

# Texas APWA Reporter

NEWSLETTER

The Magazine of the Texas Public Works Professional

JANUARY 2024

*Falling in love with...*

# PUBLIC WORKS

Wichita Falls, TX  
MPEC Multi-Purpose Event Center  
February 5-7, 2024





2023-2024

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Texas Chapter of APWA  
P.O. Box 19524  
Houston, TX 77224  
713-364-3041 office/txt  
[ChapterAdmin@TxPublicWorks.com](mailto:ChapterAdmin@TxPublicWorks.com)

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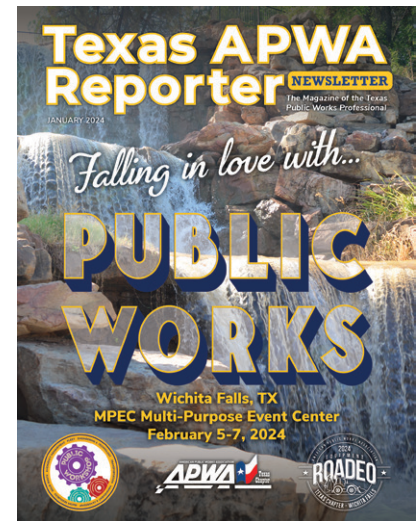
# Texas APWA Reporter **NEWSLETTER**

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## ON THE COVER

The TX-APWA Public Workshop and Equipment Rodeo is coming up February 5-6, 2024 at the Wichita Falls Multi-Purpose Events Center. The theme is a play on the city's theme to "Fall in Love with the Falls."

Photo by Joe Mabel



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# Public Workshop and Equipment Rodeo coming up in February

## WELCOME!

Please plan to participate in our Texas Chapter of American Public Works Association's 2024 Public Workshop and Equipment Rodeo held February 5-6, 2024 at Wichita Falls Multi-Purpose Events Center (MPEC).

The theme this year is **"Fall in Love with Public Works"** which is a play on the city's theme to "Fall in Love with the Falls."

Join over 300 public works professionals and your peers as we unveil the newest equipment and technologies and bring you valuable education tracks focused on public works issues.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS YEAR?

- Professional Development, Focused training, Best Practices and Technical Tours
- Exhibits with innovative technologies that can make your job easier
- Pre-Conference Mixer
- Equipment Rodeo
  - New! Women's Division (for backhoe and excavator rodeo)
  - New! Hydrant Frenzy
  - New! Cornhole Tournament
- New! Professional Headshots for attendees
- Vendor Welcome Social
- Night Cap hosted by the Young Professional Committee
- Awards Ceremony Luncheon

The Texas Chapter of APWA is proud to welcome you to Wichita Falls and hope you enjoy your stay and **"Fall in Love with Public Works."**

We look forward to seeing you all there!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Kirby".

**Jason Kirby, P.E.**

2023-2024 President, TX-APWA Chapter  
District Engineer, Fort Bend County WC&ID No. 2





# Spotlight on a PWITX Graduate and Committee Member **Gloria Martinez**

*Strategic Services Manager, Frisco Public Works Department*



**G**loria Martinez is the Strategic Services Manager for Public Works, City of Frisco. She has committed more than 20+ years in government service starting with the California Highway Patrol and started her tenure with the City of Frisco in 2008. Prior to her current position, she was an Engineering Administrative Assistant and Senior Human Resources Generalist.



Gloria leads the Administrative and Customer Service Divisions of Public Works, consisting of two supervisors, four customer service representatives, three administrative specialists, and a support services coordinator. She and her team support more than 240 men and women, operating and maintaining the Frisco Public Works infrastructure including Water Utilities (water, sewer, and reuse), Stormwater utility, Streets, Traffic Operations and the Right of Way Divisions. She is the catalyst for the Department's many successes: maintaining APWA Accreditation, processing annual budget documents, supporting numerous disaster events, leading National

Public Works Week planning, innovating many technology ideas and much more.

Last year she graduated from Class 4 of the Public Works Institute of Texas (PWITX) and afterwards was selected to join the PWITX Committee for her strong administrative and visionary leadership abilities. Gloria is actively engaged in many professional affiliations including APWA, AWWA, Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) and the Texas Municipal Leagues' Association of Hispanic Municipal Officials.

