

# THE MUNICIPAL

*The Premier Magazine For America's Municipalities*

February 2017

## Streets & Snow

**INSIDE:**

HLA Snow

Diverging Diamonds

Forecasting the Storm

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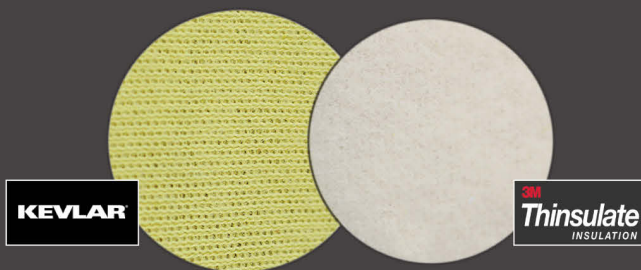
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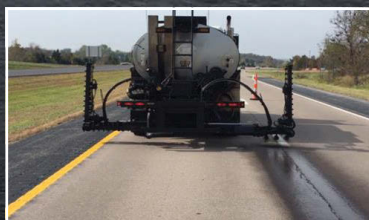
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#### ON THE COVER

Horst Welding and its three divisions — HLA Attachments, HLA Snow and Horst Wagons — specialize in providing attachments and other equipment that fulfill the needs of a variety of tasks. From snow and debris removal to moving heavy objects and material, municipalities have been turning to Horst Welding for years.







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[WWW.THEMUNICIPAL.COM](http://WWW.THEMUNICIPAL.COM)

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# Innovations cutting costs, overtime



Sarah Wright | Editor

**A**NOTHER SEASON OF SNOW-fighting is underway, with most of those in our readership—those of us who receive snow, anyway—having received some decent snow events already. And with winter's return, so too comes the long hours spent clearing the way for citizens' commutes.

As noted in *The Municipal's* November 2016 issue, several departments are beginning to turn to technology to save time and money in those efforts. For example, Maryland has begun employing infrared lasers to evaluate road conditions, namely to determine pavement and air temperatures and make the calls on how best to use its materials. These infrared lasers are a part of 42 new road sensors, which have been attached to overhead signs and poles along the state's highways, and can evaluate the thickness of water, snow or ice within a millimeter. Pretty neat, huh?

In an interview with WTOP Nov. 18, 2016, Charlie Gischlar, Maryland State Highway

Administration spokesman, stated, "It's going to increase our inventory management, so we'll have a better idea of what goes in, what's coming out, how much per lane-mile."

Determining how best to use material and manpower has become the name of the game for many public works and street departments across the country. Some managers, as writer Barb Sieminski discovered, are even bringing in private weather forecasters to pinpoint when weather events are moving into their respective areas to decide when to call in drivers and other staff members. These forecasters also provide a head-start with advance notification that allows staff who might live outside of their municipality ample time to drive in safely ahead of the storm. You can learn more by checking out the story on page 26.

Of course, some cities and towns might be interested in following Holland, Mich.'s example, namely banish snow and ice completely—no snowplows necessary. And what Holland is doing isn't exactly new technology either. Holland installed its first section of heated sidewalk back in 1988 before adding on, creating what is now the largest publicly owned snowmelt system in the U.S. It's been a boon for the city's downtown by drawing in not only shoppers, but businesses. Denise Fedorow shares more on this unique system and similar ones in her column this month on page 22.

Snowmelt systems are definitely a concept I'd like to see spread, but I've never been one for snow and ice—at least not since heavy slush pulled me into a sizable ditch as a high schooler. I'm still crossing my fingers for widespread use of solar roads. These roadways are also supposed to prevent snow and ice buildup while providing power and even alerting drivers to potential obstacles, such as deer or moose, among other benefits.

Beyond snow-related topics, *The Municipal* will also be looking at the growing trend of diverging diamond interchanges, which have been proven to increase safety, and pervious concrete, a roadway option popular in Europe that cities stateside are experimenting with to reduce runoff and flooding.

As always we hope you find this issue of *The Municipal* helpful. Stay safe out there and happy snowfighting! **M**



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*Forget about the shovel with the HLA side discharge bucket. With a left or right discharge design, the side discharge bucket can handle a variety of materials, including sand, gravel, mulch, top soil and sawdust, while eliminating the need for awkward maneuvering. (Photo provided)*

# An attachment to tackle any job

by SARAH WRIGHT | The Municipal

**Having the right tool available can make every difference at the end of the day. Horst Welding is comprised of three divisions: HLA Attachments, HLA Snow and Horst Wagons, all of which specialize in providing attachments and other equipment that are not only versatile for a variety of usages, but provide ease of use — saving time and money.**

In addition to saving time, attachments like the HLA Power Tine pallet fork can also increase safety for workers. The pallet fork can be adjusted hydraulically to fit the different sizes of pallets or other awkwardly shaped materials, such as root balls, rocks or boulders — all from within the safe confines of a tractor cab. Tom Hall, U.S. sales manager, said, “It makes it safer since they are not having to get on and off (the equipment); they can do it within the cab.”

Like many of Horst Welding’s HLA attachments the Power Tine pallet fork can be fitted onto a variety of machinery, including tractors, backhoes and skidsteer loaders. Equipment, Hall noted, that most organizations will already have available in their yards.

Horst Welding’s wide range of products and lines satisfy a diverse array of needs. Attachments like the hydraulic rotary broom and pick-up broom will ease municipalities’ post-winter cleanup efforts, with both able to clear yards, roads or parking lots of dirt and other debris that is revealed with the melting snow. The brooms pull their weight not only in spring, but throughout the rest of the year as well and can be used for dethatching grass, summer cleanup jobs, leaf cleanup and to clear light layers of fluffy snow.

The hydraulic rotary broom features a lateral and forward float, poly gauge wheels and hydraulic angling. With 26-inch diameter wafers that are made from poly-steel, the sweeper is available in two





*Made of durable galvanized steel, HLA Snow's Scattershot will make spreading a breeze. From sand to salt, the internal agitators prevent material from clumping or building up so you get the most out of every load. (Photo provided)*



*Horst Welding's hydraulic rotary broom and pick-up broom are true four-season tools to help with a variety of cleanups, from winter debris in the spring to leaf and light snow in the fall and winter. (Photo provided)*

sizes: 72 inches or 84 inches, both of which can be angled 30 degrees to the left and right.

For more intense cleanup efforts, there is the debris grapple fork. "It is used for clearing trees and brush after storms," Hall said, noting it sees quite a bit of use in the South to cleanup after hurricanes and in the Midwest and Great Plains to recover from tornados.

For landscaping and other projects where materials, such as sand, gravel, topsoil, mulch or sawdust, need to be moved or placed, the HLA Attachments side discharge bucket will make the task a breeze. Its left or right discharge design — complete with direct hydraulic drive motors that are controlled from the cab — eliminates the need for awkward maneuvering, saving time while improving safety. It can be mounted on most makes of skidsteers and loaders, plus a three-point hitch setup is available. It is the perfect tool for parks and recreation, public works and street departments, allowing them to ditch the shovel.

Sheldon Gosine, advertising and design management with Horst Welding, noted, "There's a saying in our parts that a bucket's a bucket... implying that all buckets are the same, and that's simply not true with a HLA bucket. Aside from a variety of specialty buckets, HLA buckets are tapered; this provides better clean out, which makes them highly efficient."

Options available include high dump buckets, four-in-one buckets, tree spades, heavy-duty

stump buckets, concrete slab lifter buckets and concrete funnel buckets, to name a few. There are also specialized buckets for front-end loaders, skidsteers and telescopic handlers.

"We have at least 75 pages of products that come in all different shapes and sizes," Hall said. "We also have a lot of snow products that would be of interest to municipalities."

HLA Snow offers a selection of snowblades, including specialty blades, and snow wings, both of which feature designs that ease the snow removal process in different settings, from streets and parking lots to sidewalks. In addition to snowblades, the company's Scattershot will make short work of spreading tasks, whether your organization goes with the Singleshot or Doubleshot models.

"We have about 1,700 dealers throughout North America," Hall said, noting interested parties can reach out to Horst Welding, and it will connect you with the nearest dealer. **M**



For information, visit [horstwelding.com](http://horstwelding.com), or call (866) 567-4162.

*HLA Snow's Six-Way blade can move independently to form an angle blade, scoop or V-blade to meet a variety of conditions. It is the perfect tool to clear sidewalks. (Photo provided)*





# 'Hog Capital of the World' Kewanee, Ill.

By RAY BALOGH | The Municipal

**Secessionists in the antebellum South invoked the slogan “King Cotton” to advocate establishing the Confederacy as a separate nation.**

Kewanee, Ill., population 12,676, and its surrounding Henry County, use the phrase “King Hog” to summarize the role hog farming has played in their history and express the area’s earned reputation as “Hog Capital of the World.”

In 1947 the U. S. Department of Agriculture announced Henry County as “the greatest hog producing county in the United States,” and the good folks of Kewanee wasted little time capitalizing on the official bestowment.

That fall Kewanee hosted its first “Hog Day,” setting up livestock pens along a street in the town’s business district to showcase more than 150 of the best swine raised by area farmers.

Downtown streets were temporarily renamed after breeds of the livestock: Duroc, Hampshire, Yorkshire and others; a carnival was brought in; prize drawings were held throughout the day by local merchants; and the organizers held a hog calling contest.

The one-day event was repeated the next year before becoming a four-day event in 1949, held in late September. A decade later the festival was scheduled for the Labor Day weekend and has been held Friday through Monday of that holiday weekend for 63 years.

During that time, organizers have sold more than 2 million butterfly pork chops and pork burgers. Each year, festival volunteers serve up 30,000 portions, cooked with 300 pounds of special Hog Days seasoning powder on custom-made 24-foot grills.

The Illinois House of Representatives entered the celebratory fray on March 23, 1949, passing a resolution to “publicly express our pride in the high honor the farmers of Henry County have brought to the state of Illinois.”

The resolution noted, “Hog producers from all parts of America attend the annual Hog Days celebration in the city of Kewanee, metropolis of Henry County, to pay tribute to His Imperial Majesty King Hog and to unite

*ABOVE LEFT: The “hog castle” marks the entrance of the small one-block downtown park that serves as ground zero for the annual Hog Days festival in Kewanee, Ill. (Photo provided by Larry Flannery)*

*ABOVE RIGHT: Little Miss World Festival Queen Lucy Kuepler hosts a tea party for her porky guest. (Photo provided by Larry Flannery)*

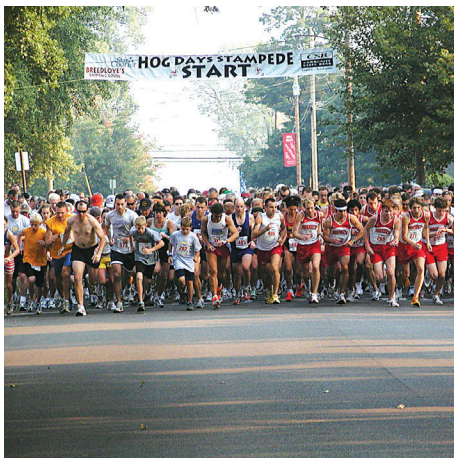
in hailing Kewanee as the Hog Capitol (sic) of the World.”

The resolution was drafted at the behest of State Rep. Frank P. Johnson, who addressed the assembly that initially greeted the resolution with “raucous laughter and derisive jeers.”

Rep. Johnson orated eloquently, though occasionally tongue in cheek, describing the importance of hog production for the town, county and state:

“I would not be true to my district or to His Imperial Majesty King Hog if I allowed those insults to go unanswered.





Hundreds of runners participate in the annual Hog Days Stampede Health and Fitness Run. (Photo provided by Larry Flannery)



A herd of hogs runs down the street during the 1955 Hog Days festival. "We now give the hogs the weekend off and race the humans instead," said Larry Flannery, co-chairperson and treasurer of the annual event. (Photo provided by Larry Flannery)

Pictured is Illinois State Rep. Frank P. Johnson who made an impassioned speech on the importance of the hog industry to not only Kewanee, Ill., and Henry County, but to the state of Illinois, leading to the passing of a resolution naming Kewanee as the "Hog Capital of the World." (Photo provided)



"It should not be necessary to remind you sons and daughters of Illinois of the significance of this great championship which the farms of Henry County have brought to our beloved state. The hog is the very foundation of Illinois prosperity and has played a vital role in the history, the economy and the development of this great state.

