

# THE MUNICIPAL

*The Premier Magazine For America's Municipalities*

July 2017

## Public Works

### **INSIDE:**

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**Switch-N-Go**

**High-tech crosswalks**

**Confined space safety**



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18



## 16 Focus on Public Works



30



38



52

**18 Focus On Public Works:** Always assume hazards exist in confined spaces

**22 Focus On Public Works:** Technology improves crosswalk safety

**26 Focus On Public Works:** Building resiliency in communities through utilities

**30 Focus On Public Works:** New bridge over the Prairie: Michigan DOT replaces historic M-86 bridge

**34 Focus On Public Works:** Municipalities using lighting to send a positive message

**38 Holiday:** Firework displays bring communities together

**46 Parks & Recreation:** Pools show value, albeit costly

**50 City & Town Management:** Abandoned malls call for creativity

**52 Streets & Snow:** The move back to gravel

**56 Fleet Service & Management:** Maintaining good driving habits, even as technology makes things 'easier'

Pages 18 & 30 photos provided; all other photos shutterstock.com

### ON THE COVER

Switch-N-Go Interchangeable Body Systems allow for easy four-season use of your municipal vehicles, whether you need to switch out a sprayer for a dump body, stake bed, chipper box, dumpster, service bed, salt spreader or just about any other body you can imagine. Switch-N-Go also improves safety by allowing workers to load or work out of a body on the ground.



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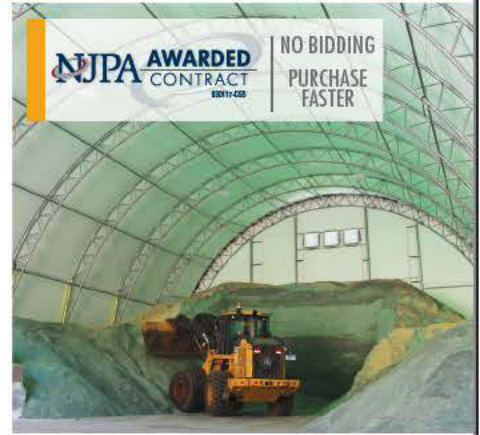
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# Departments



## Unique Claims to Fame

- 8** **Editor's Note:** *It's public works turn in the spotlight*
- 10** **From the Cover:** *Get the job done safely and effectively with Switch-N-Go*
- 12** **Unique Claims To Fame:** *The Coffee Pot, Bedford, Pa.*
- 14** **City Seals :** *Danville, Ill.*
- 42** **City Profile:** *Punta Gorda, Fla., hosts epic Fourth of July festivities*
- 60** **Conference Calendar**
- 61** **Product Spotlights**
- 62** **Classified Ads**
- 66** **Company Profile:** *MGM leads the pack in commercial vehicle actuator technology*
- 70-71** **News & Notes**
- 72** **Guest Column:** *Moline prioritizes growth*
- 75** **Advertiser Index**
- 74** **Top 10:** *Cities with the best barbecue*



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# It's public works' turn in the spotlight



Sarah Wright | Editor

**P**UBLIC WORKS WORKERS ARE THE unsung heroes keeping our cities running in ways often unseen by the average citizen; however, annually these workers are recognized through National Public Works Week, which seeks to spread public awareness of all that public works does. May 21-27 marked this year's celebration, with its theme "Public Works Connects Us."

It was a theme well suited for the times because we do remain connected—despite any political differences—via a system of interlocking infrastructure from roads and bridges to power grids. Many sections of the country are facing the same concerns when it comes to the upkeep and replacement of said infrastructure, and awareness from government officials, stakeholders and constituents has never been needed more to address those pressing concerns. NPWW definitely presented the perfect opportunity

for city public works departments to increase that awareness.

As seen via the #NPWW feed on Twitter, Facebook and other social media platform, public works departments across the world were eager to share what they do, posting interesting facts about themselves, thanking workers and sharing photos of open houses occurring during the week, public works projects in various stages of competition and workers on the job. Additionally, departments spotlighted the value of their infrastructure, as the city of Melbourne, Fla., noted in its May 23 Facebook post, "Streets and stormwater infrastructure, roads, bridges, sidewalks and bike paths link our city together."


And perhaps most importantly, these posts have encouraged interaction between public works workers and the public, by asking the public to thank workers when they see them, perhaps starting further dialogue and a deeper appreciation for the behind-the-scenes running of cities.

This month *The Municipal* is shining the light on public works, including on confined space safety—a topic brought to the forefront by the deaths of three utility workers in Key Largo, Fla., in January. Writer Denise Fedorow shares in her article another city's experience after the loss of a worker and

how its confined space training changed to prevent another tragedy. Additionally, she provides information about the National Fire Protection Association's 2016 guidelines for confined space entry and work.

Another topic is resiliency—an ever-present word in the modern city's vocabulary—and how it is making its way to our utilities. Writer Elisa Walker highlights the efforts of cities in North Carolina and Minnesota to make their utilities infrastructure not only renewable, but resilient so it can bounce back quickly, saving citizens and local businesses money and lessening hassles of an outage. Cities in both states offered plenty of tips for bringing resilient utilities to other cities.

Other public works topics include high-tech crosswalks, an innovative bridge project being conducted in Michigan and utilizing city lights to relay a message, whether going pink for Breast Cancer Awareness Month or strutting out the old blue, white and red for the Fourth of July holiday.

We hope you find this issue to be insightful, and if you get a chance, check out the #NPWW tag and see what other public works departments are up to. Happy Independence Day! 



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## Upcoming Editorial Calendar

**AUGUST 2017**

**Public Safety**

Deadline Friday, June 30\*  
\*early deadline due to holiday

**SEPTEMBER 2017**

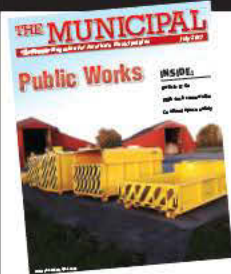
**Going Green**

Deadline Monday, July 31

**OCTOBER 2017**

**Parks & Recreation**

Deadline Friday, Sept. 1\*  
\*early deadline due to holiday





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*With Switch-N-Go Interchangeable Body Systems, municipalities can load a skid steer in the back of a dump bed and not have to tow a trailer, making equipment transportation safer. (Photo provided)*

# Get the job done safely and effectively with Switch-N-Go

**Municipalities say this often, “I have a truck(s) in my fleet that sits idle for long periods of time.” This can happen for many reasons. First, it could be that you have a specialized truck, and you only need that function for part of the week, or for one or two seasons. Second, it could be that you modified your truck body to perform a specific function during certain times of the year, and you don’t change it back until the other season’s work is complete.**

## **Body interchangeability**

That’s where the Switch-N-Go Interchangeable Body System comes into play. The system allows for easy four-season use of your vehicles. Imagine being able to have a spray rig sitting on the ground and for one person to be able to pull it up onto the truck for use for only as long as it’s needed. Then you can

set the spray rig back down and pick up the truck body that you need next — be that a dump body, stake bed, chipper box, dumpster, service bed, salt spreader or just about any other body you can imagine.

Municipalities who must keep a salt spreader ready for snow storms into March or April tie up their trucks for months on

end. Some years the trucks sit unused for weeks at a time because of little or no snow. Some municipalities have a limited number of trucks, and having one of those trucks out of use puts a strain on the amount of work that can be accomplished. In just three minutes, a salt spreader can be set on the ground, and another body can be loaded up. This will prevent a municipality from putting off a job that could be done in early spring because the truck was tied up.