Her support to APWA and the Texas Chapter & Branch is considerable. For two consecutive years Gloria has been on the local and state planning committees for the Annual Chapter Conferences. This year she joins the APWA National Committee for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Gloria was a key member of the Frisco Public Works Department's Committee, leading to national accreditation in 2019 and now serves as the APWA City of Frisco Public Works Accreditation Manager.

The above is just partial testimony leading to her selection as the Texas Chapter Professional Manager of the Year for Administrative Management in 2022 and this year's APWA National Manager of the Year for Administrative Management.



# 2024 Public Workshop and Equipment Roadeo Conference Agenda

**FEBRUARY 4-7, 2024 | WICHITA FALLS, TX**

## SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2024

- 8 am - 7 pm .....Registration Open
- 9 am - 5 pm .....TX-APWA Chapter Leadership Training
- 8 am - 5 pm .....Setup – Roadeo/Large Equipment
- Noon - 7 pm ..... Vendor table-top set-up
- 6:30 - 8:30 pm ..... Pre-Conference Mixer

## MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2024

- 7 am - 6 pm ..... Registration open
- 7 - 8 am .....Breakfast
- 7:30 - 8 am .....Orientation for Roadeo judges/competitors
- 8 am - Noon ..... Equipment Roadeo (4 hours) New! Women’s Division
- 8 am - Noon ..... New! Hydrant Frenzy and Cornhole Tournament
- 8:30 am - Noon .....Equipment Demos
- 8:30 am - Noon ..... Tours
- 7 - 9 am ..... Vendor table-top set-up
- 7:30 am - 6:30 pm .....Vendors
- Noon - 1 pm .....Lunch
- 1 - 5 pm ..... Technical Sessions
- 5 - 6:30 pm .....Vendor Welcome Social
- 7 - 10 pm ..... Night Cap (hosted by Young Professional Committee)

## TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2024

- 7 am - 4 pm ..... Registration open
- 7 - 8 am .....Breakfast
- 7:30 am - 4 pm .....Vendors
- 8 am - 5 pm ..... Technical Sessions
- 9 am - 2 pm ..... New! Professional Headshots for attendees
- 11:30 am - 1:30 pm ..... Lunch (Chapter Membership Meeting & Awards Ceremony)
- 3:30 - 4 pm ..... Vendor recognition and prize drawing
- TBD ..... Evening Social

## WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2024

- 9 am - 1 pm ..... TX-APWA Chapter Board Meeting



# TML Update

## January 2024

**Joshua Mair CPWP-M**  
**City of Converse Director of Public Works**

I want to start this first TML Corner of 2024 by congratulating all my fellow TML members. We made it through the 88th Legislature in one piece! Surprisingly, though, when I sat down to write this article, the Texas Legislature had just adjourned the fourth-called special session with the possibility of calling a fifth. We have seen the legislature in session for 260 days, the longest legislators have been in session in Texas history!

So, what have our representatives been up to? As always, since there is only so much we can cover in a one-page article, I recommend visiting TML.org and checking out the Legislative Update tab on their main page to stay fully informed. In this article, we will focus on items related to public works in the 4th legislative session.

One piece of exciting news and, in my opinion, a show of overall fiscal responsibility: Comptroller Glenn Hegar announced the transfer of \$3.06 billion into the State Highway Fund and \$5.46 billion to the Rainy-Day Fund for a total of 8.5 billion dollars. The State Highway fund can be used for non-toll highway construction, maintenance, and right-of-way acquisitions. If you are in the transportation business, you know the increase in population in our State has created the need for increased capacity on Texas Roadways.

Moving on from Transportation, The Texas Water Development Board has opened the public comment period on the proposed Flood Infrastructure Fund State for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. They have published information that includes eligibility, minimum standards, program timeline, financial assistance categories, and prioritization information. During the 88th Legislature, S.B. 30 provided over \$624 million from the general revenue fund in additional funding to the program. TWDB anticipates utilizing at least

\$375 million during the 2024-2025 cycle to assist communities. Comments were due on January 1, 2024.

Lastly, The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) is accepting applications for its Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program. A whopping \$1.5 billion is available through the RAISE grant program meant to improve local and regional surface transportation infrastructure across the country. The RAISE program will support projects designed to improve transportation safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, mobility, community connectivity, economic opportunity, and innovation through capital awards, planning, design, and other non-construction-related projects. This grant type may benefit capital construction projects such as roads, highways, and bridges.

