, promotes coexistence strategies, and maintains a balance between urban development and natural habitats.

Ultimately, this training enhances safety, reduces conflicts, and contributes to the sustainable management of wildlife in urban environments. Class participants from around Central Ohio included various departments of public service, including law enforcement.

With the topic revolving solely around wildlife, Central Ohio APWA wanted to develop and provide this training in a nature setting. The board networked with local Metro Park personnel to secure a suitable venue and settled on Scioto Grove Metro Park in Grove City.

Scioto Grove Metro Park is a 620-acre facility along the Scioto River with mature forests and scenic bluffs overlooking the river. The park is located on a scenic bend of the Scioto River and proved to be a great destination. Ray's class was held in the park's lodge.



The Grove Lodge is one of the newest indoor facilities at the park and it provided a large meeting room with beautiful floor-to-ceiling windows on three sides that overlook the park. We wanted the class location to really set the mood for the discussions to come. Networking and personal time was also offered for attendees to enjoy the amenities of the park as they chose and expand their contact lists. It was a great way to plan discussion around wildlife while taking in the fresh air of the outdoors.

Ray guided the class on how to respond and mitigate nuisance concerns from the public. Strategies included community education, humane deterrents and implementing preventive measures that promote coexistence. She also talked about the importance of public asset protection like stormwater conveyance, storm structures, open waterways, and facility management.

Animals of interest included deer, coyotes, fox, raccoons, skunks, geese, bats and beaver to name a few!



Class participants shared their current wildlife-encounter issues and worked with Ray on strategies for prevention. They also received additional wildlife resources to continue their learning and process improvements, including contact info for the Ohio Community Wildlife Cooperative, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Beaver Institute, and The National Wildlife Federation.

Did the class accomplish its goal? Definitely! Attendees said they want more continuing education/networking training opportunities like this. It is this support and feedback the Central Ohio APWA board values as we move forward in developing and implementing new and engaging training opportunities to our local communities' public service – and public works – staff. And grow our public visibility.

Central Ohio APWA feels wildlife topics are a definite subject to build upon. Conservation efforts, habitat protection and sustainable practices are the collective responsibility of all.

Central Ohio APWA respectfully encourages all local APWA branches to implement training programs that help employees continue to develop new and existing skills and abilities while providing networking opportunities for “boots on the ground” staff while expanding public visibility.

**Editor's notes:** For any questions regarding this training or others like it, contact Gary Browning at [gbrowning@dublin.oh.us](mailto:gbrowning@dublin.oh.us) or Barbara Ray at [bray@dublin.oh.us](mailto:bray@dublin.oh.us).

This monthly public visibility column showcases great examples of advocacy by APWA chapters. Will your chapter be next? Contact Mark at [mshade@apwa.org](mailto:mshade@apwa.org) to schedule your interview.

December 2023 Columns APWA Central Ohio Chapter turns Fire Hydrant Roadshow into public

visibility opportunity  
Columns

## APWA Central Ohio Chapter turns Fire Hydrant Roadshow into public visibility opportunity

Gary Browning Operations Administrator Dublin, Ohio Member, APWA Transportation Committee  
Photos by Gary Browning



Jerry Lawman, territory sales manager, Clow Valve Co.

*From the editor: Utter the phrase “workforce challenges” and many public works professionals will nod their heads, maybe even respond with an audible sigh. APWA’s Central Ohio Chapter is addressing this issue with a new event, and we think it’s worthy of a public visibility column because it shows how training and continuing education can educate not just workers but also a community.*

*Welcome City of Dublin, Ohio’s, Gary Browning to the Reporter Magazine’s public visibility column.*

As workplace succession needs rise, there is a growing need for professional development that shares knowledge and skills with the newest employees on our teams. We all know one of the best ways to enhance

knowledge and skills is through training; providing public service employees with relevant and consistent training to improve their performance and efficiency. This was the primary mindset in developing a fire hydrant maintenance, repair, and replacement training.

Central Ohio APWA board members worked together to construct and successfully complete the first Fire Hydrant Roadshow.

We wanted training to give employees a better understanding of their responsibilities and the knowledge and skills they need to do this job. We knew this would improve confidence, which would positively impact performance and give residents a better understanding of how this job protects them.

The training format was “boots on the ground” and not a sales pitch opportunity. We asked vendors to agree the roadshow was not the place to “sell” or be competitive about their products or services. They satisfyingly received and agreed to this message.

As a Central Ohio APWA board member, I reached out to area suppliers Core and Main (salesperson Jamie Mathew) and Ferguson Waterworks (salesperson Paul Thatcher) to pitch the roadshow idea. We hoped to secure the most readily used manufacturers for the area, and we won the support of Mueller Co., Clow Valve/Eddy Hydrants, and Kennedy Valve.

The next step? Secure a location to host a potentially large number of attendees, provide catering, and allow accessibility to safely take fire hydrant and valve displays indoors. We wanted to keep costs low and break even financially, so we looked to the local technical school.

We reached out to the Tolles Career & Technical Center, and they said, “yes.” And our roadshow was now benefiting more of the community. The technical center provided all needs, including catering from the Tolles Technical Culinary Arts students, who provided lunch and dessert. Twenty-five juniors and 18 seniors worked on meal preparation which counted as part of their daily participation grade. AND, we invited fire and EMS students to participate, so it turned out to be a great way for students and adults to learn.

Next step? Time to advertise!

“Join us for the first-ever APWA Fire Hydrant Roadshow!!”

In addition to sharing the basics of the day, we shared that representatives from three companies—Mueller, Kennedy, and Clow Eddy—would be there and said this would be a great opportunity for just-learning and seasoned hydrant technicians.





Jason Snell, territory manager, Mueller

We hoped to attract 50 fire hydrant technicians, water distribution maintenance workers, and water distribution supervisors. We got 40! Students had the opportunity to watch how each fire hydrant and valve disassembled for repairs, and they learned maintenance items to help with asset longevity.

Roadshow attendees graded each presenter, the overall course, and content on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5

(excellent). We received a 4.7! SUCCESS! Take it from a few attendees:



Roadshow attendees

**Jamie Mathew, Core and Main:** “The Hydrant Roadshow was a great opportunity for multiple municipalities to gather together with different manufacturers while providing operations training. It was a good opportunity to award credit hours to operators while also providing professional face time for me to represent my company.”

**Paul Thatcher, Ferguson Waterworks:** “A big thank you to Gary for allowing us to help him assemble our vendors to participate in the Hydrant Roadshow! Any opportunity to assist and provide education and training is always welcome and consistent with our overall goals. Enabling our customers to work safer and more efficiently benefits everyone.”

**Chef Gregg Needles, Tolles Technical:** “The opportunity for my students to participate in the catering request was very impactful and timely for them given our current curriculum. Currently, they are working on food safety and adapting a menu to meet class needs. This opportunity provided a real-world, hands-on application.”

Attendees said they wanted more networking training like this, and we heard it loud and clear. It is this support and feedback the Central Ohio APWA board will build upon as we move forward in developing and implementing new and engaging training opportunities for our local communities’ public service—and public works—staff.

Central Ohio APWA encourages all local APWA branches to implement training programs that help employees continue to develop new and existing skills and abilities while providing the opportunity for networking for “boots on the ground” staff and expanding public visibility. Using local technical schools and inviting student participation will not only provide cost savings, it will also invest in their future while showcasing public works employment needs.

Gary Browning may be reached at [gbrowning@dublin.oh.us](mailto:gbrowning@dublin.oh.us).

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