Change your body, not your truck! In the past, municipalities could afford to have a specific truck upfitted for each job they perform. The escalating cost of truck chassis and the constraints on maintenance hours spent has forced a change in the way municipalities buy their trucks and equipment.

**RIGHT:** While improving safety for workers, Switch-N-Go Interchangeable Body System also increases efficiency and proves beneficial toward reducing costs. (Photo provided)



**ABOVE:** Switch-N-Go Interchangeable Body System allows for easy four-season use of your vehicles. Vehicles no longer have to sit around unused in case there is another winter storm. (Photo provided)

Switch-N-Go offers a host of job-specific bodies. An example of this is the heavy-duty storage body, which, among other things, is currently being used by a variety of municipalities for bridge maintenance. The body is loaded with tools and equipment specific to bridge maintenance; additionally, it is secure and lockable. This eliminates having to transport the tools each day to work on the project and ensures that no tools are forgotten from day to day.

### Emergency response

Storms can materialize in what seems like seconds. In a matter of 90 seconds, Switch-N-Go can pull up a pre-loaded flatbed with sandbags on it and be ready to drop them off for citizens to use in flood protection efforts. Or it can transform the dump bed you use daily into a chipper truck to clear roadways of fallen trees.

### Load a "loaded" body

Beyond just changing bodies, you will have the ability to load a "loaded" body. This means that you could easily pull a dump bed with up to 15,000 pounds of material in it onto your truck; you could load a skid steer in the back of a dump bed and not have to tow a trailer; or you could roll logs into a



chipper body that rests on the ground rather than strain your back throwing them up into the truck and then load the chip body onto the truck.

Municipalities of all sizes are currently using the service proven Switch-N-Go Interchangeable Body System — ranging from Departments of Transportation in several states to hundreds of small townships throughout the United States.

### The three "S's": Safety, security and Switch-N-Go


Loading and working out of a body cannot be safer than when the body rests flat on the ground. Flipping a dump bed tailgate down creates a small ramp for loading equipment or wheelbarrowing material easily in and out of the body. Ground-level work is both safer and easier. Worker's compensation claims have been filed for back and neck strain caused by workers lifting materials up and into traditional truck beds.

Switch-N-Go allows not only the transportation of equipment, but also the securing of the equipment at ground level. Bodies are available with lockable doors for project-long security. Equipment transportation is safer on the truck chassis than an inexperienced driver pulling a trailer. Loading materials at ground level for hand-work jobs significantly reduces risk for costly workplace back, neck or shoulder injuries, versus having to lift the materials up to conventional bed height on a truck chassis.

### The value is in the versatility

Truck chassis are getting more expensive each and every year. The days of being able to have a different truck for each type of job you perform are past. You should expect more from your trucks, and Switch-N-Go's versatility will accomplish that for you. Imagine being able to eliminate just one truck out of your fleet. What costs — initial truck chassis purchase, oil changes, registration, insurance, maintenance, etc. — will you save? These savings are on top of time savings while utilizing ground-level loading and frequent body changeovers. The return on investment keeps adding up!

Switch-N-Go fits medium-duty trucks, ranging from 14,500-33,000 GVWR. Body lengths are available from 9 feet to 15 feet. Body styles are limitless, but common bodies are dump, flatbed, stake bed, storage, dumpster, service body, recycler, salt spreader, spray tanks for water/brine/mosquito repellent, etc.

Switch-N-Go is 100 percent made in the U.S., in small-town Hadley, Pa. 

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Information provided by Switch-N-Go

# The Coffee Pot

## Bedford, Pa.



*The Coffee Pot, teetering on the edge of the scrap heap, was rescued by preservationists and moved 100 yards across the highway to the entrance of the Bedford County Fairgrounds. The structure was renovated in 2004 and still receives thousands of visitors a year. (Photo provided)*

by RAY BALOGH | The MUNICIPAL

**If Route 66 is America's Mother Road, the transcontinental Abraham Lincoln Memorial Highway, 13 years older and nearly 1,000 miles longer than its parallel counterpart to the south, is certainly the father.**

Constructed in 1913, the 3,389-mile asphalt ribbon of freedom stretches from Times Square in New York to Lincoln Park in San Francisco. In its heyday, the roadsides of Lincoln Highway were dotted with hundreds of novelty structures designed to entice motorists to stop and indulge in local cuisine, lodging, merchandise and souvenirs.

David Berton Koontz operated a service station along the Lincoln Highway about a mile west of Bedford, Pa.

The days of horse-and-buggy travel when he was a kid had been displaced by the increasingly ubiquitous stream of automotive wonders spiriting their occupants along the open road at 30 miles an hour.

To entice some of those potential customers, Koontz built an 18-foot-high coffee pot next to his station. The brick and sheet metal structure served both as an advertisement and as a luncheonette

where travelers could grab a cup of coffee and sandwich and rest a spell.

As business grew, a restaurant was attached to the coffee shop, complete with access between the two buildings. The addition subsequently served as bar and bus station. A motel was later added behind the buildings.

The location changed ownership several times and for a while The Coffee Pot was run by Bedford County Sheriff Max Norris Sr. and his wife, Sonni.

Vernon Hunt owned a business next to the attraction for several decades. Hunt, 81, retired Jan. 15, 2015, from his screen printing, sign making and embroidery business and has collected many artifacts of The Coffee Pot.



*The Coffee Pot on Lincoln Highway just outside Bedford, Pa., was the signature building in a complex that included a service station, motel and restaurant. (Photo provided)*

“The local Lions Club used to make Coffee Pot pens and sell them for fundraisers,” he said, also listing T-shirts, postcards, matchbooks and novelty items as other Coffee Pot memorabilia he looks for online, or at auctions and collector shows.

“They made quite a few postcards featuring The Coffee Pot,” said Hunt. “One guy from Pittsburgh did a series on roadside attractions, and they’re making reprints of the old postcards.

“But I haven’t found any matchbook covers yet,” though his search continues.

Hunt also preserved his memories with photographs. “Back when there was film, I used a whole roll on The Coffee Pot,” he said.

The attraction also caught the attention of artist Kevin Kutz, who included The Coffee Pot in some of his many paintings commemorating Lincoln Highway.

The Coffee Pot closed in 1989 and “came within an inch of the scrap pile,” according to [www.roadsideamerica.com](http://www.roadsideamerica.com).

“Even after the highways bypassed (US) 30, The Coffee Pot catered to locals, sitting just west of town and across from the county fairgrounds on Business 30. But time took its toll and the place changed hands. For a decade or so it was closed and for sale, tattered and drooping next to a drive-thru beer mart.

“The people of Bedford thought that the Big Pot might have one more jolt left in it, and preservationists managed to save The Coffee Pot in 2003. The Bedford County Fair Association paid \$1 to purchase it, and the Lincoln Highway Heritage Park Corridor, and attraction preservation group, spent \$80,000 to move the building across the street to the fairgrounds and restore it in 2004,” reads the website.

“It was moved in the middle of a snowstorm,” said John Hobart, fairgrounds manager.

“We put it at the fairgrounds entrance, in an area that was not very attractive with an old building ready to collapse and overgrown brush. We got a grant from the Lincoln Highway Association and prepared the site with the grant and tax money. Now the front of the fairgrounds looks very attractive.”