Remember, the best way to effect change is to stay involved with your state representative's office, and for the latest news, visit the Texas Municipal League website or stay on the lookout for the TML Corner in the Texas APWA reporter Newsletter.

#### REFERENCES

TML. (2023, December 7). TEM Legislative Update. Retrieved from Texas Municipal League: <https://www.tml.org/930/December-7-2023-Number-48>



# Unique Success

## Austin Public Works achieves 2nd American Public Works Association re-accreditation, first time joined by multiple City of Austin departments

**P**articipating in the APWA Accreditation Program is an opportunity for agencies to earn an accreditation after an evaluation and thorough review process. This program is a means of formally verifying and recognizing public works agencies for compliance with the recommended practices set forth in the Public Works Management Practices Manual.

The City of Austin Public Works Department (PWD) received its first APWA Accreditation in 2015, re-accreditation in 2019, and its second re-accreditation in 2023. Undergoing this process has helped the department enhance the quality of its public works services through rigorous self-assessment and process improvements. The program has helped promote a culture of continuous advancement, fostering collaboration and sharing of best practices within and with partner departments.

Historically, the Public Works Department approached the accreditation program as a singular agency. Two years before the recent re-accreditation, PWD began meeting with potential partner departments to demonstrate the benefits of accreditation, the level of effort required and to gauge their interest in joining the journey.

This re-accreditation was unique because PWD embarked on its journey alongside various City departments who would receive a courtesy review of their functional chapters (Chapters focused on the agency's core functions). The Public Works Department was joined by five City of Austin departments: Austin Resource Recovery, Austin Transportation, Building Services, Fleet Mobility Services, and Watershed Protection.

Throughout the re-accreditation process, all six departments met on a regular basis to discuss their progress,

ask questions, and share helpful tools and resources. All partner departments participated in a thorough Quality Control review of all their chapter documentation and participated in a simulated mock Evaluation to prepare them for the re-accreditation evaluation in July 2023.

“Our teams are not just dedicated to providing a transportation network that is well-built and well-maintained, but they are committed to meeting the highest standards set forth for public works organizations,” said Richard Mendoza, Director of Austin Transportation and Public Works Department.

APWA Evaluators concluded that the Public Works Department achieved full compliance and recommended re-accreditation to the council. All partner departments' functional chapters were found to be in full compliance by APWA standards. This multi-departmental effort was monumental in building stronger partnerships with public works agencies within the City of Austin.



City Council Proclamation on Nov. 30, 2023



# PWITX training continues in Frisco



Class V session 2 took place at the City of Frisco Public Library from October 24-October 27. This session had the largest number of students to date: 62! The session started on Tuesday October 24 as our host city Frisco, had graciously arranged two elective field trips for the participants. One group visited the North Texas Municipal Water District waste water treatment plan. The second group visited the central fire station where the City emergency operations center was located, followed by a tour of the public works service center.

The session had a full slate of diverse topics using 14 instructors.

Ms. Ines Roach, Program Administrator, exceeded expectations as usual: the facility space, food and audio visual support was excellent.

The next session is scheduled in the City of Austin from April 17-19, 2024 in the Permitting and Development Center.

If anyone has questions about the program, please email Ines Roach, Program Administrator, at [publicworks@pwitx.org](mailto:publicworks@pwitx.org) or check out the website at [www.pwitx.apwa.org](http://www.pwitx.apwa.org).





# Texas Chapter Awards

**T**X-APWA's Awards Program is a yearly effort to recognize outstanding individuals, teams, organizations and projects in public works across the state. The program is divided into two categories: State and Field Awards.

The State Awards cover a wide range of honors including Top Public Works Leader of the Year, Projects of the Year, the John German Award for Exemplary Service to Public Works, Professional Manager of the Year in several categories, and the John Roark Young Leader Award. The State Awards call for nominations typically occurs in February after the Public Workshop with nominations usually due in April. The awards are presented in a ceremony at the Annual Conference in June each year.

The Field Awards honor the individuals and teams getting the day-to-day work done in the field and include Equipment Operator of the Year, In-House Projects of the Year, Operations

Excellence Award and Field Excellence Award. The call for nominations for the Field Awards is typically in September with nominations due in November. A ceremony to present the awards is held at the Public Workshop the following February. Nominations were due November 10, 2023, and the awards will be presented at the 2024 Public Workshop in Wichita Falls on February 4-6, 2024.