"Our pioneer forefathers who cleared the wilderness and conquered these prairies were nourished and sustained on a diet of hog and hominy. The boys in blue from Illinois who ran the batteries at Vicksburg, scaled the heights of Lookout Mountain and marched with Sherman to the sea were strengthened for those ordeals by rations of salt pork from the farms back home.

"We of this house take great pride in the ability of our illustrious speaker, the Honorable Paul Powell. Whence came those sterling qualities that have molded his granite character? He came from Johnson County where they weaned their babies on bacon rind and his youthful years were nurtured by a diet of hog jowls and turnip greens.

"We have praised our Illinois athletes for the great victories they have brought to our state — and rightly so. May I remind you that King Hog played an important role in those magnificent victories?


"We have been informed that the pictures of the (1949) Rose Bowl game (where Illinois' Northwestern University defeated California 20-14) are to be shown to this assembly. Study these pictures and you will observe a pigskin in every play.

"And watch carefully for the dramatic climax of that historic game. That climax came when a blond-haired youth from Kewanee, Ill., the Hog Capital of the World, scampered over the California goal line (on a 45-yard run) for the winning touchdown.

"You can appreciate Eddie Tunnicliff's magnificent achievement when you understand that the tender years of his youth were strengthened by daily breakfasts of Henry County bacon.

"And you, my colleagues from the great city of Chicago who grunted the loudest during the reading of the resolution, you in your innocence may cherish the delusion that you have little in common with the Illinois hog. I assure you that you do — plenty. Every city must have some economic justification for its existence. That was true in the ancient past and it is true today. Ships made Carthage. The wars made Rome. Beer made Milwaukee. Gold made Nome. Cotton built Atlanta. The harbor built New York. But good old Chicago was built on pork."

The resolution passed unanimously.

Though the county no longer holds the status as the nation's largest hog producing county in the nation — it ranks fourth in Illinois — the place the industry has held in the county's history is indisputable and Kewanee's Hog Days, which draws 50,000 visitors a year, shows no signs of abating. 

For more information, visit [www.kewaneehogdays.com](http://www.kewaneehogdays.com) or [www.visithenrycounty.com](http://www.visithenrycounty.com).



A competitor emerges from the muck after trying for a save during the Hog Wallow Mud Volleyball Classic, a Hog Days festival staple since 1983. (Photo provided by Larry Flannery)



Volunteers at Kewanee Hog Days have served up more than 2 million butterfly pork chops and pork burgers since the annual festival began in 1947. (Photo provided by Larry Flannery)



# Josiah White:

## *Jim Thorpe, Pa.*



**Josiah White and Jim Thorpe never met; White died 37 years before Thorpe was born.**

Yet the confluence of the two men's impact forged the town of Jim Thorpe, Pa.

White (1781-1850) was an industrialist and entrepreneur with a staggering resume of innovation and success. His efforts were indispensable in perpetuating the fledgling American Industrial Revolution.

During the War of 1812, he spearheaded the discovery of a method to burn anthracite coal. Shortly thereafter, White helped combat the country's first energy crisis — prompted by forest depletion through overlogging and rapidly increasing coal prices and firewood — by supplying the energy needs of other industrialists.

He pioneered advancements in civil engineering, mining, iron production, wire works, railroad development, water transport and boat and barge construction and shipping.

White and his partner, Erskine Hazard, founded numerous mining operations and transportation enterprises and built a transportation infrastructure to deliver passengers, coal, ores, timber and finished goods throughout the area in Pennsylvania where he would establish the town that was later to bear the famous Olympian's name.

The partners' coal and navigation companies are the earliest known example of vertical integration wherein they combined in one entity the stages of production normally operated by separate companies. They established the region's first blast furnaces and built the nation's first steel cable factory.

In 1814 the partners obtained an interest in Lehigh Coal Mine Company, which experienced considerable difficulty safely transporting its product to Philadelphia, 80 miles to the southeast. White and Hazard scoped out the mine and its surrounding geography and determined a descending wagon road from the mine's

elevated entrance would facilitate loading boats by chute and delivering the material down the Lehigh River.

The river, however, was too shallow to accommodate the loads, so they engineered a canal with a lock system to handle the boat traffic.

Commercial success grew and in 1818 the partners founded a riverside town at the bottom of the gravity railroad, naming it Mauch Chunk, a name derived from a Delaware Indian phrase meaning "bear place," probably a reference to a nearby outcropping resembling a sleeping bear.

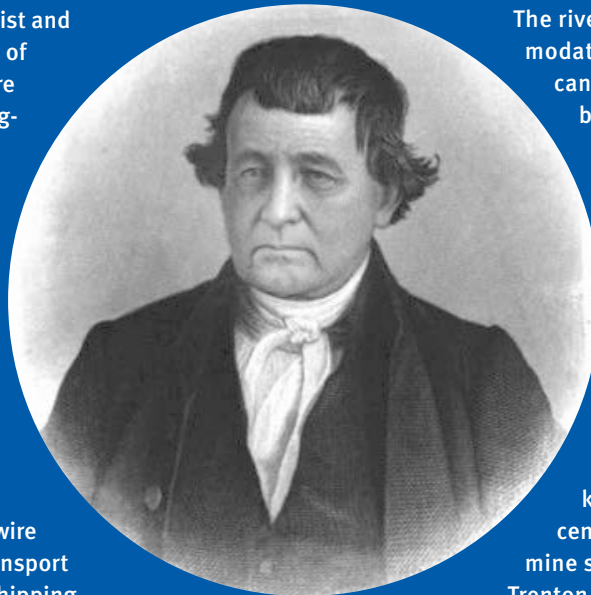
Population grew slowly at first, then accelerated as the town became known as a railroad and coal shipping center. Fortuitously situated, the local coal mine serviced Philadelphia, New York City, Trenton and cities all along the East Coast.

Legendary athlete and Olympic medal winner Jim Thorpe began his sports career as a student at Carlisle Indian Industrial School, 100 miles southwest of Mauch Chunk.

Upon his death in 1953, Thorpe's widow requested the state government of Oklahoma, Thorpe's birthplace, to erect a memorial in his honor. They refused, so she sought an alternative site, striking a deal with the neighboring boroughs of Mauch Chunk and East Mauch Chunk.

The boroughs merged, renamed the resulting municipality Jim Thorpe, obtained the athlete's remains and erected the requested monument.

The monument site contains Thorpe's tomb, two statues of him in athletic poses and historical markers describing his life story. His grave rests on mounds of soil taken from his native Oklahoma and from the Stockholm Olympic Stadium in which he won his Olympic medals. ■



*Josiah White*



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# *Focus on:*

## *Streets & Snow*



▲ **Holland, Mich.:**

*Despite the frost and ice on the trees in downtown Holland, the snowmelt system is working to keep the streets and sidewalks free of snow and ice. Holland is home to the largest publicly owned snowmelt system in the United States, and it has been a draw for downtown development. (Photo provided)*



## 4.9 Miles

Holland, Mich., has extended its snowmelt system by this amount, making it the largest publicly owned snowmelt system in the United States.



See story on page 22



# 1,000

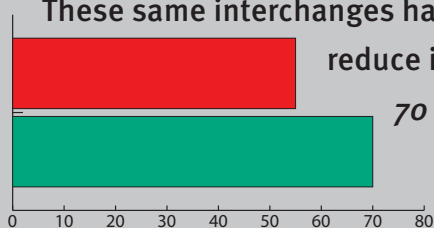
The number of gallons of water pervious concrete can absorb in 60 seconds, taking the load off municipal water systems.

See story on page 30

## 55 percent

Diverging diamond interchanges have been found to reduce overall accidents by more than 55 percent.

These same interchanges have also been found to reduce injury crashes by nearly 70 percent at the DDI ramp terminals.

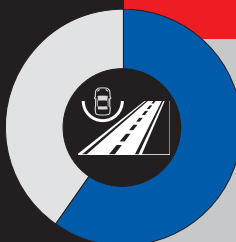


See the story on page 18

## 31 percent

The percentage of satisfaction with roads and highways among residents in Rhode Island. Michigan residents don't rate their roads and highways much higher with a 35 percent rate of satisfaction.

Source: <http://247wallst.com/infrastructure/2016/02/28/rhode-island-residents-most-dissatisfied-with-their-roads>



## 67 percent

Average amount of satisfaction seen in the 10 states spending the most per capita on roads, compared with 61 percent satisfaction among the 10 states spending the least per capita on roads.

Source: <http://247wallst.com/infrastructure/2016/02/28/rhode-island-residents-most-dissatisfied-with-their-roads>

### By the numbers

# \$1 million

The amount of savings the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation saved with its Engineering Construction Management System for highway and bridge construction.

Source: <http://www.cpbj.com/article/20161202/CPBJ01/161209946/penndot-highlights-savings-tech-contracts-in-year-end-report>

### By the numbers

# \$146,000

The amount saved by Skohegan, Maine, thanks to El Nino and a light 2015-2016 snow season.

Source: [www.centralmaine.com/2016/03/26/central-maines-mild-winter-saves-municipal-budgets-this-year](http://www.centralmaine.com/2016/03/26/central-maines-mild-winter-saves-municipal-budgets-this-year)



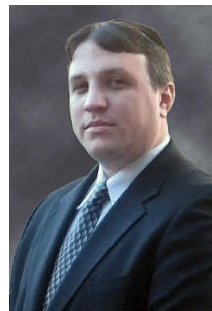


# Diverging diamond interchanges gain traction



By **BARB SIEMINSKI** | The Municipal

**Gilbert Chlewicki of Fulton, Md., deals in diamonds—the bigger the better. And in some cases, the cost runs around \$3 to \$4 million. The diamonds Chlewicki, professional engineer and director of Advanced Transportation Solutions, works with are outdoor diamonds—diverging diamond interchanges—which are trending over the nation.**



A diverging diamond interchange, also called a double crossover diamond, is a kind of diamond interchange where the two directions of traffic on the non-freeway road cross to the opposite side on both sides of the bridge at the freeway. Such an interchange was recognized by Popular Science magazine as one of the best innovations in the engineering category in 2009. Hailed as safe, less expensive

and more efficient, the DDI has been emerging in various cities.