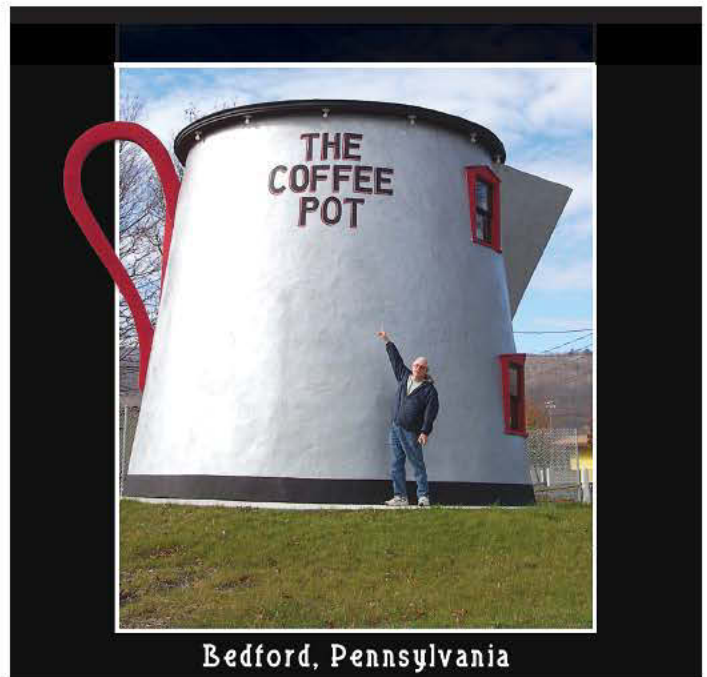
The Coffee Pot still attracts visitors numbering “in the thousands,” according to Hobart.

“Sometimes a bus will visit. Most of our visitors come the first two weeks of October during our fall festival,” he said. “We open the door those two weekends. We have some gift items in there.”

The 90-year-old structure can be a challenge to preserve structurally. “We put a new roof on it and it’s a constant work to keep it maintained,” said Hobart.



*The Coffee Pot, built in 1927 a mile west of Bedford, Pa., was one of hundreds of roadside attractions designed to entice travelers along Lincoln Highway, the country’s first improved transcontinental artery. (Photo provided)*



**Bedford, Pennsylvania**

*Vernon Hunt points to The Coffee Pot, next to which he operated a graphics business for several years. Hunt, 81, retired two years ago but still collects memorabilia about the roadside attraction. (Photo provided)*

Judging from comments on online travel sites, The Coffee Pot is rarely a destination in itself, but it is a “must-see” if one is “in the area.”

“So you’re driving along and all of a sudden there’s a huge coffee pot on the side of the road,” wrote a traveler from Pittsburgh on [www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com). “At first you think, ‘Why?’, but if you love these kind of roadside oddities (as I do) you immediately switch to ‘Why not?’ Park the car, get out, and take that photo—you know you want to.”



## Danville, Ill.

It is not always easy to distill the diverse industries of a municipality into a single seal, but Danville, Ill., has done just that.

Danville was founded in 1827 on an 80-acre parcel, and the sale of lots began April 10 of that year. The first post office was established the following month and city fathers Dan W. Beckwith and Amos Williams drew up a plat map.

Agriculture was a vibrant component of the community's economy. Later, Danville became a major industrial city in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The city, now hosting a population of 33,027, became one of only four junctions in the United States accommodating four major railroads— from Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis— in the mid- and late-1800s. The original train station was named "The Big Four."

The rail yard consisted of machine shops, switching yards and a roundhouse capable of simultaneously servicing 15 steam engines.

For a time, Danville was home to Western Brick Company, the largest paving brick manufacturer in the world, and several buildings, including the football stadium, at the nearby University of Illinois, were constructed of that brick.

Western bricks were also used to lay the track at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

So, it is not surprising the city seal would include symbols of the industries most responsible for the city's growth.

"The seal contains a sheaf of wheat, denoting agriculture," said Sue Richter, director of the Vermilion County Museum. "Now the crops are corn and soybeans, but back then it was mostly wheat."

The gear symbol is "the wheel of industry," according to Scott Eisenhauer, Danville's mayor since 2003. "It is reflective of all our industries."

The other symbol, said Richter, "is a beehive kiln where bricks were baked."

Eisenhauer explained the colors of the seal. "The maroon represents the brick, the blue— as in blue-collar— has traditionally been the city's color and the green is for agriculture."

The shield-like shape of the seal was simple coincidence, according to Richter. "That's just the shape they had."

But the overall meaning is clear: Danville stands as a monument to the balance of agriculture and industry in the making of a robust town of honest laborers in America's heartland. ■



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## Focus on:

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### *More than 200*

The number of people who visited Peoria, Ill., Public Works Department's open house during National Public Works Week, May 21-27. The department showcased its equipment, plus its recently built rain garden. Public works departments across the world also hosted similar events throughout the week.

Source: <http://www.pjstar.com/news/20170525/peoria-public-works-rolls-out-red-carpet--and-rain-garden>

### *\$4.9 Million*

The price tag of Michigan's M-86 bridge project, which is a state-of-the-art, 104-foot structure and the first Michigan Department of Transportation bridge to use carbon fiber composite strand reinforcement in the bulb T-beams.

*Check out the story on page 30.*

### *\$899 Million*

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation started its \$899 million rapid bridge replacement project in 2015, targeting 558 bridges across the state. This project will utilize a private sector team to manage the bridges' design, construction and maintenance for 25 years after construction under a public-private partnership contract.

Source: [www.infrastructurereportcard.org/gamechanger-item/bundling-bridge-projects-to-save-money-and-build-faster/](http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/gamechanger-item/bundling-bridge-projects-to-save-money-and-build-faster/)



**31**

The age of utility worker Jabin Lakes when he died on the job after being overcome by nitrogen fumes. His death led Middletown, Ohio, to dramatically change its training when it comes to confined space safety.

*For more about confined space safety, turn to page 18.*

**\$150,000**

The amount Eau Claire, Wis., paid for its high intensity activated crosswalk system.

*Learn more on page 22.*

**\$27 Million**

The amount of the investment Buffalo, N.Y., is making to upgrade its water system; this will include the replacement of some water mains and supply lines in addition to the installation of an energy-efficient pump at one of its pumping stations.

*Source: news.wbfo.org/post/brown-announces-public-works-improvements-city*

**80,000**

*Read the story on page 34.*

Big River Crossing, a bridge that spans the Mississippi River and connects Memphis, Tenn., and West Memphis, Ark., has this number of energy-efficient LED lights, which offer an expanded palette of more than 16.7 million intensely saturated colors.

**80%**

The city of St. Cloud, Minn., plans to operate on this percentage of renewable energy by 2018.

*Story on page 26.*

**3 hours**

The length of time it took West Chester, Pa., Public Works Department employee Stephen Bannon, with the help of fellow public works employee Kevin Garris, to rescue a 4-week-old kitten from a storm sewer.

*Source: www.dailylocal.com/article/DL/20170526/NEWS/170529865*



*City of Middletown, Ohio, utility workers work on a sewer line repair in their city. The department lost one of its own in 2010 when Jabin Lakes was overcome by a gust of oxygen-depleted air after opening a manhole cover. (Photo provided)*



*Middletown, Ohio, utility workers deal with a broken water main. A situation such as this could cause a worker to be overcome by the water and result in an accidental drowning. Middletown utility workers have increased training in all area of confined space safety after losing a co-worker in a 2010 atmospheric hazard. (Photo provided)*

# Always assume hazards exist in confined spaces

By DENISE FEDOROW | The Municipal

**“Stop, drop and roll.” We’ve drilled that into our children so that in the event of a fire — rather than panic — they’d automatically know what to do.**

A similar mindset needs to be implemented when it comes to confined space safety as time and again not adhering to safety training has resulted in a tragic number of lives lost across the country. In most of those cases, lives could have been saved either with proper training or by adhering to the safety standards in which they were trained to operate — instead of letting panic or complacency take over.