The Chapter's Awards Committee administers the awards program. It is co-chaired by Cesar Molina and Matt Froehlich and includes half a dozen other volunteers who assist in reviewing and ranking nominations. The Committee is always looking for volunteers to help judge, particularly volunteers from the public sector. If you are interested in participating or have questions about the program, please contact Cesar at [cmolina@half.com](mailto:cmolina@half.com) or Matt at [mlfroehlich@bgeinc.com](mailto:mlfroehlich@bgeinc.com).

## Southeast Branch Golf Tournament

**W**e couldn't have asked for a better day for the Southeast Branch Annual Golf Tournament. Hosted at the Quail Valley Golf Course in Missouri City on November 3rd, over 40 teams teed off to support the TX-APWA SE Branch Scholarship Fund. The day was filled with camaraderie, laughter and hopefully no frustration with your golf game!

This year's golf tournament raised over \$20,000 for the branch's scholarship fund and operating account.

Scholarships for the D. Ray Jones Scholarships are provided in May for the fall semester, to members of the branch, their spouses, children, and grandchildren, enrolled in school. In addition to the D. Ray Jones Scholarship, the Southeast Branch offers a year-round professional development scholarship for members attending training courses, seminars or activity that is directly related to the person's current job.

Last year, the Branch was able to award 11 scholarships, in the amount of \$19,500! We are so grateful to the wonderful sponsors, volunteers, and participants the Branch has that make events like this possible!





# Southeast Branch hosts Inaugural Half Day Seminar



After being inspired by the North Texas Branch, the Southeast Branch held its first ever half day seminar and toy drive! The event was graciously hosted by Mustang CAT at their facility in Waller, Texas.

The topics had a great range to provide something for every member of APWA, including Engineering and Technology discussion over drones, Management presentation on attracting, recruiting and retaining employees, and Construction discussion on planning the startup of the Northeast Water Purification Plant, a 320 million gallon per day water treatment facility.

In addition to the sessions, the Southeast Branch Young Professionals committee hosted a toy drive for BEAR, a local organization that helps provide basin needs and supportive services for children placed in Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

Before the holidays kicked off in full force, we wanted to offer a relaxing (to some) round of golf! All attendees were encouraged to stay for a round of golf following the sessions and a delicious lunch.

We hope everyone had a wonderful time and thank you to our gracious speakers for taking time out of your day to teach us all something new. See you again next year!

Please visit our LinkedIn for more information on upcoming events and updates: [www.linkedin.com/company/tx-apwa-southeast-branch/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/tx-apwa-southeast-branch/)





# Waller Creek Tunnel: Marking a Milestone

The City of Austin Watershed Protection Department recently celebrated the completion of the Waller Creek Tunnel. On November 30, key figures including department leaders, City staff, engineers, contractors, and contributors gathered to commemorate this milestone.

During the event, attendees had the opportunity to tour the Waller Creek Tunnel Inlet Facility. The occasion featured light refreshments, an informative presentation, and musical performances by the Eastside Kings band.

Tunnel construction began in 2011 and flooded for the first time in May 2015. It took until 2019 for all components, such as the 4th and 8th Street inlets, to be finalized. Situated 70 feet below ground and spanning 5,600 feet from Waterloo Park to Lady Bird Lake, the tunnel reduces the floodplain along Waller Creek. With a diameter of 22 to 26 feet, it captures floodwaters, directing them into Lady Bird Lake. This helps mitigate flood risks to buildings and roads, improves water quality, and enhances wildlife habitats along Waller Creek.

Beyond its technical significance, the tunnel's creation has led to revitalization efforts in the Waller Creek District. Thanks to the tunnel, businesses, governments, and nonprofits are able to invest in both private and public projects, including 37 acres of parks and open space. Construction for The Confluence, Phase 2 of the Waterloo Greenway, began in spring 2023, creating a continuous hike and bike trail and improving the appearance, stability, ecology, and water quality along Waller Creek.

Commemorating the Waller Creek Tunnel's completion goes beyond recognizing an incredible engineering feat. It's a testament to its crucial role in fortifying Austin against flooding, a collective achievement made possible by the efforts of everyone involved. For more information about the tunnel, visit [AustinTexas.gov/department/waller-creek-district-and-tunnel](https://AustinTexas.gov/department/waller-creek-district-and-tunnel).