“DDIs are a growing trend nationally, and some are making progress internationally,” said Chlewicki. “Thirty states have at least one DDI, and most others have at least one DDI project in consideration. DDIs are more commonly applied in suburban and urban areas, although they can also be placed near

**ABOVE:** Pictured is an aerial photo of the completed diverging diamond interchange at Dupont Road and I-69 in Fort Wayne, Ind. (photo provided by INDOT)

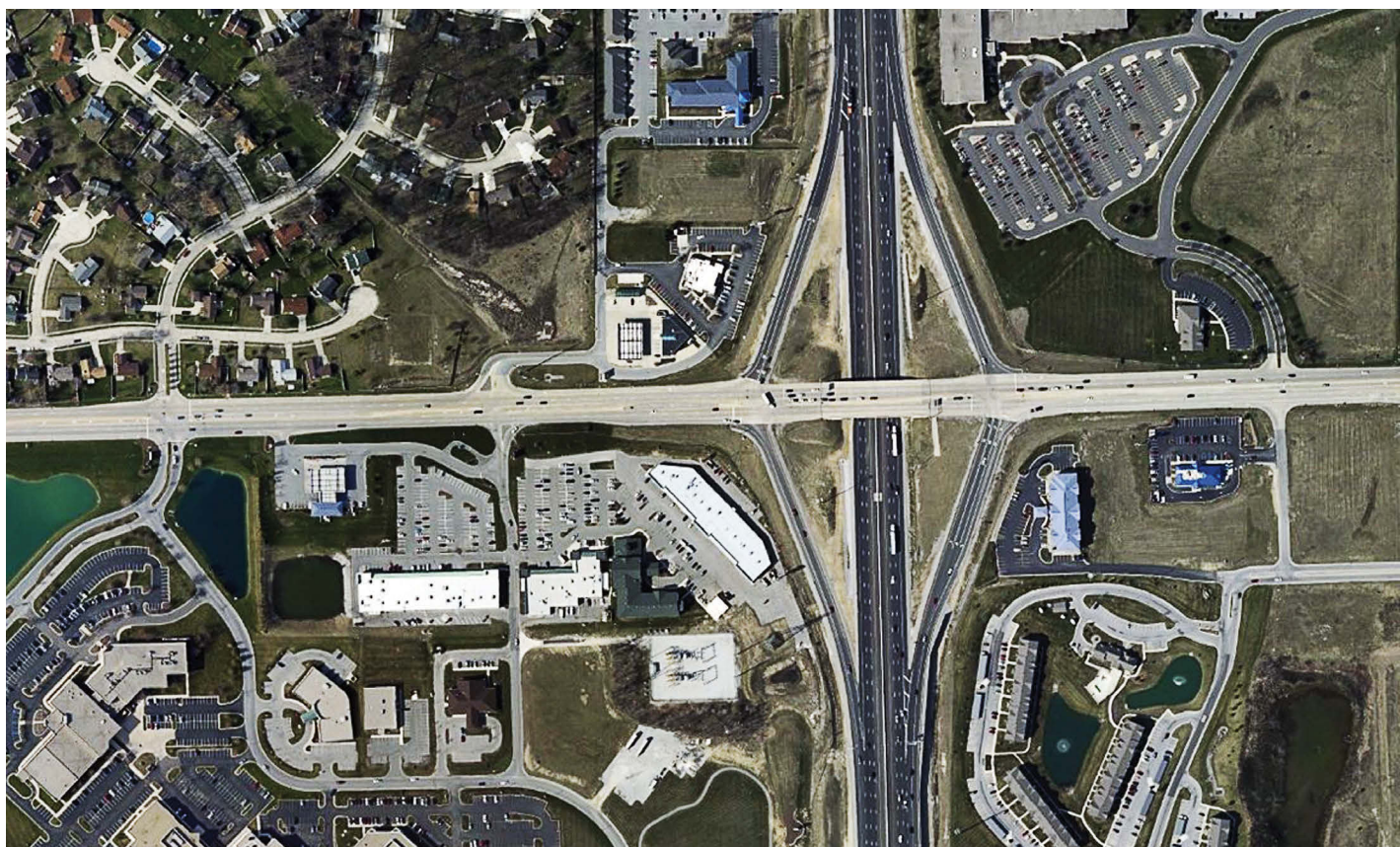
**LEFT:** Gilbert Chlewicki, director of Advanced Transportation Solutions (Photo provided by Gilbert Chlewicki)

small towns and rural areas where there is enough traffic to warrant signals.

“DDIs move traffic better, reduce crashes significantly and can save nearly \$10 million per project; it becomes a no-brainer to transportation agencies as long as they are willing to try something different. Once they try it, they like it, and the biggest barrier of trying something different is broken. There are no more excuses to not build more DDIs.”

Each year the American Council of Engineering Companies of Indiana awards its top annual road project honor—the state’s highest engineering recognition—to a city with





**ABOVE:** Pictured is an aerial view of I-69 prior to the construction of a diverging diamond interchange in Fort Wayne, Ind. (Photo provided by INDOT)

**RIGHT:** Fort Wayne's diverging diamond interchange has streamlined traffic, cutting down commute times. In general DDIs have been shown to decrease overall accidents by more than 55 percent. (Photo provided by INDOT)

the most successful road endeavor. This year Fort Wayne was the 2016 Grand Project Award winner with its \$3.5 million DDI at I-69 and SR 1 — also called Dupont Road — designed by Burgess & Niple Inc.

"We are pleased the state's first diverging diamond can serve as an example of (the Indiana Department of Transportation) seeking innovative solutions for Hoosier transportation needs while being good stewards of the taxpayers' dollars," said Susan Doell, INDOT project manager. "Receiving the ACEC award for this project is added confirmation that this was the right solution for the I-69/SR 1 interchange."

Nichole Hacha-Thomas, media relations director of INDOT Fort Wayne District, noted



that the area — complete with two hospitals, a growing suburban area, a high-traffic commercial and business district, plus an interstate interchange — was heavily congested, particularly during peak periods.

"The frequent congestion was the primary driver of the project, and while congestion relief was INDOT's primary goal, there was a safety component as well," said Hacha-Thomas. "The number of conflict points where

one car can come in contact with another are significantly reduced inside the DDI."

When it comes to getting a DDI in place, Hacha-Thomas said, "The biggest challenge was convincing stakeholders (both inside and outside of INDOT) that the DDI was the best design for the situation. A DDI won't work just anywhere — you've got to have specific conditions and the SR 1/I-69 was a perfect example of where a DDI would work!" ▶





Contractors hand-level the concrete as they complete the bridge deck overlay on the I-69/SR 1 project in Fort Wayne, Ind. (Photo provided by INDOT)

The Fort Wayne five-year project was a curiosity, said Hacha-Thomas, rather than a form of resistance, because drivers had never seen such an unusual interchange in Indiana.

"INDOT used a variety of tools to educate the public about the new interchange," said Hacha-Thomas, "including large diagrams, computer-generated simulations and more. INDOT really advocated for community buy-in. Were people skeptical? Sure. But most of those skeptics have turned into believers!"

The DDI was an overwhelming success. Commute times have been cut, congestion is no longer an issue and people are generally pleased with the interchange.

"At the one-year mark we initiated a study to determine how successful the DDI has been," said Hacha-Thomas, "and the study found that the crash frequency at the DDI has decreased, reducing injury crashes by almost half."

In the proper application, there are three main benefits to a DDI, according to Chlewicki. "First, traffic can flow better in a DDI for nearly all movements. This is due to the simplification of the traffic signals that do not have separate left-turn signal phases. These left-turn phases take up valuable time away from other movements. Left turns are much simpler in the DDI because they are direct, which also helps."


He added, "Second, DDIs have proven to be much safer than traditional diamond interchanges. Overall crashes have been reduced by over 55 percent and injury crashes have been reduced by nearly 70 percent at the DDI ramp terminals. The main reasons for this are that there are less potential conflicts of movements; each potential conflict is spread out from the next, which allows the driver to concentrate on just one potential conflict at a time; and speeds are generally slightly slower in DDIs, which allows drivers to react more easily to conflicts and reduces impacts if there is a crash."

As for the final benefit, Chlewicki said, "Third, DDIs are considerably less (expensive) than other interchange forms. The two biggest costs of interchange projects are structure costs and land. In a DDI that is retrofitted, often there is little to no structure cost. New interchanges require smaller bridges; usually between 25 percent to 50 percent smaller. This is due to not needing extra left turn lanes and/or weave lanes on the bridge."

Other cities are employing DDIs as word catches on about their benefits. Some states and cities that use them, or currently have them in construction, include Springfield, St. Louis and Kansas City, Mo.; Raleigh, N.C.; St. Peter, Minn.; and Atlanta, Ga.

DDIs and roundabouts are part of a group of innovative geometric designs that can improve traffic operations and reduce crashes at significantly lower cost, said Chlewicki.

"But there are differences, too," he added. "DDIs require traffic signals, roundabouts do not. Roundabouts slow traffic a lot more than DDIs. Pedestrian and bicycle traffic is designed differently, and DDIs are really just for ramp terminals whereas roundabouts can be used at ramp terminals, too, but they can be applied in other places as well."

DDIs are definitely not alone in shaping the way traffic moves, with Chlewicki stating, "There are other innovative intersections that are being used a lot such as the Michigan left, jughandles (most common in New Jersey), continuous flow intersections and superstreets, and a location where you can see a combination of elements is at US 26 at Route 153 (Ford Road) in Dearborn Heights (Mich.), outside of Detroit." 



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## *Holland, Mich.,*

# heats up its sidewalks



By DENISE FEDOROW | The Municipal

**It's part of the season for northern and Midwestern states: mounds of snow piled up at the corners of city streets, icy sidewalks and salty slush. It can be a drain on city resources and a problem for business owners. But the city of Holland, Mich. — among others — has come up with a solution for some of that wintry mess: a snowmelt system of heated sidewalks.**

This isn't a new concept. After all, Holland installed its first section of heated sidewalk in 1988 — paid for by a donation from local philanthropist Edgar Prince.

"He saw it in Europe and thought 'why couldn't we do it here in Holland?'" related Amy Sasamoto, interim downtown development director for the city of Holland.

They installed the first section of tubing for the heated sidewalks under Eighth Street

in downtown — one of the major shopping streets in downtown Holland. It was installed at the same time as the downtown streetscape. Sasamoto said initially they used water out of Lake Macatawa and transported it through the PEX tubing. When they extended the snowmelt system, they started transporting water from the power plant, where the water comes out heated at about 95 degrees, according to Sasamoto.

In 2015 the city extended the snowmelt system even more so that they now have 600,000 square feet or 4.9 miles of snowmelt, making it the largest publicly owned snowmelt system in the United States.

"We built a new power plant because the old one was at capacity, and that enabled us to do it," she said.

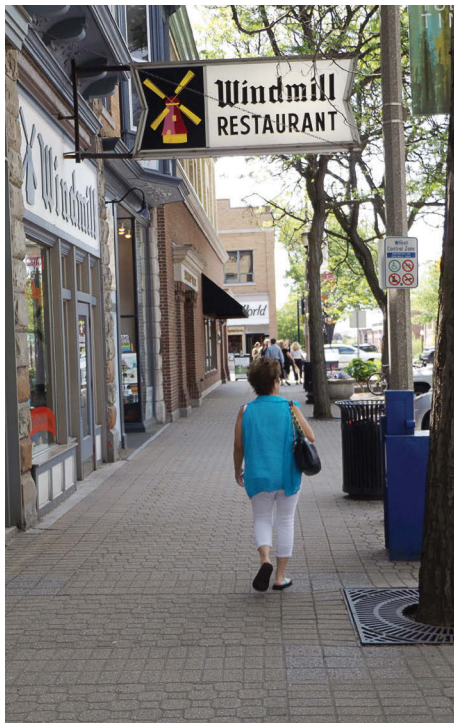
It's been a boon to downtown. "It's one of the biggest draws in downtown Holland," Sasamoto said.

### **Snowmelt systems**

There are basically two types of snowmelt systems being widely used: hydronic, which uses heated water and is the system Holland has, or electric. With an electric system, electric cables are fed into

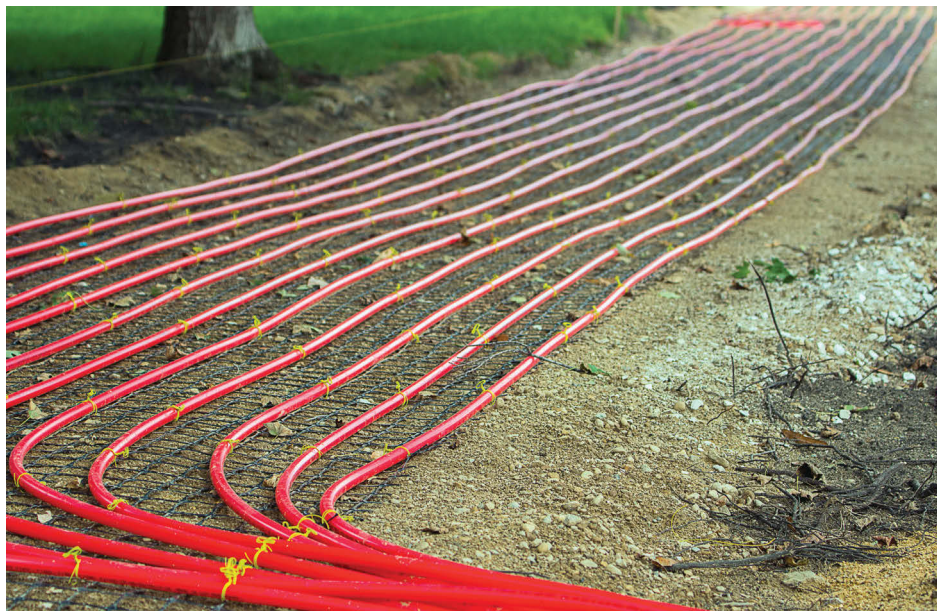


**LEFT:** Despite the frost and ice on the trees in downtown Holland, the snowmelt system is working to keep the streets and sidewalks free of snow and ice. Holland is home to the largest publicly owned snowmelt system in the United States, and it has been a draw for downtown development. (Photo provided)



**ABOVE:** A visitor to downtown Holland, Mich., strolls down a sidewalk along Eighth Street, one of the first sections of heated sidewalks. (Photo by Denise Fedorow)

**RIGHT:** This downtown Holland, Mich., street stays clear and dry even in the winter months because of the city's snowmelt system. (Photo By Denise Fedorow)



Rows of PEX, or Polyethylene cross-linked, tubing is placed under the sidewalks of Holland, Mich., to carry the heated water from the power plant to the downtown streets. (Photo provided)



concrete, or for smaller applications, electric mats can be installed.