A tragic domino effect occurred in Key Largo, Fla., in January, resulting in the loss

of three lives and severely injuring rescue workers who were all overtaken by fumes. According to law enforcement reports to the media at the time, the men were working on a road project and were investigating resident’s reports of smells coming from a drainage manhole. One worker went into the manhole and collapsed, a second went in to rescue him and collapsed, and the third went in and also collapsed. When rescue workers arrived, a volunteer firefighter took off his air pack before entering the hole and succumbed to

the fumes. A second rescue worker put his air pack between his legs so he could be lowered into the manhole. The sheriff reportedly said the 15-foot-deep manhole had ventilation problems and it appeared the workers hadn’t ventilated the hole before going in, nor did they have proper breathing apparatus.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration describes a confined space as an area not designated for occupation but large enough to accommodate a person to get into to provide maintenance and those spaces that have limited access-exit spaces. Confined spaces include tanks, vessels, silos, storage bins, hoppers, vaults, pits, manholes, tunnels, equipment houses, ductwork, pipelines, etc.



Confined spaces have certain characteristics, such as potential to contain a hazardous atmosphere, contain material that could engulf an entrant—like grain in a bin—walls that converge inward or down sloping floors that could potentially entrap a person. They can also have other safety hazards such as exposed live wires, heat stress and unguarded machinery. Entry should not be allowed without proper training or the reviewing, understanding and following of proper procedures.

### Proper procedures

According to OSHA, before entering a confined space, workers should first know how and where to exit. They need to identify any physical hazards and should be properly outfitted in full protective gear, plus rescue and air monitoring, ventilation, lighting and communication equipment. Before even lifting a cover, the air should be tested and monitored for oxygen content, flammability, toxins or explosive hazards. In several recent cases, the workers were overcome before even entering the confined space.

Workers need to maintain contact at all times with a trained attendant either visually,

by phone or two-way radio. This enables the attendant and entry supervisor to order a worker's evacuation, or to bring in the assistance of rescue personnel, if needed.

The National Fire Protection Association takes those guidelines even further in a document called "NFPA350—Safe Confined Space Entry and Work Guide"—viewable at [www.nfpa.org/codes-and-standards/all-codes-and-standards/list-of-codes-and-standards/detail](http://www.nfpa.org/codes-and-standards/all-codes-and-standards/list-of-codes-and-standards/detail)—released last year.

This document is "more prescriptive," according to Nancy Pearce, CIH, senior fire protection engineer at NFPA. She explained that OSHA regulations tell people what to do but don't go into details about how it should be done.

"The analogy I use in my trainings is that I can tell my kids to pick up their rooms—my daughter will dust but leave the toys on the floor, my son will put the toys in a bucket but not dust and neither will make the bed. They each have their own idea of what that means. NFPA350 tells you in detail this is what you need to do," she said. "Like here's how to select a gas monitor; here's how to calibrate it—it's much more prescriptive on how to comply and (suggests) best practices."

*A confined space, such as this stormwater repair that Middletown, Ohio, utility workers are tackling, can be extremely hazardous without the proper training and procedures. (Photo provided)*

### Types of potential hazards

There are different types of hazards that can occur in confined spaces—some obvious and others not so obvious.

"There are multiple factors that can exist," Pearce said. "Those that are introduced into the space like with gas-powered tools or welding equipment and those that are adjacent to the space like a flammable liquid tank or a chemical line nearby."

Some physical hazards that can exist include exposed, energized electrical equipment that could shock or electrify; machinery or equipment with moving parts that could crush or amputate; engulfment with solid or liquid materials; and entrapment.

"Entrapment and engulfment in grain bins has been very common in the Midwest," Pearce said. ▶

Atmospheric hazards could be the presence of flammable gases like methane or toxins like hydrogen sulfide. The space could be poorly ventilated or have improperly stored chemicals.

Less apparent could be depletion of oxygen caused by the decay of simple organic matters like leaves or by rusting metal. It was reportedly a yearlong build up of rotting vegetation at the bottom of the manhole that caused the atmospheric hazard in Key Largo.

Pearce said decreasing oxygen in a confined space is common but just as dangerous is increasing oxygen, which can be a huge fire hazard and was recently depicted in a “Chicago Fire” episode.

Other hazards can also exist adjacent to confined spaces. It could be exhaust from vehicles running nearby or when the cover is removed, releasing toxins into the air.

“The majority of fatalities, historically in confined spaces, have been oxygen deficiencies,” Pearce said.

### Middletown, Ohio

Those who know all too well how oxygen deficiency in a confined space can be deadly are city workers living in Middletown, Ohio. On Friday, May 7, 2010, 31-year-old city utility worker Jabin Lakes died after being overcome by nitrogen fumes when he went to check on odors coming from a sewer in front of Air Products and Chemicals.

Rescue workers assumed he either had a heart attack or slipped and fell, and they didn’t take protective measures or test the air and were also overcome.



*A memorial for Jabin Lakes, a young utility worker who tragically died on the job when overcome by oxygen-depleted air, has been erected on the grounds of Middletown, Ohio’s, public works facility. Lakes’ death was one of several similar deaths across the country when the atmosphere around a confined space is not considered as hazardous. (Photo provided)*

City of Middletown Public Works Superintendent Brian Adams was there that day and said it was “a moment in my life I wish never happened.”

Adams explained two workers responded to the complaint about fumes coming from the sewer. Lakes lifted the manhole cover and was immediately overcome by the oxygen depleted air and fell in the manhole. His co-worker “turned around and he wasn’t there anymore. Luckily, he was wise enough (and) he didn’t go in; he called me right away,” Adams said, adding that they were trained prior to this incident, but their training has definitely changed since that time.

Adams said when he arrived on scene they were working to get a tripod and a

harness. “I wasn’t aware of any gasses,” he said.

He witnessed the first responders get overcome. “They just fell in the manhole. One fireman tried to reach down, and when he bent over, he almost fell in. Right before my eyes — that quickly — they just went limp,” he related.

Adams said everyone on the fire department and police department just backed off then. “They had no idea what to do — it took over 10 hours to get him out.”

Adams said he showed low oxygen levels with his detector and wanted to ventilate but emergency responders were concerned about releasing toxic fumes into the air, so they wouldn’t allow him to ventilate.

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He said this particular manhole was in front of a business that produced nitrogen and a busted line in the ground coming from the factory was the cause of this incident.

Since that tragic day, training has changed “dramatically” as has training for the fire department and other municipal departments. He said they’ve increased the amount of self-contained breathing apparatuses and detectors his department has. He said at that time their air packs only had five minutes worth of oxygen. Now before they even consider popping open a lid on a manhole or any cover, they test — something he admits they didn’t do before.

“Now we lower a hose before picking up a manhole lid and test the air before we pop the lid,” he said. “Before, if we weren’t planning on entering, we wouldn’t even test.”

His employees are provided with more training on the basics of confined space safety, which includes information about different detectors and the definition of confined spaces. All new employees receive this training and seasoned employees are also included.

Now when they arrive on a work site, everyone wears SBCAs and harnesses. They bring extra harnesses with them and their air packs without a hose have about an hour’s worth of air.

Adams said he’d advise others, “Never trust an entry. Whether it’s a door, manhole, storm grate — take everything as not being safe.”

He added that workers never thought twice about the city’s regularly monitored sanitary lift stations, but now they test every time before going in.

Pearce said she often hears, “We were going in there for years’ ... There can be a gas leak underground a mile away that seeps into the ground. It’s very critical not to assume. History means nothing.”