Pictured left to right: **Jorge Morales**, current Director of Watershed Protection Department, City of Austin; **Richard Mendoza**, Current Director of Transportation and Public Works Department, City of Austin (TPWA Board Member); **Howard Lazarus**, former Public Works Director, City of Austin; **Channy Soeur**, Owner, CAS Consulting and Services, Inc.; **Joe Pantaleon**, former Director of Watershed Protection Department, City of Austin







# TALKING POINTS

## JANUARY 2024

### US GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

- If you missed the Engineering & Public Works Roadshow's virtual call last month to invite APWA chapters to work with ASCE and ACEC state leaders to expand the Roadshow to local events, you may watch the recording online. The Roadshow wants to hold more events and we need chapters to collaborate on the local level with ACEC and ASCE to accomplish this goal.
- Congress returns January 8 and so does the APWA Washington Report, but you don't have to wait for the Washington Report to learn what Washington DC is doing to affect public works. Always check for updates and breaking news from APWA Government Affairs on **X** and **LinkedIn**.
- January 9 is the next meeting of the National Homeland Security Consortium. APWA—along with two dozen other national organizations focused on public safety, emergency preparedness, and public health—meet twice each year to collaborate on common priorities and best practices. APWA member Mike Millette, Public Works Director for South Elgin, Illinois, represents APWA in this capacity while Government Affairs Manager Marty Williams provides staff support.
- Have outreach and advocacy ideas? Let us help. Contact Director of Government and Public Affairs Andrea Eales to schedule a training or brief. Andrea's email is [aeales@apwa.org](mailto:aeales@apwa.org).

**ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS ROADSHOW**  
INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS



### EDUCATION

- The fall/winter chapter certificate program season has concluded. In 2023, chapters offered 19 sessions of APWA's five certificate programs. We are already planning for fall 2024. As these programs are very popular, early planning is advised. If chapters are interested in holding a certificate program locally, they should contact [education@apwa.org](mailto:education@apwa.org).
- The Leadership and Management Successful Supervision Framework is now available in APWA's Resource Center. This Framework is dedicated to enhancing employee productivity, satisfaction, and engagement.
- The DEI Network invites you to join our group and take a significant step in shaping the future of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion within APWA and the communities we serve. If you are interested in learning more or would like to join, please email April Jones at [ajones@apwa.org](mailto:ajones@apwa.org).



### CERTIFICATION

To enhance exam security, we have implemented the use of secure password delivery software. This allows us to send

proctor login credentials via a 1-time use link. The link can only be opened by the recipient and cannot be forwarded without invalidating the link. This will allow us to ensure passwords cannot be shared amongst proctors and candidates while allowing us to generate more secure passwords.

The CFPF Council approved CFPF sample questions that were made available to candidates in December.

For more information, please contact the certification team at [certification@apwa.org](mailto:certification@apwa.org) or visit our certification page at [www.apwa.org/education-careers/certification](http://www.apwa.org/education-careers/certification).

### MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

#### 2024 NORTH AMERICAN SNOW CONFERENCE REGISTRATION OPENS SOON

Help APWA spread the word about the 2024 North American Snow Conference taking place in Kansas City, Missouri at the end of April. Highlights you can share in your upcoming communications include:



- The 2024 Snow Conference Photo and Video Contests are now live. This year's theme, **Show Us Your Heart**, is all about showcasing how public works professionals put their hearts into snowfighting each winter. Prize information, deadlines, and other details are viewable here.
- Registration will open mid-January. Event details about this year's educational program, Tech Tours, networking events, and more will be available at [apwa.org/snow](http://apwa.org/snow) when registration opens.

Don't forget to use our #Show4Snow hashtag in your social media posts about the Snow Conference!

### CONFERENCES

#### NORTH AMERICAN SNOW CONFERENCE & PWX

The NASC Program Review Committee met in Kansas City in November to make final selections. Speakers have been notified of their selection, and we are moving forward in the planning process.

The PWX Program Review Committee will meet in January to make final selections and plan the education program for the conference.

**MEMBERSHIP**  
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Questions, comments, feedback: [ChapterAdmin@TxPublicWorks.com](mailto:ChapterAdmin@TxPublicWorks.com)