There is also a geothermal system that uses geothermal energy to heat water under the sidewalks. The town of Klamath Falls, Ore., has been using a geothermal system.

In Holland's case, a nearby electric generator releases heat into the water from its turbines and transfers the heated water into the loops where two pumps channel the water at a rate of reportedly over 700 gallons a minute through the coils of PEX

tubing and under the downtown sidewalks. The water then returns to nearby rivers.

Without the benefit of a nearby power plant, those using a hydronic system would need a nearby boiler to heat the water.

#### Benefits and downsides

Several sources cite numerous benefits for heated sidewalks that include:

- Eliminates the need for snowplowing, freeing city employees to concentrate on other areas.
- Eliminates the need for sidewalk shoveling so there is no need for either city

employees or employees of the business to take time to shovel.

- Reduces the risk of injuries caused by shoveling.
- Reduces the risk of slips and falls by residents and customers.
- Reduces wear and tear on carpeting and flooring from snow and salt tracked in.
- Reduces the cost of salt and other snowmelt chemicals.
- Saves sidewalks from the heaving and buckling caused by freezing and thawing.
- Saves plantings from harmful salt and chemicals. ▶



- Makes good use of an industrial waste by-product (in Holland's case).
- Draws downtown development.
- Draws customers downtown in winter months.
- Eliminates the need to haul away snow mounds.

The only downside seems to be the initial cost to install the system and, depending on the type of system, the cost to operate.

The village of Oak Park, Ill., installed an electric-heated sidewalk system in 2007 as an experiment under the 100 block of North Marion Street and has determined it to be too costly at this point.

Village Engineer Bill McKenna said in a typical winter they figured it cost \$25,000 annually, which was "a little more costly than anticipated. Therefore, we haven't expanded the system at this point."

He said the costs were due to maintenance and electricity use. Although McKenna wasn't in his position when the decision to install the system was made, he said to his knowledge they did consider hydronic systems and geothermal systems as well as the electric system.

"One of the constraints we had with the hydronic system was a building to house the mechanics and equipment," he said, adding, "A hydronic system probably would've had lower maintenance costs."

Despite the village's decision not to expand, McKenna said the feedback has been great on their heated sidewalk; the customers and businesses love it.

"It's a great amenity," McKenna said, adding that now when there is snowfall going, downtown is like "night and day," with the heated block being clean and dry while the others are icy and slushy.



*This is the map of the areas served by the snowmelt system in downtown Holland, Mich., which now encompasses 4.9 miles. (Graphic provided by Holland, Mich.)*

Holland pays for its system with an annual special assessment for the property owners and adjacent properties in the snowmelt area. She called the cost of that assessment "low" and said it was "truly linked to those adjacent to the snowmelt."

According to Sasamoto, there is no downside. "I love it because it keeps people coming downtown in the winter."

She also said when people are interested in locating to Holland, the snowmelt system is one of the first things they ask about, and she said it is a definite draw to downtown business development.

If snow and ice has been a strain on your city's budget or employees' backs, or if you're looking for a way to draw more businesses to your downtown, a heated city sidewalk system might be your answer. **M**

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# Private forecasters: *Should your city be using one?*

By **BARB SIEMINSKI** | The Municipal

**With winter here, some cities want to be even more prepared for snow and ice by using private meteorological services, which hone in on specific needs and increase lead times for cities so they can respond quicker to changing weather.**

Sara Croke is the founder and president of Kansas-based Weather or Not Inc., an award-winning 24/7 weather-consulting service that delivers custom forecasts to companies and cities, especially affected by the weather. As consultants, according to Croke, their job is to fully understand the specific operational logistics of each client so they can give them time to mitigate Mother Nature's mischief.

"In other words, we need to know the answer before the client even knows he/she has a question," said Croke, adding that most of the job postings in private weather forecasting require a minimum of a bachelor's degree in atmospheric science.

"Local public weather services cannot give that level of customer service," she said. "Are they going to call out a road crew at 2 a.m. when the weather forecast changes so pavements will be pre-treated before rush hour? Are they going to update when roads and bridges will go below freezing or only mention air temperature?"

Croke added, "For example, an app or desktop system usually refers to one zip code or city. Our meteorologists know that many of the personnel who respond to winter events in the middle of the night are coming from outside those city limits. We may call a superintendent or a public works director much earlier than the snow or ice will hit their

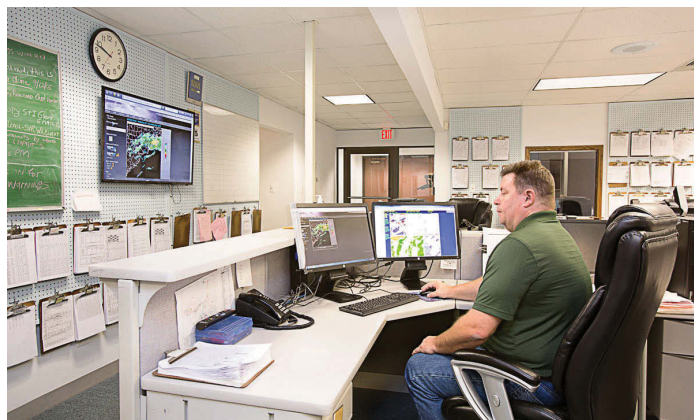
*Cities are turning to private meteorological services to make the best decisions on how to fight each storm. (Shutterstock.com)*

location so she/he can get their drivers and mechanics to the service center safely on dry roads. The same applies to those cities large enough to staff a customer call center or emergency operations center for big storms. The weather information they need may be well beyond their jurisdiction in order to bring personnel in safely."

When there are back-to-back storms, a city may choose to send its drivers and staff home to rest up before the next storm, rather than make their day longer by loading all the trucks with material. If clients tell their private meteorologist this, that weather consultant will call with an even greater lead time than usual for the clients' wake-up calls as the meteorologist will factor in the time needed to load trucks before they hit the streets.

"Usually clients will say, 'We're sending our guys home to rest now, but if that snow is still coming in for rush hour in the morning,





*Weather Command meteorology's staff keep its eyes peeled on conditions to give clients a heads-up on impending weather events before they happen. (Photos provided by Weather Command)*

"I'll need an extra hour and a half to load the trucks when they get back in here in the morning, so call us with that extra time in mind," said Croke.

"Another factor, which creates the need for a private forecaster, is that your local resources, such as TV, radio or the National Weather Service, are not going to call you out of bed when something changes at 2 a.m. When our meteorologists do that, we help cities keep rush hour safe. All the cool apps and their alerts are fine until a winter maintenance supervisor sleeps through them. We don't stop calling until we get a human on the phone. We've even called people back a few minutes after we spoke to them because we thought they were so groggy they probably rolled over. Sure enough — they had!"

David Huffman, street commissioner of the city of Carmel, Ind., offered his views on why he decided to use a private forecaster.

"Because local television forecasts are for the large viewing areas, and I want and need pinpoint information to make the best decisions I can for the city," said Huffman. "I've used Weather Command/Murray and Trettel Inc. for several years now, and I trust and rely on their information. With all the services they offer and provide the city of Carmel, I know with confidence that I'm making the best decisions on how to fight each storm. They have also saved the city money by using their services — for example, they've saved me from calling the crews in too early, or at all, plus from pre-treating for a storm that is actually passing by us. I can't imagine going through a winter season without this company and the information it provides. It would be comparable



*Sara Croke, founder and president of Kansas-based Weather or Not Inc., participates in the Kansas City Metro Chapter of American Public Works Association's Rodeo & Equipment Expo. (Photo provided by Weather or Not)*

to going to battle without communication and intelligence."

In addition to advance heads-ups, John Boyle, meteorologist and director of sales and marketing with Weather Command/Murray and Trettel Inc., headquartered in Palatine, Ill., stated there are several different reasons why someone would want past weather data. The most basic reason might be for certified snow totals for a location after a snow and ice event.

"Private snowplow companies use our Certified Site-Specific Snowfall reports for billing," he said. "Some companies have storm total limits or seasonal limits that are tracked and perhaps eventually justify higher charges for their clients."

Storm reconstruction can also prove beneficial when it comes to litigation reasons,

with Boyle saying, "When you get into more specific weather reconstruction, it is probably more for litigation rather than just a simple snowfall total. Our company handles in our Forensic Applications Department legal cases with depositions, and weather reconstruction were needed for court cases. It could be a slip and fall case; it could be an auto accident or trees down, or anything weather-related. For example, here in the Chicago area, there are weather reports from O'Hare Airport and Midway Airport. If something happens even just a few miles from either of those reporting locations, the weather can be significantly different with regards to precipitation, winds, lightning, etc. We would use our meteorological knowledge to do a weather reconstruction for a specific location based on all the available facts, such as radar ►



imagery, other observing networks, etc. What happens at O'Hare cannot always be representative of other nearby locations."

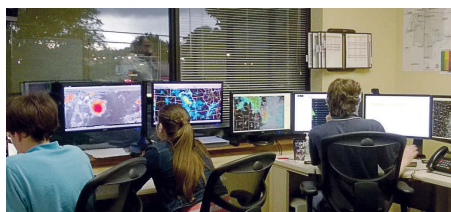
He added, "Our FAD also helps verify insurance policy claims for several insurers."

Some clients like Lee's Summit, Mo. use private weather services year-round. Situations may include construction, large event management as well as flash flooding, tornadoes and more.

Saving money by using private weather forecasters can be a real boon to cities, according to Croke.

"Last Wednesday, road temps were staying above freezing but were going to drop into the upper 20s during afternoon rush hour before the pavements dried. One client kept a small crew over to be on guard in case any of the roads they'd treated had any problems during rush hour. They knew they didn't need a full crew. They also knew those drivers would only be needed for a couple hours, not all night. That's overtime savings," she said.

Another client praised Weather or Not for saving him a measurable amount of money.



*Private forecasters, like the Weather or Not's team, pictured, can save money when it comes to material costs and overtime, letting cities know if and when a snow—or other storm—event is coming. (Photo provided by Weather or Not)*

"We needed three hours of dry weather to continue a chip and seal project. Weather or Not stressed it was raining just south of the airport, but looked like we had a good shot at staying dry," said Todd Waeltermann of the city of St. Louis, Mo. "I needed an hour's notice to stop applying material. Weather or Not talked me through the next three hours as I fended off many calls from my superintendent and foreman to stop work. We successfully completed the project and gained a half day of

production worth \$5,000 and saved a day of inconveniencing the citizens."

Treatment costs can vary, said Croke, who was hearing \$50 to \$65 per ton of salt, "but that doesn't include calcium chloride or the number of tons of treatment that can be wasted on preparing for the wrong storm."

Construction costs for construction are easy; if you buy concrete or asphalt, you own it when it leaves the vendor's shop whether you use it or not. That's a substantial cost in the warmer months, said Croke, and there are also examples for pools, golf courses, major festivals and events throughout any municipality.

Finally, last Thanksgiving in the Kansas City area, the entire region came within half of 1 degree of a devastating ice storm. All Croke's municipal clients, including the airport and regional utility, did not bring crews in unnecessarily.