“Take the time to test,” Adams said. “You don’t want a memorial.” ■

## Confined Space Safety

In June the National Fire Protection Association rolled out a program for fire services on confined space safety. The program will have three one-hour training modules on confined space safety, and Pearce said NFPA is making the first module free of charge for fire departments.

Visit NFPA’s website for information at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org) and to view a free five-minute training demo on confined spaces applicable to all industries and municipal departments. The demo video can be found under the “training and events” tab.



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# Technology improves crosswalk safety

By BARB SIEMINSKI | The Municipal



**Remember jaywalking as a kid? Well, outside of that dangerous little practice being against the law, crossing the street has gotten a lot more sophisticated. You still have to look both ways, but there are new items in place that make it easier and safer for pedestrians to use a specially marked, highly visible crosswalk.**

Several cities are opting to use a variety of crosswalk solutions. Last summer, Asheville, N.C.'s, transportation department installed new high-contrast crosswalks, according to Polly McDaniel, communications specialist for the city. She noted the city's aim was to improve pedestrian safety.

These are called ladder-type crosswalk markers, said City Traffic Engineer Jeff Moore. One high-profile area where they've been installed is at the intersection of Haywood Street and Battery Park Avenue. He added, "This location has more pedestrians than vehicles."

The white part is a nonslip thermoplastic that sticks to the pavement. The high-contrast markers also serve as aids to visually

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*Rectangular rapid flash beacons, according to the Federal Highway Administration's website, can "Enhance safety by reducing crashes between vehicles and pedestrians at unsignalized intersections and mid-block pedestrian crossing by increasing driver awareness of potential pedestrian conflicts." (Shutterstock.com)*



impaired pedestrians, who may not be completely blind.

While also improving the visibility of crosswalks for both drivers and pedestrians, some cities are also installing new high-tech signals that aim to streamline crossings.

#### **Lakewood, Ohio, gives high intensity activated crosswalks a go**

According to Joe Beno, director of public works in Lakewood, his city installed its first high-tech crosswalk a year ago in April 2016. The pedestrian hybrid beacon, or high intensity activated crosswalk, is designed to stop traffic only as needed when pedestrians are present at the crosswalk.

"A big challenge in implementing our high-tech crosswalk at the Manor Park and Detroit Avenue intersection was that many residents just wanted the traffic light back that used to be there," Beno admitted. "The most vocal citizens still complain that they want a full traffic signal. People don't tend to call city hall to say that something is going well so most of what we hear is negative. However, the signal is doing its job."

The purpose of a crosswalk, after all, is to get pedestrians safely across the road, either at an intersection or in the middle of the street. Some towns have elected to supplement these specially marked crosswalks with advanced overhead or post-mounted warning signs, flashing lights, audible tones or supplemental pavement markings.

The unrest of the Lakewood residents could just be due to their being used to the way things were and not wanting anything different. So their feelings may gradually change.

Beno brought up another point.

"Our situations were not typical installations because they were replacing fully signalized intersections," he said. "The signals were removed because they did not meet any traffic or pedestrian warrants, but due to the locations of these intersections, the city felt that something was needed here to assist crossing the street."

He added, "I think that reactions would be different if these were locations that had nothing and then the HAWKs were added. Like any crosswalk whether it has a signal or not, pedestrians need to pay attention to

*Asheville, N.C., installed a high-intensity ladder-style crosswalk that increases visibility and improves safety in a high-pedestrian area of the city. (Photo provided by Asheville, N.C.)*

traffic and not assume that every car is obeying every traffic control measure on the road."

Lakewood's Mayor Michael P. Summers noted that there was one other installation of the HAWK pedestrian signal on Madison Avenue, which leads to Madison Park.

He said, "These signals are effective but require driver 'retraining.' We are not used to them in our city. Drivers are unaccustomed to seeing flashing red lights to turn to solid red. We are gradually improving in our compliance with them. More pedestrian activity helps get the point across."

Summers added, "We are coming off a 50-year stretch where cars ruled the road. Lakewood is working hard to balance this with bike and pedestrian activity. This signal helps communicate that all modes are welcome and have a right to share the road." ▶

Asked if he were aware of similar systems for disabilities, Summers said no, "other than the chirping sound. Many citizens who rely on mobile chairs successfully use these signals."

**Neenah, Wis., embraces variety of high-tech approaches**

James Merten, P.E., traffic engineer of Neenah, pointed out that in addition to HAWK, rectangular rapid flash beacon can be used on some crosswalks.

"The reception here has been positive," said Merten. "We installed two RRFB systems this spring — one on Winneconne Avenue (aka Highway 114) at Zemlock Avenue and one located downtown on Main Street at Wisconsin Avenue. The RRFBs have been pretty complaint free. In fact, the crosswalk at Main/Wisconsin has been the largest complaint-producing crosswalk before the beacons were installed. It is on a tight bend on the major street in a downtown setting, resulting in a situation with lots of drivers and pedestrians interacting on a corner with tight vision clearances. We did a traffic survey for the



A HAWK system is designed to stop traffic only as needed when pedestrians are present at the crosswalk. Pictured is the signal at Manor Park and Detroit Avenues. The silver box on the left is the signal controller cabinet to operate the signal. (Photo provided by Lakewood, Ohio)

**On the Web**

To see a HAWK signal demonstration, check out the YouTube video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nty\\_HpzmCrc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nty_HpzmCrc).

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downtown area last year, and this crosswalk was the top safety issue identified in the survey results.”

When it came to HAWK, however, Merten said, “The HAWK has caused some confusion to drivers with the alternating flashing red sequence. Some drivers will stop and wait through the entire alternating red phase and some drivers have falsely assumed that once the car in front begins to proceed, the drivers behind don’t need to stop. However, each vehicle needs to stop at the stop bar before proceeding when the red lights are flashing. We have had to do some public outreach initiatives to help educate the public. While the system hasn’t yielded perfect results, responses have been that it is better than what it used to be.”

Neenah now has seven crosswalks with RRFs, one with a Blinkersign system and one HAWK/pedestrian hybrid beacon. They are all installed on major thoroughfares, some two-lane and some four-lane. All systems are push-button-activated. We have considered using pedestrian detection devices to trigger the beacons, however feel that the push button alternative is safer because it requires an action by the pedestrian before they attempt to cross the street.”

According to Merten, the biggest obstacle in installing these high-tech crosswalks is public outreach, which is very hard to do. It’s not so much organizing it, but rather, “reaching out to the people who are most affected by the device in an impactful and executable manner,” said Merten, adding that statistics by the



*Pictured is the intersection of Madison and Clarence avenues in Lakewood, Ohio, where the city placed a pedestrian hybrid beacon that had previously been located a block east at Grace Avenue. (Photo provided by Lakewood, Ohio)*

Federal Highway Administration seem to suggest that the new crosswalks are safer.