"Imagine how that overtime would have added up," said Croke. "The morale of taking workers away from their families over a holiday would not have gone over well either." ■

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**PRE-CONSTRUCTION ABOVE:** Westmont's road before construction had become tired and weathered, which sparked the idea for experimenting with pervious concrete. (Photo provided)

**POST-CONSTRUCTION LEFT:** Westmont residents were the first to approve the Stormwater-Infrastructure Sales Tax. Residents living on the pervious roadway have commented that the road is wonderful and have had no complaints. (Photo provided)

## Cities explore green roadway alternatives

By ELISA WALKER | The Municipal

**Pervious concrete has gone by quite a few different name. Porous, green, permeable or “thirsty” concrete is an environmentally friendly alternative to traditional concrete for parking lots, driveways, parking lanes, alleys and roadways. It has been used primarily where water collects and takes days to drain. The substance has been improved over the years to endure heavy loads of consistent traffic.**

Made of materials that create a permeable texture, pervious concrete allows water to seep through its open pores and be collected in a base below to be reabsorbed into the ground or evaporated. The overflow of rainwater from the base would drain into the public water system, which benefits runoffs and stormwater management.

Southern states that experience constant flooding have invested or plan to invest

in this technology. Pervious concrete can absorb up to 1,000 gallons of water in 60 seconds, which allows urban drainage systems to withstand copious amounts of rainfall. The green concrete helps by redirecting water from the already overused drainage system. Cities with older infrastructures have also shown interest in pervious concrete since some areas were built without a drainage system along alleyways.

Chemical discharge from vehicles, fertilizing chemicals from lawns and traditional concrete chemicals can be absorbed by the water and enter the draining system or be evaporated into the air, contaminating the environment. Pervious concrete lacks the potential to contaminate and even filters these pollutants in order to reduce the flow of contaminants into the water system.

Pervious concrete also harbors the ability to reduce heat with its lighter color and open pore structure. It absorbs less heat than the typical concrete that is used in urban areas and diffuses the heat island effect. Trees would significantly benefit from the use of pervious concrete since water and air would have easier access to the roots of the tree. Additionally, the trees can be used as a heat reducer since shade





casted along the concrete would create a cooling effect.

### In the North

Areas where freezing weather is present have only recently tried utilizing the material, with many continuing to watch small projects to see what can be improved upon. On a world-stage, the Beijing National Stadium caught attention when it was built for the 2008 Summer Olympics in China. For the build, China used copious amounts of pervious concrete, which have held strongly through various weather extremities since 2008. Closer to home, Westmont, Ill., became the first village within the Chicagoland region and five-state area to experiment with pervious concrete on a municipal roadway.

"We've known about this technology for many years, but it was used mainly in southern and eastern states," explained Assistant Director of Public Works and Village Engineer Noriel Noriega. "Closer to 2010, our board of trustees became aware of this technology and thought it'd be great idea to invest in. We were in design for a standard cross section

at the time and was requested to use green alternatives. We sort of tested it."

With Westmont slipping into below freezing temperatures, the care and maintenance for pervious concrete is different from traditional concrete and asphalt. Much more time goes into maintaining pervious concrete and must be cleaned more often as salt would challenge the structural integrity of the roadway. Steel plow blades are also restricted, instead replaced with a rubber blade. These special items along with extra cost in manpower and labor contribute to more attentive responsibility.

"It works better in southern states, but we're doing our best and being proactive," commented Noriega. "We definitely have benefits from a political side and feedback by reducing our carbon footprint. Being environmentally friendly goes a long way and salt conservation is another advantage."

"I would recommend this to others in terms of what they need for their municipality. This mostly exists in parking lots around here. Our roadway was the first in Illinois, definitely a learning process."

*During the construction period, the workers demonstrated the pervious concrete's ability to absorb water to the residents. (Photo provided)*

Noriega expressed that there are some difficulties with pervious concrete in a Midwest state. Ensuring that all the staff has proper additional training is a major part of having a successful permeable road. Noriega commented that the village has started investing in other pervious aspects such as alleyways. As progress continues Westmont will always be reviewing and trying out this technology to be more environmentally friendly.

### In the South

In areas that don't dip to freezing temperatures, these kinds of issues wouldn't occur but southern cities do have another bit of upkeep to maintain in their own ways. Plan Review Engineer Robert Gordon in Wilmington, N.C., has said that pervious concrete must be vacuumed routinely to keep particulates and debris such as leaves, pollen, soil ▶



and so forth from eroding the pores within the concrete.

While Wilmington hasn't publicly invested in pervious concrete beyond small grant projects and extensive private development, the city will be looking into pervious parking lots now that they have the proper equipment. A stable landscape structure with drainage system awareness is also an important factor as the proper flow of debris into the water system prevents clogging the pervious concrete. Most of the maintenance revolves around prevention by keeping clogging materials out of the permeable surface.

"With typical asphalt, you put it in and then you just forget about it," explained Gordon. "With pervious concrete, if you don't maintain it and it does get clogged, then it's shot. That's the challenge we've seen."

Wilmington plans to use the concrete as a demonstration in public areas for city projects and public education. Some grant projects with pervious concrete have been



*Pervious concrete allows water to seep through its open pores and be collected in a base below to be reabsorbed into the ground or evaporated. (Photo provided)*

completed, allowing the city to observe the impact it creates.

Pervious concrete has been present in North Carolina for about 15 years with city and development engineers keeping in touch with new options that are available. It is a widely used material, but maintenance

poses a problem for Wilmington, and the cost is more expensive than traditional concrete.

"When you look at the benefit you gain as a space, it becomes a very cost beneficial option," added Gordon. "I would recommend pervious concrete for municipalities if they have a solid way to maintain it." **M**

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# Bardstown, Ky., *stands among the 'best'*

By ANNE MEYER BYLER | The Municipal

**B**ARDSTOWN, KY., RESTS AMONG the “best” in a number of different lists. Expedia selected Bardstown as one of the “18 Most Interesting U.S. Destinations”; Fodor picked it as one of “America’s Best Small Towns”; and AARP named it one of its “10 best small towns.” It led TheCultureTrip.com’s list of the “10 Most Beautiful Towns in Kentucky” and was named the “Most Beautiful Small Town in America” in the Rand McNally/USA Today 2012 “Best of the Road” contest. Bardstown also landed in the top 20 of “America’s Favorite Towns” by Travel + Leisure, which also recognized it as having one of “America’s Most Beautiful Town Squares.”

Much of Bardstown’s charm lies in its historic setting. Settled in 1780, Bardstown is Kentucky’s second-oldest city. My Old Kentucky State Home Park features Federal Hill, which was made famous by Stephen Foster, the composer of “Camptown Races” and “Oh! Susanna.” One of America’s first great composers, Foster’s life is the subject of a summertime



*Bardstown, Ky., has landed on many “best” lists over the years, including a spot on Travel + Leisure’s list of “America’s Most Beautiful Town Squares”. (Photo provided by Bardstown Tourism)*

musical, “The Stephen Foster Story” — the largest summer attraction — held at an amphitheater at the park. Federal Hill was a farm with a mansion owned by a United States senator

related to Foster. The farm is well known for its association with Foster’s anti-slavery ballad “My Old Kentucky Home, Good Night,” and the park runs tours of the mansion.



**LEFT:** As one of America's first great composers, Stephen Foster's life is the subject of a summertime musical, "The Stephen Foster Story." It is Bardstown's largest summer attraction and is held at an amphitheater at My Old Kentucky State Home Park. (Photo provided by Bardstown Tourism)

**RIGHT:** My Old Kentucky State Home Park features Federal Hill, which was made famous by Stephen Foster, the composer of "Camptown Races" and "Oh! Susanna." Federal Hill was a farm with a mansion owned by a United States senator related to Foster. (Photo provided by Bardstown Tourism)



Dawn Przystal, executive director of Bardtown-Nelson County Tourist & Convention Commission, recommended that small towns focus on authenticity and experiences when enhancing their tourism product. Pictured is Bardstown's Jailer's Inn Bed and Breakfast. (Photo provided by Bardstown Tourism)

Bardstown is called the "Bourbon Capital of the World." In 1789, Baptist minister Elijah Craig developed the first bourbon, and it was first commercially distilled in the 1800s. According to Dawn Ballard Przystal, executive director of the Bardstown-Nelson County



Bourbon is a major draw to Bardstown, which was named the "Bourbon Capital of the World." Pictured is Willet Distillery. Established in 1936, it is one of America's smallest, independent family-owned and operated distilleries. (Photo provided by Bardstown Tourism)

Tourist & Convention Commission, there are six distilleries currently in operation "with another three set to open in 2017." The annual Kentucky Bourbon Festival, a six-day affair taking place in September, is held there with over 50,000 people from more than 40 states and 12 countries attending. Given the place of bourbon in the city's history, Bardstown offers "Bourbon entertainment, Bourbon-inspired dining, Bourbon history, and Bourbon shopping," according to its website.

Przystal cited the Civil War Museum of the Western Theatre as one of the four most significant such museums in the country. The website reports it is the "repository of such treasures as cannons, 'drummer boy' drums, soldiers' Bibles and pipes and an Eagle Head match safe." Other attractions include My Old Kentucky Dinner Train; the Kentucky Railway Museum; four 18-hole golf courses, one of which is at the My Old Kentucky State Home Park along with a ►



campground; three wineries; three Bardstown self-guided tours; two Bardstown haunted tours; and Whisky Magazine's Visitor Attraction of the Year — the Oscar Getz Museum of Whiskey History. Year-round carriage rides are also available to the public for viewing the city's sites.

Another historical site is the Basilica of St. Joseph's Proto-Cathedral. Przystal said, "It is the first Catholic cathedral west of the Allegheny Mountains, dating from 1816. Bardstown is the site of the first 'Diocese of the West,' from 1808." The Abbey of Gethsemani is another religious historic site.

Lodging and restaurants derive from the history of Bardstown. The city boasts "a profusion of locally owned eateries and bed and breakfast inns, including no less than a dozen restaurants in its historic downtown district and nearly 20 inns, including cottages, stage coach stop, log home, antebellum homes and a former jail. The stage coach stop that was built in 1779 still stands today as a tavern, restaurant and bed and breakfast."



*Bardstown is the location of two historic trains and is home to the Kentucky Railway Museum. (Photo provided by Bardstown Tourism)*

Besides the unique historic sites in Bardstown, it is the location for numerous other annual festivals. These include Cocktail Week in the spring; the summertime Bardstown Bluegrass Festival and Bourbon City Street Concert; Bardstown Arts, Crafts, Antiques Fair in the fall; and, closing out the

year, 20 events that are part of Christmas 'Round Bardstown.

Given Bourbon's population of roughly 13,000 in 2013, here are some ideas about what you could do with your town to enhance its attractiveness to tourists. Przystal said, "My advice to any community looking to develop or enhance its tourism product is to focus on authenticity and experiences. Determine what makes your community special and build on that authentic experience. Small towns in particular are often filled with a wonderful cast of characters whom locals may not fully appreciate, but who bring your community to life for visitors. Travel above anything else is about creating memories. It's not about visiting a distillery; it's about the look on your mother's face when she has her first sample, or learning how to create a signature cocktail. What can you do to bring your guests unforgettable experiences? If you can answer that and make it happen, you are already miles ahead of a lot of places." **M**

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# Firework tax offers some relief to West Virginia volunteer fire departments

*The sale of fireworks in West Virginia has opened up an opportunity to aid local communities through a 12 percent tax, which supports the Veterans Facility Support Fund and the state's many volunteer fire departments. (Shutterstock.com)*

by NICHOLETTE HODGSON | The Municipal

**Beginning in 2016, West Virginia decided to allow the sale of fireworks past the simple novelty items like snakes and sparklers. Along with the ability to purchase fireworks within the state came a 12 percent tax on all consumer fireworks. This tax, however, is different from most, with the money gained being split between two groups. The Veterans Facility Support Fund receives 75 percent of the funds received from the tax. That money goes to assist with various veteran programs throughout the state. The remaining 25 percent of the tax funds are divided among West Virginia's volunteer fire departments.**

Elizabeth Pardue from the West Virginia State Tax Department stated that the legalized sale of a broader range of fireworks that can be sold year-round will help to increase the purchase of fireworks within the state's borders. These sales will increase

the amount that is contributed to the volunteer fire departments. Money from the tax will be deposited equally among all volunteer fire departments. The funds will be placed quarterly into the Fire Protection Fund during the months of January, April,

July and October. All 428 departments were set to receive the first payment in October 2016 with each department getting \$428.

There are certain stipulations as to what the revenue received by the volunteer fire departments can be used for, according to West Virginia code. The funds can be used for equipment, including personal protective equipment or rescue equipment. It can go toward insurance premiums, such as property and casualty insurance, worker's compensation and life insurance. The money can also cover certain expenses such as utility bills; reasonable and necessary improvement and maintenance; operating expenses; and training expenses. Training supplies and fire prevention promotional materials up to a certain dollar amount are also allowable.





*A Cheat Lake volunteer firefighter shows students his equipment as part of a demonstration for preschool children. Funds received from the firework sales tax can be used not only toward training supplies, but fire prevention promotional materials up to a certain dollar amount. (Photo provided)*

#### **Davis, W. Va.**

Chief Sanford Green of the Canaan Valley Volunteer Fire Department stated that while, at the time, he had no projection on specific dollar amounts that would be received, the general feeling among the firefighting community is that the funds gathered from the firework tax will be a windfall. According to Green, it seems the funds from the tax will be put in the same way as the quarterly municipal pension fund stipend, and so it is unlikely that the departments will know the exact amount received from the tax.

The firework tax funds will be electronically transferred into a state funds account, and then checks will be written for items that are allowed per West Virginia code. Green stated the money will likely go to certain operational expenses such as insurance, worker's compensations, radios, protective clothing and training. However,



**TOP RIGHT:** *Volunteer firemen from the Cheat Lake Volunteer Fire Department learn to draft water. According to one of the volunteers, "When a hydrant is unavailable sometimes it's easier to get the water from the lake." Funds from the firework tax can help to any West Virginia volunteer fire departments pay for similar training. (Photo provided)*

**BELOW RIGHT:** *Engine 141 sits in front of the Cheat Lake Volunteer Fire Department building before its new metal roof was put on. Last year a strong wind blew off half the roof, and it needed to be replaced. Firework tax funds will help volunteers pay for necessary maintenance on both the building and the fire trucks. (Photo provided)*

the Canaan Valley Volunteer Fire Department is "a solvent corporation with a generous donor base," according to Green. Therefore, the fire company currently has zero debt, so the funds from this tax will likely make little difference.

On the other hand, Green admitted that this tax initiative could be profoundly important for smaller departments. Green said, "Small communities that, perhaps,

do not have any kind of expendable income within their resident donor base, yet require the same fire protection as a larger municipality, are suffering under the burdensome requirements of the state and federal governments. This funding will be welcome relief to these departments." These funds can help the smaller departments also pay for the necessary training that is required by West Virginia code. ▶



### Lavalette, W. Va.

The Lavalette Volunteer Fire Department is one of the departments that can use all the help it can get. A representative of the department stated that any money the department receives is always helpful since the "funding is very limited as to what and when we receive it. We, as volunteers, always struggle to make ends meet on a yearly basis with the mandates out there and little money coming in." Accordingly, funds gained from the firework tax will likely be spent on equipment.

### Morgantown, W. Va.

Sentiments are similar to those at the Cheat Lake Volunteer Fire Department. Chief Jason Christopher and Assistant Chief Paul Porter said that every little bit helps when it comes to funds to help support the department. However, each department is estimated to receive \$500 or less per year. The funds the department does receive from the firework tax will be used the same way other state funds are used for expenses, such as equipment, maintenance and training.

Statewide residents paying the firework tax seem to have little to nothing to say on the matter. A 12 percent tax that benefits communities across the state does not seem to hinder the willingness to purchase fireworks within West Virginia for the first time. When it comes to whether these funds will make a difference John Holstein,



*State funds given to volunteer fire departments can greatly assist volunteers in paying for updates to both apparatuses and other equipment. (Photo provided)*

West Virginia State Firemen's Association president, said, "The funds received from the fireworks tax by fire departments is very minimal. The use thereof varies from department to department, primarily adding a small amount to the operating budget. Very little difference has been observed by the very limited amount of distribution to the state's 400-plus fire departments." ■

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Hartsville has seen a lot of growth in its downtown, and StartUp Hartsville—a Shark Tank-type competition—has resulted in four new businesses, with two more coming within the year. (Photo provided)



Envision Williamston, a program housed under the Main Street South Carolina initiative, aims to draw visitors from nearby larger cities—to dine, shop and stay the night. (Photo provided)

# South Carolina undertakes revitalization of its downtowns

by CATEY TRAYLOR | The Municipal

## Mix small-town charm with big-city accessibility and you've got Sonya Crandall's dream come true.

Crandall is the executive director of Envision Williamston, a program housed under the Main Street South Carolina initiative, which works to empower local communities with the knowledge, skills, resources and organizational structure necessary to revitalize their downtown districts.

"Main Street SC is perfect for small towns on the brink of becoming a destination for people looking for a higher quality of life, but who still wish to have access to big cities and their offerings," Crandall said.

That's exactly what she believes Williamston has to offer.

A small town of about 4,000 residents, Williamston sits in the northwest part of South Carolina, a short commute from larger cities like Greenville and Anderson. Crandall said, as Envision Williamston's executive director, her hope is to draw visitors from those larger cities, but it all starts with simple solutions right in town.

"We want people to come and enjoy our historic parks, our regional events, a place to have good, clean family fun. But we want to move on from that—instead of just coming to visit, come stay a while. Dine here, enjoy our shops, stay the night," she said.

As part of their master plan, Crandall said Envision Williamston will eventually offer more retail and residential options, as well as bed and breakfasts, bicycle paths and social gathering spaces in town. Each of these additions will not only make the downtown corridor more appealing, but will spark economic growth and job availability within the community over time.

Main Street SC Manager Beppie LeGrand said small changes rooted in economically sound decisions are what ultimately contribute to a successful community revitalization effort.

"The change has to be comprehensive," she said. "We're keen on making sure we

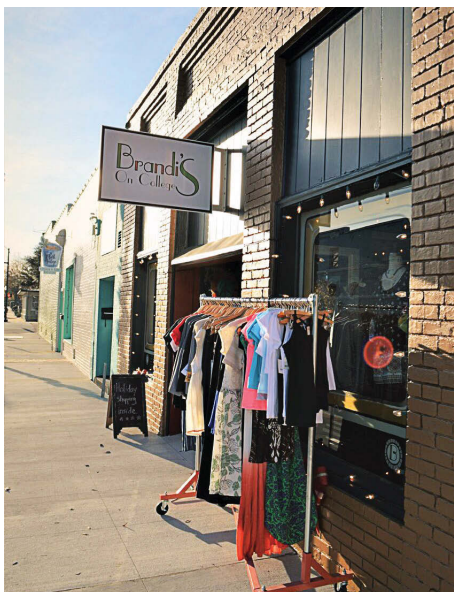
don't just give communities pretty buildings—they need the hardcore piece of economic development in place. We offer tools, resources and staff to help with all of that."

Main Street SC is a branch of the larger National Main Street program. The intensive program largely focuses on working with community leaders to discover cost-effective methods to attract new investments to downtown districts while reusing already existing amenities and infrastructure.

Following the national "Four Point Approach" model, LeGrand works with each of Main Street SC's 17 enrolled communities to ensure the principles of organization, promotion, design and economic restructuring are at the forefront of each master plan.

In order to enroll in the program, communities must complete an exhaustive application and be chosen to participate. After that, community leaders must hire a person to oversee the project and commit to a three-year boot camp program. During boot camp, community leaders are provided intensive technical assistance and training.





*The city of Hartsville is one of Main Street South Carolina's biggest success stories, having a total of 51 ribbon cuttings since joining the initiative. (Photos provided)*

## ***"It has breathed new life into our downtown district."***

"Communities really have to commit to being on board for three years," LeGrand said. "You can't start turning the corner in less time than that. A lot of training must happen, a lot of resources need to be under your belt before you can make a real change happen."

The city of Hartsville is one of LeGrand's favorite stories of a well-executed plan and successful results.

A total of 51 ribbon cuttings have taken place in Hartsville since the city joined the Main Street SC program in 2014, including the addition of boutiques, restaurants and two hotels.

"Our city really sees the value in the Main Street SC program," Main Street Hartsville Executive Director Suzy Moyd said. "It has breathed new life into our downtown district."



*Williamston, S.C., hopes to attract visitors to enjoy its historic parks, regional events and simply have fun. (Photo provided)*

Much of the city's success can be attributed to thinking outside of the box. During the boot camp phase, community leaders created StartUp Hartsville — a Shark Tank-type competition — complete with funding and other incentives to encourage local entrepreneurs to establish their businesses downtown.

Contestants received assistance developing and executing business plans, securing funding and creating a marketing strategy.

"We're building a community of entrepreneurs," Moyd said. "They all try to out-think each other, one-up each other. That energy is something that people want to come see and explore." ►



*As part of its master plan, Envision Williamston will add more retail and residential options, as well as bed and breakfasts, bicycle paths and social gathering spaces in town. (Photo provided)*



As a result of StartUp Hartsville, four new businesses have been established downtown, and two more will be added within the year.

"The synergy in Hartsville is great," LeGrand said. "They've got a young, progressive mayor and city manager, lots of community support and support from the local college. It's an ideal situation."

However, it's not always so easy, LeGrand cautioned.

Main Street SC's oldest program is in the city of Beaufort. Enrolled since the beginning of Main Street SC 32 years ago, the city has experienced great success, but also huge setbacks, especially when floods devastated the community in 2015 and rained out the largest fundraiser of the year.


"Beaufort has seen a lot of ups and downs," LeGrand said. "But like a phoenix, they rose up again, forming a partnership with the local chamber of commerce and sticking to the program."

That, LeGrand said, is why the three-year boot camp period is so vital to a community's

For more information, or if interested in becoming a Main Street SC community, contact Beppie LeGrand, Main Street SC manager, at [blegrand@masc.sc](mailto:blegrand@masc.sc) or (803) 933-1231. To learn more about the National Main Street Center, visit its website at [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org).

success. Laying the groundwork is key, and having a solid foundation on which to rebuild a community is a must.

In the coming years, LeGrand doesn't anticipate taking on more than one or two more programs annually so as not to spread her resources too thin. Instead, she said, she hopes to continue helping her enrolled communities flourish.

"Once a city is in our program, they're with us forever," she said. "They may leave the program and come back later, but when they need us, we're here. When that change needs to happen, we can show them how." 



*Parks and additional bike paths play a role in Envision Williamston's master plan to attract more visitors from nearby big cities. (Photo provided)*



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# Engaging the community where they are — Facebook

by LAUREN CAGGIANO | The Municipal

## Twenty-first century policing calls for embracing 21st century methods of communication.

The Ellisville, Mo., Police Department has adopted such an approach. Patrol Officer Joey Nickles, serving in the newly created social media coordinator role, acts as a liaison between the department and the public. He has managed the Facebook page for about a year now. The page has more than 1,900 “likes” and has been well received in the community.

For Nickles, the use of channels like Facebook removes barriers to connectivity.

“I really like the idea of reaching out to the community in ways we historically haven’t,” he said. “With social media platforms, they have created a new dynamic to reach out to the public.”

This is just one of the many hats Nickles wears. A longtime and seasoned patrol officer, he has been with the Ellisville Police Department since 2010. Ellisville is a St. Louis suburb with a population of about 10,000.

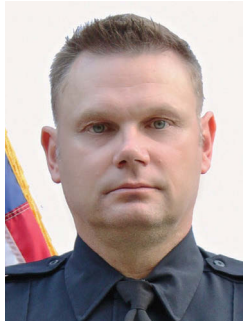
Nickles serves the department as a patrol officer, while the social media coordinator position brings “extra duties.” One challenge he has encountered is related to scheduling. He works the night shift so it can be difficult to push out real time updates during the day.

Despite this reality, this arrangement works for the department and community because for the most part Ellisville is pretty quiet and crime is at a minimum, he said. These conditions mean Nickles has had the time to devote to social media strategy instead of “jumping from call to call.”