The cost of the crosswalk varies. Eau Claire, Wis., paid \$150,000 for its high-intensity activated crosswalk system, and other cities have comparable bills. Some research online can provide cost estimates of various systems. **M**

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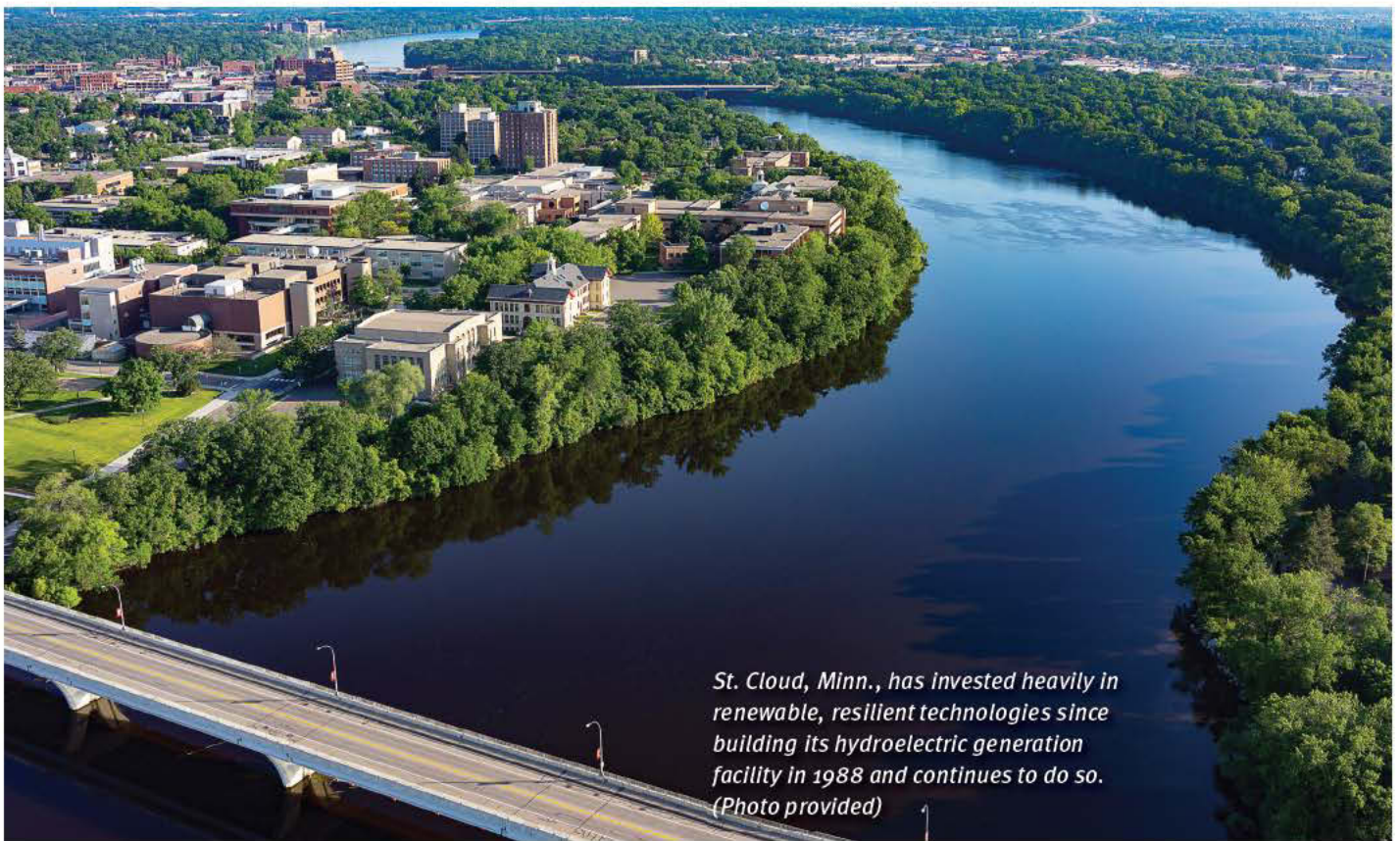


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*St. Cloud, Minn., has invested heavily in renewable, resilient technologies since building its hydroelectric generation facility in 1988 and continues to do so. (Photo provided)*

# Building resiliency in communities through utilities

By ELISA WALKER | The Municipal

**U**NPREDICTABLE EXTREME weather has become normal in the world, which is why municipalities have started taking the initiative to make their utilities—including electricity, water and wastewater—more resilient in retaliation, especially since outages can last for weeks and crank up residents' bills. Hurricanes, flooding, tornadoes and wildfires have been known to severely affect communities that haven't set up their utilities to bounce back as quickly, which is why taking the initiative to create a plan and strategy is imperative.

Being aware and prepared to adapt to unforeseeable circumstances is what can

build a strong city infrastructure. With the ever-changing times and updated technology systems, municipalities now have resources available to use that they didn't have 10 or 20 years ago, such as smart meters, to regulate energy or green developments that will allow gradual change to the community.

After experiencing the severity of natural disasters, coastal states had began resiliency projects years ago while more Midwest states like Minnesota decided that preparing for

sustainable energy would pay off in the long run. Due to their differing extreme weather experiences, they took different routes that appear to be beneficial for their communities.

## What's happening in North Carolina?

Many cities in North Carolina have a common focus on customer service, resilience and cost effectiveness. Benson, Kinston and Wilson are three examples of cities that took the time to implement a long-term vision for a system of resilience by installing smart





**LEFT:** The town board of Benson, N.C., made the decision to implement smart meters. Pictured from left are Dean McLamb, Fred Nelson, Max Raynor, Mayor William W. Massengill Jr., Jerry Medlin, Cassandra Stack and Will Chandler. (Photo provided)

**BELOW:** Pictured is a 220 kW solar array located at the wastewater treatment facility in St. Cloud, Minn. Working directly and communicating with power providers will make headway toward resilient utilities. (Photo provided)

meters for electricity and water. Smart meter systems enable staffers to recognize problems, such as electric outages or water leaks, and address them quickly, which allows them to bounce back efficiently after unpredictable disasters.

Benson had created a long-term strategy to lower electric rates, which resulted in the investment of the smart meter. Towns like Benson and Wilson were able to move toward the smart grid system to jump on problems as they happen while improving customers' experiences.

"In Wilson's case, it was made all the more doable by its city-run fiber optic network, making for great communication between monitoring devices," explained Ben Brown, the advocacy communication associate for the North Carolina League of Municipalities. "That long-run spirit also motivated the town to give itself plenty of raw water and treatment capacity for the future with redundancy of service. Wilson saw the importance in redundancy and made the investment for reliable, resilient essential services. It can be tedious but our members always want to be careful about system implementation."

Kinston has been installing smart electric and water meters, carefully observing and witnessing positive benefits such as a lower



call volume during outages. Crews are automatically alerted to address them, which frees municipal offices up for communications and other important tasks. After more time and confidence is gained with the system, Kinston will plan to expand it.

"Wilson's resilient broadband network was a major benefit. It's powered by a number of serving facilities and helped ensure solid communications and responses to the same end," elaborated Brown. "There are so many other ripple effects here. Another important piece is data analysis. These smart systems enable town officials to look at trends, map patterns, pinpoint problems and plan solutions more reliably than before. Models and predictability are not just great for the health of the utility, they're also cost and potential life savers."

#### What are they doing in Minnesota?

St. Cloud, Minn., has had a hydroelectric generation facility on the Mississippi since 1988, which was already a step taken towards renewable energy decades ago. As technology continued its advancement, St. Cloud sought proposals to implement solar energy into their platform. By integrating technology for renewable energy, the community has the opportunity to gradually phase green infrastructures into the area such as permeable concrete and changing street lights.

"We're not so different from other Midwest communities. We're just looking at more sustainable operations," commented Public Services Director Patrick Shea. "It's been challenging but that's part of what makes providing public services fun. You learn new things and overcome obstacles. It's been interesting in learning more about what renewable ►

**LEFT:** Many cities in the U.S. and around the globe have been investing in smart meter systems. The system records the consumption of electric energy at regular intervals. (Photo provided)



When Wilson made the transfer to smart meters in hot weather, the town's staff worked diligently with help from water, Gatorade and popsicles to keep them hydrated. Wilson's citizens are very appreciative for all that the workers do. (Photo provided)

energy programs are out there. It's allowed us to work more closely with providers and programs they offer with energy use. There wasn't a lot of literature or communities doing what we wanted to do. So it was fun to venture out and start from scratch."

One of the biggest challenges St. Cloud faced was getting decision-makers on board. Unlike Wilson, Benson and Kinston who easily had backup from decision-makers, St. Cloud had to battle the misconceptions with accurate information. In a day and age where information rests at the fingertips, misinformation has been spread abundantly.

Not many states in the Midwest have taken full advantage of renewable resources yet, which has given St. Cloud a head start. The city plans to operate 80 percent on renewable energy by 2018. As the city continues forward, it plans to look into more developments and other unknown areas of renewable energy it has yet to explore such as green rooftops. By doing this, it is building opportunities by observing each building and asking, "How can we update this facility to be more energy sensitive and efficient?"

**Want this for your municipality? Here's what you do**

Municipalities who have shown initiative and zeal towards creating more resilient utilities all say the same thing: Plan carefully ahead of time and don't expect it to be a quick project. Much thought and research should go into projects like this because it is a complete shift in the community. Literature must be read and other municipalities



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***“Being aware and prepared to adapt to unforeseeable circumstances is what can build a strong city infrastructure.”***

with similar communities should be sought out for advice for this to work successfully.

Long-term visions and plans are necessary as building resilience and preparedness isn't something that can be achieved quickly. Months or even years of data on energy use — as well as research — are required to create a successful infrastructure. It's an all-or-nothing project that must be taken seriously with unrelenting determination from every team member.

“Make sure you have staff on board and a group of professionals around you,” recommended Shea. “People who will stay with it and (don't) allow things to slow down. If you don't have a champion with you, there's plenty of opportunities for it to

be delayed. You have to apply yourself and stick with it.”

Timing may also be an imperative aspect when making changes. Benson had intentionally changed over electric meters during a low-consumption, low-demand period. The NCLM sees communications with customers in North Carolina continually improving, especially in a more digital systematic age that will help towns stay ahead of problems and recover quickly while reducing costs.

“Based on the communications we've had with our municipalities about moving to smart grid systems, I suggest planning well ahead and don't get distracted by other projects or special initiatives. Focus solely on the conversion,” advised Brown. “Communicate



*Photographed is a future solar garden on city property in St. Cloud. (Photo provided)*

the project clearly with the customers to let them know what's happening along the way. Be clear that any investments or changes are meant to save time, money and improve quality of life.” **EM**

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## New bridge over the Prairie:

# Michigan DOT replaces historic M-86 bridge

by JULIE YOUNG | The Municipal

**ABOVE:** Work on the new state-of-the-art M-86 bridge is expected to wrap up in September 2017. It is the first Michigan Department of Transportation bridge to use carbon fiber composite strand reinforcement in the bulb T-beams. (Photo provided)

**It's never easy to let go of the past, much less embrace the future, but the Michigan Department of Transportation managed to span the divide and do both when it announced plans last year to replace the M-86 bridge over the Prairie River in St. Joseph County. The \$4.9 million project, which began in July 2016, not only included plans to create a new and innovative structure, but also plans to relocate, restore and preserve the original one.**

### A bridge grows in Michigan

Although historic records on the M-86 bridge are scarce, it is known that the 93-year-old camelback pony truss was originally built in 1923 on Telegraph Road over the Rogue River in Detroit. It was created to the same state standard as the bridge in New Boston with a main span of 90 feet and a roadway width of 27 feet. In 1938, the bridge was removed and



*Workers get ready to place one of the new bulb T-beams at the M-86 bridge project site. The new M-86 bridge will be one of only two bridges in Michigan to feature the innovative bulb T-beams. (Photo provided)*

rebuilt at the Prairie River site as part of the Public Works Administration’s response to the Great Depression. Contractor L.W. Lamb oversaw the project, which replaced a pin-connected, 82-foot “low type through truss span” with a 14.67 roadway width.

The M-86 bridge is significant because it is the last remaining bridge of its kind on the State Trunkline Highway System and is eligible for the National Register. Due to its historic nature, MDOT is compelled to save it, however, the bridge is too narrow to handle the traffic volume along the M-86, and since 2013, MDOT has been looking to replace it.

**“T” time**

The new M-86 bridge is a state-of-the-art, 104-foot structure that is the first MDOT bridge to use carbon fiber composite strand reinforcement in the bulb T-beams. Carbon fiber strands provide many benefits to bridges as they are lightweight, non-corrosive and offer high tensile strength, which should extend the life of the bridge by 25 years or more. According to a MDOT press release, the concrete beams will be monitored in order to compare their longevity to beams that use traditional reinforcements on other new bridges constructed in the state.



*The bulb T-beams, along with the carbon fiber reinforcement, are expected to reduce concrete cracking, deterioration and corrosion that is typical in traditional steel reinforced bridges. (Photo provided)*

MDOT has been an innovator when it comes to utilizing carbon fiber reinforced polymers in its bridges. The first one to use this type of reinforcement was, appropriately,

the Bridge Street Bridge in Kent County. Called “the bridge of the future” when it was constructed in 2003 by researchers at Lawrence Technical University, it replaced the ▶



*Carbon fiber strands provide many benefits to bridges as they are lightweight, non-corrosive and offer high tensile strength, which should extend the life of the bridge by 25 years or more. (Photo provided)*

traditional black steel reinforcement with a combination of stainless steel and carbon fiber materials. This latest design further reduces cracking and other deterioration by optimizing the post-tensioning process and replacing post-tensioning cables with these stronger, corrosion-resistant carbon fiber composite cables.

From 2006 to 2008, researchers studied and tested these materials to find that transverse post-tensioning significantly improved the load distribution among side-by-side box beams and that increasing post-tensioning levels improved the overall behavior of the bridge model. The new M-86 bridge will also be one of only two bridges in the state to feature an innovative bulb T-beam that, when paired with the carbon fiber reinforcement, is expected to reduce concrete cracking, deterioration and corrosion that is typical in traditional steel reinforced bridges. With these new designs, MDOT expects the new beams will last far longer and will cost taxpayers a lot less in terms of maintenance.

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"We're hoping that the use of carbon fiber composite cables ... could give us a bridge with a 100-year service life," said Matt Chynoweth, MDOT project contact in the Bridge Field Services Division.

#### Out with the old

For four months, traffic into Centreville was redirected as the old M-86 bridge came down and installation of the new bridge began. The project was only delayed by two weeks and met its budget. According to Nick Schirripa, in the MDOT communications office, there were some hydrology issues as the crews poured concrete into the water for the new bridge footings, but those issues were resolved quickly and the project moved along fairly smoothly.

As for the old M-86 bridge, it will eventually be moved to Crystal Springs Road, which has a lower traffic volume and will make a more effective home for this versatile truss. Contractors will replace portions of the rusted steel and paint the entire structure before re-installing it with more than 1,800 rivets. Schirripa said he is looking forward to the completion of the whole M-86 bridge project.

"It is expected to be completed by September 2017," he said. **M**



MDOT hopes that the use of carbon fiber composite cables will result in a bridge with a 100-year service life. (Photo provided)

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# Municipalities using lighting to send a positive message



*Big River Crossing, which connects Memphis, Tenn., and West Memphis, Ark., over the Mississippi River, can be lit up to commemorate special events. Here it can be seen lit up like a large American flag for holidays such as Independence Day. (Photo provided by bigrivercrossing.com)*

by NICHOLETTE HODGSON | The Municipal

**Using lighting to send a message is becoming more prominent in municipalities across the country. Lights can be used as celebration for holidays and to show solidarity with other cities and countries when tragedy strikes such as in France, Belgium and Orlando, Fla.**

James Freed, city manager of Port Huron, Mich., also used lighting to honor police officers worldwide. Using blue lights loaned to them by Philips Lighting specifically for that purpose, Freed arranged to have two thin, blue lines light up the Municipal Office Center for approximately three weeks. They received a huge, positive community response.