Speaking of strategy, Nickles has put in the time to determine where to invest efforts. As Ellisville’s population skews older, he has found Facebook is the ideal channel to reach this demographic. This is a lesson other departments can take away from Ellisville’s success. What goes out? How will it go out? Who does it target? These are all critical questions when determining which social channel(s) in which to invest.

The first question relates to content curation. Nickles said it was important not to “create the image of a fluff department,” so he’s been intentional in his posting to advance the agenda.

“We decided we will post felony arrests of individuals charged,” he said. “But it’s a pretty narrow lane where we’ve landed (in terms of



Patrol Officer  
Joey Nickles  
(Photo provided)



*The Ellisville, Mo., Police Department is one of the latest police departments to join Facebook as a means to further community outreach.*

types of content).” He balances this material with promoting light content in the form of community events and news.

Nickles said he’s also careful not to operate in a vacuum. The Facebook page is one piece of a larger puzzle.

“(S)ocial media (adoption) falls under the larger umbrella of community relations,” he said.

Police departments of all sizes that don’t see the value in investing in these efforts are making a mistake, he said.

“It’s a cost-effective way to show the public who you are,” he said. Here’s one case in point. Although they have not invested in Facebook advertising, the content is still far reaching by word of mouth. Lost dog posts are a great example.

“It’s amazing how viral (posts) can reach thousands, and we can find dogs in minutes,” he said.

It’s also an issue of meeting your residents where they are — literally. With the average user spending nearly an hour a day on Facebook, it seems like the natural way to reach constituents. Yet according to Nickles, some departments are more socially savvy than others — and failure to adapt or adopt can be a liability.

“Some police departments are really behind the eight ball when it comes to community relations,” he said.

Facebook is not the end-all, be-all though, when it comes to community engagement. Nickles said he would like to one day have a dedicated webpage for the police department administered and maintained by his peers. He wants to make it easier for residents to access commonly requested forms online. Currently residents must access these forms in person.

“It’s a better way to get that information out,” he said. **M**

The Ellisville Police Department page can be accessed here: [www.facebook.com/EllisvilleMOPolice](http://www.facebook.com/EllisvilleMOPolice).



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# Cities reach across borders

by SARAH WRIGHT | The Municipal

**U**.S. CITIES HAVE BEEN REACHING across international borders for more than 60 years, since President Dwight D. Eisenhower first launched Sister Cities International. A nonpartisan nonprofit, the organization counts more than 500 U.S. cities, counties and states as members and organizes roughly 2,300 partnerships in 150 countries on six continents. Eisenhower envisioned the nonprofit would foster bonds between people from different communities, bringing understanding, appreciation and a celebration of differences while building partnerships that would lessen chances of new conflicts. The organization in particular focuses on programming classified in four main areas: youth and education, arts and culture, business and trade and finally municipal exchange and community development.

For many cities, relationships formed through Sister Cities International have proven very beneficial. For example, Minneapolis, Minn., is taking notes from its sister

city Harbin, also called the “City of Ice,” in China on winter tourism. Harbin holds an annual Harbin Ice Festival that attracts more than 10 million visitors each year, and Minneapolis is hoping to adapt some of its practices while expanding already existing practices at home, according to Sister Cities International’s website.

Other cities have used programming to spread goodwill. Such is the case for Atlanta, Ga., which sends volunteers to its sister city Montego Bay, Jamaica, to offer medical treatment to those in need.

A sister city, county or state relationship becomes official after the highest elected or appointed official from both communities sign off on an agreement; however, these relationships may start in a variety of ways, sometimes through ordinary citizens as was the case for Gordonsville, Va., a town of more than 1,500.

Deborah S. Kendall, town manager of Gordonsville, explained, “We have a local property owner who is from France, and as I recall, our relationship with

*One benefit Elkader, Iowa, has experienced as a sister city has been an uptick in tourism, and business deals might be in its future, too. (Kevin Schuchmann at English Wikipedia; <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>)*

Thore-la-Rochette began as the result of her points of contact in that town.”

That relationship, formed in 2013, is still very new, with Kendall stating, “Unfortunately, there have been no coordinated efforts to engage with our sister city since the relationship was first established in the fall of 2013. We are proud of having established ties with Thore-la-Rochette; however, neither they or we have reached out to take our relationship beyond its initial establishment.” She added, “On our side, this is a combination of getting busy with some big projects in town and also just not having a good idea of what kinds of activities we can undertake to make the best of our participation in the program.”

As for a city of 1,229 in Iowa, a founder’s choice in city names played a vital role in cementing its eventual sister city relationship.





*Cities can take a lot away from their sister cities relationships. Minneapolis, Minn., hopes to adapt lessons learned from its sister city Harbin, also called the “City of Ice,” in China on winter tourism. Pictured is the Harbin Ice Festival, which attracts more than 10 million visitors each year. (TonyV3112/Shutterstock.com)*

### **Name leads to a long-time relationship**

Elkader, Iowa’s, sister cities relationship with Mascara, Algeria, had its start in part because of the small Iowa city’s name. One of its founders, Timothy Davis, was an admirer of the world-famous Algerian Emir Abdelkader, who fought against French colonialism in his country, and proposed an Americanized version of “Abdelkader” — Elkader — to be the fledgling city’s name and it stuck.

Later in 1979, a staff member of the United States Information Agency contacted Donna Menken, editor of the Clayton County Register in Elkader, in regards to its name; in return, Menken submitted a story, later published in the USIA’s Arabic language magazine, *Al Majal*.

Menken’s article would be found years later by Benaoumer Zergaoui, a native of Mascara who was working for the U.S. Embassy in Algiers, sparking him to visit Elkader in 1983. That visit proved very welcoming, and Zergaoui eagerly shared his experiences in Elkader with both the people of Mascara and



*Elkader draws its name from world-famous Algerian Emir Abdelkader, pictured, who fought against the French colonialism of his country. That name connection led to Elkader becoming sister cities with Mascara, Algeria. (Public domain)*

the U.S. Embassy, which suggested Elkader and Mascara become sister cities. Elkader applied to Sister Cities International for affiliation and sent an invitation and resolution to Mascara in 1983. The two cities officially became sister cities in 1984 after a delegation from Elkader traveled to Mascara to sign the official documents.

“Initially, it was very active, with student exchanges, etc.,” Jennifer Cowser, city administrator/clerk for the city of Elkader, said of the relationship with Mascara.

“Then it was still somewhat active as we have hosted every ambassador (from Algeria to the U.S.) since 1984. But it was revived about 10 years ago.”

Cowser explained one of the people the city of Elkader worked with, Idriss Jazairy, lost his toddler son in an unfortunate accident. This led Ed Olson, who was coordinating Elkader’s sister cities activities at the time, to raise funds to dedicate toddler playground equipment in his name.

“Then there was a number of other visits, and a scholar, (John Kiser), who wrote a book about our namesake, did a program on his new book,” Cowser said. “The book ▶



turned into an educational program called AEP (Abdelkader Education Project), and even though that program has morphed into a separate organization, it has done a lot to further the sister city relationship.”

AEP, according to Cowsert, has been a real treasure for the community, providing scholarships for high school and college students. “But more importantly in this post-9/11 world, it spread the message of the Emir (our namesake), which is peace, understanding, coexistence, etc.,” she said.

Beyond furthering ties and understanding, Cowsert said Elkader has also benefited from tourism since becoming a sister city; however, other benefits may be coming.

“Within the last couple of years, the trade agreement has changed so now Algeria is interested in buying on its own so we expect things to change,” she added, noting previously all trade had to go through France. “We have a manufacturer of earth moving equipment here in town, and a businessman from Algeria is interested in buying some. They had



to work out the differences on fuel, but I think that is still in the works.”

Elkader’s agriculture is also drawing attention. “We have had the Algerian-American Business Council travel here with a delegation, and they went to our local community college to see a demonstration on cows and milking,” Cowsert said, adding there is currently not a lot of dairy in Algeria. “But I don’t know the outcome of that trip (if they were able to apply the practice they learned).”

Travel goes both ways, with Elkader’s Mayor Josh Pope and its Mayor Pro Tem

Mayor Josh Pope of Elkader, center, was presented with the key to the city of Mostaganem during a visit to Algeria in September 2016. Elkader has been sister cities with another Algerian city, Mascara, since 1984. (Photo provided)

Roger Buchholz having both traveled to Algeria as part of the sister city relationship. In fact, Pope was invited in September and then in November 2016 to travel to Algeria.

Cowsert said it’s been a good experience and would encourage other cities to participate in Sister Cities International. “Anytime you can learn more about another culture, it is important as a world citizen. I think we are the only city in Iowa, and maybe the U.S., to have a sister city relationship with a city in Algeria. It is unique!” ■

For information on Sister Cities International or to find cities seeking cities, visit [www.sister-cities.org](http://www.sister-cities.org).

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Phoenix Convention Center,  
Phoenix, Ariz.  
[expo.atssa.com](http://expo.atssa.com)

### Feb. 13-16 11th Annual ARFF Training Alliance ARFF Chiefs & Leadership School

Rio Suites, Las Vegas, Nev.  
[arffwg.org](http://arffwg.org)

### Feb. 12-14 NYCOM Winter Legislative Meeting

Hilton Albany, Albany, N.Y.  
[www.nycom.org/meetings-training/conferences.html](http://www.nycom.org/meetings-training/conferences.html)

### Feb. 22 Sixth Annual ITEA Conference

Carol Stream Holiday Inn, Carol Stream, Ill.  
[illinoistruckcops.org](http://illinoistruckcops.org)

### Feb. 22-25 WWETT

Indiana Convention Center,  
Indianapolis, Ind.  
[wwettshow.com](http://wwettshow.com)

### Feb. 23-25 EMS Today/The JEMS Conference and Exposition

Calvin L. Rampton Salt Palace Convention Center, Salt Lake City, Utah  
[www.emstoday.com](http://www.emstoday.com)

### Feb. 26-March 1 Disaster Recovery Institute 2017

Golden Nugget, Las Vegas, Nev.  
[driconference.org](http://driconference.org)

### Feb. 27-March 2 Technology and Maintenance Council Annual Meeting and Transportation Technology Exhibition

Music City Center, Nashville, Tenn.  
[www.trucking.org](http://www.trucking.org)

## MARCH

### March 4-6 National Utility Contractors Association National Convention

Las Vegas, Nev.  
[www.nuca.com/convention](http://www.nuca.com/convention)

### March 7-10 Missouri Park and Recreation Association Conference

Hilton Promenade at Branson Landing, Branson, Mo.  
[www.mopark.org](http://www.mopark.org)

### March 11-16 Congressional City Conference 2017

Washington, D.C.  
[ccc.nlc.org](http://ccc.nlc.org)

### March 12-17 Facility Managers' Revenue Development and Management School

Oglebay Resort & Conference Center, Wheeling, W.Va.  
[www.revenueschool.org](http://www.revenueschool.org)

### March 13-15 Mid-South Transportation and Parking Association Annual Spring Conference and Trade Show

Crowne Plaza, Knoxville, Tenn.  
[www.mstpa.org/annual-conference.html](http://www.mstpa.org/annual-conference.html)

### March 14-17 Green Truck Summit and NTEA Work Truck Show

Indiana Convention Center,  
Indianapolis, Ind.  
[www.worktruckshow.com](http://www.worktruckshow.com)

### March 20-21 Tennessee Municipal League 2017 Legislative Conference

DoubleTree, Nashville, Tenn.  
[www.tml1.org](http://www.tml1.org)

### March 21-22 Michigan Municipal League's 2017 Capital Conference

Lansing Center, Lansing, Mich.  
<http://blogs.mml.org/wp/cc/>

### March 21-23 Wildland Urban Interface 2017

Peppermill Resort, Reno, Nev.  
[www.iafc.org](http://www.iafc.org)

### March 23-25 Mid-America Trucking Show

Kentucky Exposition Center,  
Louisville, Ky.  
[www.truckingshow.com](http://www.truckingshow.com)

### March 27-31 International Wireless Communications Expo

Las Vegas Convention Center,  
Las Vegas, Nev.  
[www.iwceexpo.com](http://www.iwceexpo.com)

## APRIL

### April 3-4 New England Parking Council Conference

Seaport Hotel, Boston, Mass.  
[newenglandparkingcouncil.org/events](http://newenglandparkingcouncil.org/events)

### April 5-6 National Fire and Emergency Services Symposium and Dinner

Washington, D.C.  
[www.cfsi.org/events/annual\\_dinner.cfm](http://www.cfsi.org/events/annual_dinner.cfm)

### April 9-13 NASTT No-Dig Show

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### April 12-14 NAVIGATOR Conference

New Orleans, La.  
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### April 23-25 Fire Department Training Network Live-Fire Training Camp

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### April 23-26 North American Snow Conference 2017

Iowa Events Center, Des Moines, Iowa  
[www.apwa.net/snow](http://www.apwa.net/snow)

### April 24-29 FDIC International 2017

Indiana Convention Center and Lucas Oil Stadium, Indianapolis, Ind.  
[www.fdic.com/index.html](http://www.fdic.com/index.html)

### April 25-28 NAFA 2017 Institute and Expo

Tampa Convention Center,  
Tampa, Fla.  
[www.nafainstitute.org](http://www.nafainstitute.org)

### April 26-28 Parking Association of Georgia Annual Conference and Trade Show

Lanier Islands Legacy Lodge,  
Buford, Ga.  
[parkingassociationofgeorgia.com](http://parkingassociationofgeorgia.com)

### April 27-29 "The Summit" Conference

The Coeur d'Alene Resort Hotel,  
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# Keeping the public in the know during storm events



**Kürt Blomquist** | Guest columnist  
Public Works Director/Emergency Management Director,  
Keene, N.H.

**Y**OUR BANK SENDS YOU NOTICES over your phone, your teenage children live on social media and even the president of the United States tweets. If you are sitting at your desk thinking that social media has no relationship to your snow and ice control activities or your public works department in general, here are some statistics to ponder.

From We Are Social's — wearesocial.com — 2016 Digital Yearbook, the global population was 7.395 billion; there are 3.419 billion internet users, 2.307 billion active social media users, 3.790 billion unique mobile phone users and 1.968 billion active mobile social users. In an Oct. 8, 2015, the Pew Research Center issued a report by Andrew Perrin called "Social Media Usage: 2005-2015," which reviewed the use of social media. It reported that 65 percent of American adults use social network sites; 90 percent of adults 18-29 are most likely to use social media; 35 percent of adults over 65 are using social media; and 58 percent of rural residents, 68 percent of suburban and 64 percent of urban residents are using social media in one form or another.

If you are wondering about the ever present cell/smartphone — in an April 1, 2016, Pew Research Center report by Aaron Smith called "U.S. Smartphone Use in 2015" — it was reported that 64 percent of American adults own a smartphone of some type, a majority of smartphone users use their phones to look up information, and 40 percent of smartphone owners look up government services or information.

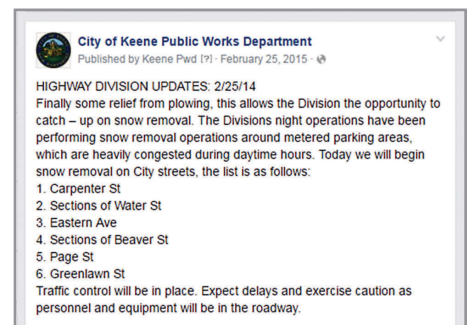
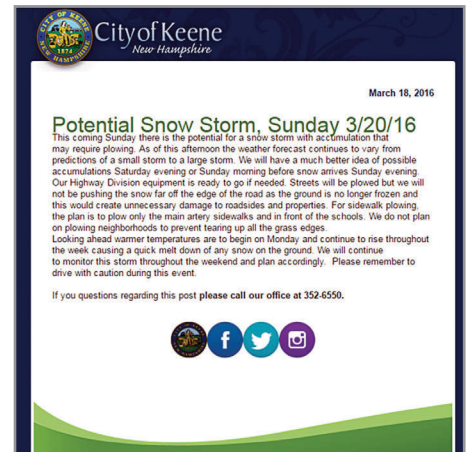
If these statistics have not gotten your attention on how information is being received along with the explosion of smartphones has been an exponential growth of "apps." Today there is an app for everything, from online banking, shoe buying and weather to flying a drone. Just go to the Google Play Store and see what is available. This has created a culture that information is the norm. People want to know what is happening, where it is happening, how it will affect them and they want it when they want it. Private companies now cater to this demand. A person can bank 24 hours a day, seven days a week, or access the services of their favorite store at any time. Government is a service and our customers have the same expectations from us as they do for Amazon.

My department recognized that the traditional methods of communication were not being as effective as we wanted. In 2011 the Department developed a social media strategy and began with our Facebook page, facebook.com/keenepublicworks/. Several years later we integrated other platforms, including twitter, @KeenePWD; Instagram; and a YouTube channel — all with the purpose of getting our story out to our customers.

For our snow and ice control activities, we have been using it to keep the public informed on our activities. We push out information on our pre-storm activities, updates during the storm, post-storm plans, and fun facts and trivia. What is important is that this information is timely and relevant. This resulted in us pushing out the responsibility for updates to frontline supervisory staff. For winter events the primary posters are the



**ABOVE & BELOW:** Pre-storm social media postings the city of Keene, N.H., Public Works Department. (Photos provided)

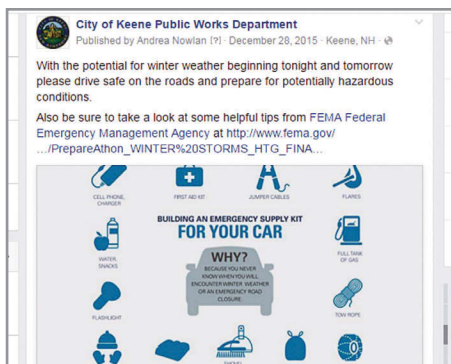


*This post-storm post relays snow removal efforts that are still underway. (Photo provided)*





To keep its fans engaged, Keene Public Works Department also posts fun facts and trivia about winter and being prepared. (Photos provided)



there has been a decrease in calls to the department during storms. The communication and comments we do receive are more supportive of the department and its staff. In today's world people want to feel like they are in the know, that they are informed on what is happening and that they are receiving the service they expect. There is some level of effort if you are not doing much today because the concept of social media is to be in the moment you can spread out the responsibility. If you have not looked at a social media communication strategy, you may want to start working on one.

highway superintendent and department administrative staff. We have established general guidelines for the type of information and style of post. As director, I am not reviewing all posts because that would slow them down.

For pre-storm posting, we are telling people about any pretreatment activities, updated weather information and how the department will be approaching the storm.


During the storm event, we are pushing out information on how activities are going. Since our operations can be done at night or

when people are at home, it is important for them to know that you are out.

As storms are wrapping, we are putting out information on what can be expected over the next several days.

Another area that keeps people interest is fun facts and trivia about winter and being prepared. An important part of any social media strategy is keeping your fans engaged. So these posting let people know that you are still active and thinking about them.

We have found since the implementation of our social media communication strategy that

Kurt Blomquist has been involved in the public works profession for over 30 years. He serves as the public works director and emergency management director for the city of Keene, N.H. He is a licensed professional engineer and a graduate of Norwich University and Georgia Institute of Technology. He is active in the American Public Works Association; on the boards of the New England Chapter of APWA; New Hampshire Public Works Association; and the New Hampshire Public Works Mutual Aid Board. He serves as a faculty for the New England Public Works Institute through Norwich University. 



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Under CDL, DT466 diesel auto, new Arbortech 14' Chip Box.

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**2008 INTERNATIONAL 4300**  
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**\$62,500**



**2012 INTERNATIONAL 4300**  
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**TOP  
10**

# Ten oldest bridges in the United States

In December 2014, the National Bridge Inventory released a list of the 10 oldest bridges in the United States. These

bridges are more than 200 years old and still safely carrying traffic. Bridges are listed by the year they were built.



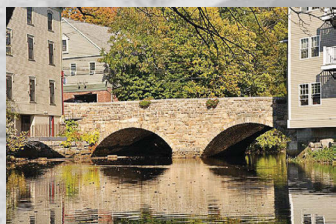
**Frankford Ave. Bridge**  
73.2 feet  
Philadelphia, Pa.

**Built in 1697**



**Stony Brook Bridge**  
82 feet  
Princeton, N.J.

**Built in 1792**



**Choate Bridge**  
71.9 feet  
Ipswich, Mass.

**Built in 1764**



**Skippack Bridge**  
202.1 feet  
Collegeville, Pa.

**Built in 1792**



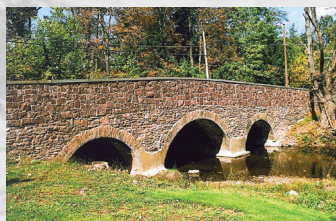
**Adams Street Bridge**  
119.1 feet  
Dorchester Center, Mass.

**Built in 1765**



**Centre Ave. Bridge**  
34.1 feet  
Philadelphia, Pa.

**Built in 1796**



**Old Bethlehem Road Bridge**  
54.1 feet  
Quakertown, Pa.

**Built in 1777**



**Kingston Bridge**  
109.9 feet  
Princeton, N.J.

**Built in 1798**



**Trinity Lane Bridge**  
22 feet  
Conshohocken, Pa.

**Built in 1789**



**Periomen Bridge**  
453.1 feet  
Collegeville, Pa.

**Built in 1798**



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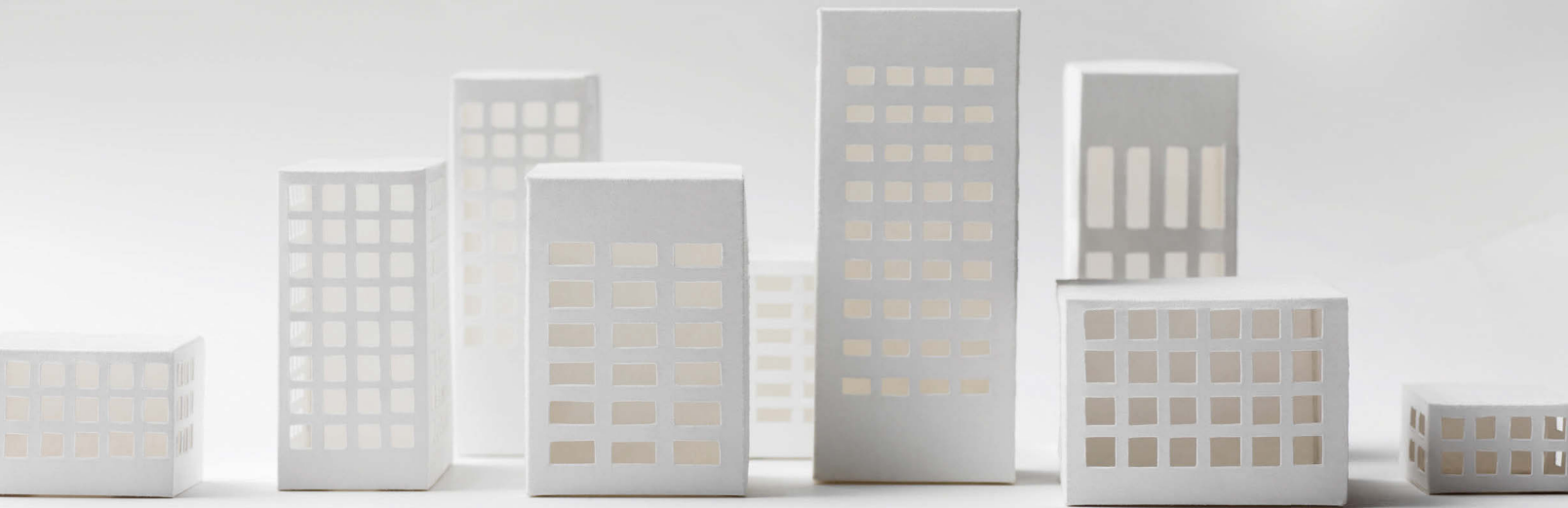
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