## **Big River Crossing**

Previously a Harahan Bridge wagonway turned abandoned steel structure, Big River Crossing has gained international coverage as the bridge over the Mississippi River connecting Memphis, Tenn., and West Memphis, Ark. Cara Greenstein,

public relations and social media manager at Doug Carpenter and Associates, relayed the story of how Big River Crossing came into existence.

Local citizens thought it would make a good bike and pedestrian trail, so a local entrepreneur and philanthropist, Charlie McVean, teamed up with Congressman Steven Cohen to make it a reality. McVean filled two private planes with prominent Memphis citizens to travel to Omaha, Neb. They successfully convinced Union Pacific Railroad to work with Memphis, Tenn., to build Big River Crossing.

Congressman Cohen then led the effort to secure a \$15 million federal transportation grant to lead project funding. Countless

partners worked together to raise the public and private funds necessary for completion.

The bridge opened on Oct. 22, 2016, and houses over 80,000 energy-efficient LED lights provided by Philips Lighting. According to Greenstein's information, the number of lights "offer an expanded palette of more than 16.7 million intensely saturated colors or finely tuned pastels and hues in a variety of beam angles so that the full volume and depth of the bridge is showcased."

Hundreds of possible configurations and light distribution patterns are available, including "static displays or dynamic color shows that can be programmed to commemorate special events, holidays and important civil causes." It was recently pink for Easter, green for Earth Day and the colors of Colombia's flag as this year's honored country in the Beale Street Music Festival.

In the first six weeks alone over 65,000 pedestrians and cyclists experienced Big River Crossing, which introduces a "grand, unmatched perspective of the Memphis



**ABOVE:** Downtown South Bend, Ind., has become a “must-see” destination, partially thanks to the River Lights. The lights turn the St. Joseph River and Riverwalk into a canvas that can also be interactive. It helps attract many summer festivals. (Photo provided)

skyline and rushing Mississippi River.” It also won the prestigious American Architecture Award, which was juried in Athens, Greece.

The locals are experiencing a revived affinity for the waterfront thanks to Big River Crossing, and the interconnectivity between Memphis and Arkansas has positively affected the economic development of the trailheads. Property values of homes with a view of the bridge are also expected to rise. The bridge, linking not only two towns but two states, “marks a physical and metaphorical feat of the tristate Greenprint development, serving as a driver for continued developments in the area.”

### River Lights

In order to create a “must-see” destination with a light display that wasn’t purely ornamental, Aaron Perri, executive director of South Bend, Ind., Venues, Parks and Arts, worked with artist Rob Shakespeare. The South Bend River Lights were installed in 2015 as a part of the city’s sesquicentennial celebration.

As part of the interactive display, Shakespeare “designed built-in programming that responds to various movements at eight different sculptures on each bank of the river. In addition to the interactive element, the artistic display of light changes cycles through various shows each evening – turning the cascades and bridge into a dynamic and artistic canvas.” The lights also have “secrets,” according to Perri, ▶

**RIGHT:** The South Bend River Lights are lit up with special colors for holidays, for example red and green for Christmas; however, they can be changed at any time to reflect the city’s mood. (Photo provided)




such as the ability to tell time and flashing the time in synchronicity at the top of each hour. The River Lights change seasonally with special colors for holidays and settings for major victories by Notre Dame or the South Bend Cubs.

Perri stated, "The lights can be changed to reflect the city's mood at any time. Our city has come together at the River Lights to stand in solidarity with France, Orlando and Belgium. We honor our police force and celebrate alongside community organizations. The night Prince passed away, it was raining so the lights quickly got in the spirit to pay homage via a 'Purple Rain' display."

The River Lights total project cost was approximately \$800,000 and has become a symbol of civic pride that also evokes emotion. It was funded almost entirely by private donations, corporate gifts, grants and donations of material and labor. However, according to Perri, the city is hoping "to expand upon its success by introducing



complementary light installations along other portions of our Riverwalk."

Although costly, creative lighting displays send their own message that the city is a place to visit. Not only do light displays help make the city a destination for tourism, they can also bring about a greater sense of unity and pride within the community. 

*Over 80,000 energy-efficient LED lights are housed in Big River Crossing. These lights were provided by Phillips Lighting. They opened the gates on Oct. 22, 2016, and over 65,000 pedestrians and cyclists experienced the bridge in the first six weeks. (Photo provided by bigrivercrossing.com)*



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# Firework displays bring communities together

by CATEY TRAYLOR | The Municipal

**Annual fireworks displays are usually one of the most anticipated events of summer. Sure, the big bangs and bright lights are fun to admire, but there is a lot that happens behind the scenes before crowds can enjoy the show.**

According to Charles Back, lead pyrotechnician for Orville, Ohio's, yearly Fire in the Sky event, before a fireworks show of any sort can happen, three procedures must be followed.

"First, you have to get a fireworks permit from your respective city or township. This must be signed by local law enforcement agents stating that you may host a show," he said. "Then, you need to make sure both the fire department and police department are on board because they play a large role in safety on the day of the event. Finally, you need to purchase the show from a licensed fireworks company to ensure the product you're receiving is legitimate and safe."

As is becoming the trend with many Fourth of July celebrations, Fire in the Sky is much more than just a fireworks display,

so it takes a lot of coordination across various groups in town to make the event a success.

"Fire in the Sky also features a carnival with games, rides and food, as well a three-day softball tournament with the final game hosted on the evening of the display," Back explained.

Since so many components go into a successful event, Back said the fire department, which acts as the primary planning team behind the event, works in coordination with multiple local departments to pull off the special weekend.

Coordination across multiple parties is a common practice when planning a Fourth of July extravaganza, said Danette Idlett, co-chair of Bowling Green, Ky.'s, Thunderfest event.

Thunderfest is sponsored by the local Kiwanis Club and is in its 46th year of

existence. Idlett has been co-chair with her husband for three of those years and can attest to the collaboration an event of this magnitude requires.

"It takes great community involvement to make this happen," Idlett said. "We can have great ideas all daylong, but without community support and sponsorships, nothing could get done. It's amazing to see a community-owned event bringing everyone from city government officials to construction workers, local college faculty members and volunteers together to make this the best event possible."

Thunderfest is held at the local amphitheater and, in addition to a large fireworks show, features everything from food trucks and carnival-style games to inflatables, a local band, a hot dog eating contest with community leaders and an Army National Guard-operated obstacle course. Without sponsors, the event wouldn't be possible.

"The event is amazing," Idlett said. "But the fireworks alone cost about \$10,000, not to mention the other family-oriented activities



Bowling Green, Ky.'s, Thunderfest is sponsored by the local Kiwanis Club and is in its 46th year of existence. The event has survived due to the support and efforts of many community entities. (Photo provided)

we offer. Our sponsors are the ones who help foot the bill and they are amazing.”

Similar to practices Back described in Ohio, Idlett said Thunderfest coordinators have to work with local government officials to allow the event to happen each year.

“Bowling Green has grandfathered us into its parade permits, because due to the masses of people we have coming, we need to shut down roads to accommodate everyone,” she explained. “In order to do that, we work with the city to obtain a permit. It’s no problem, because once the city realized the impact this event has, they are willing to work with us.”

In addition to a fun night on the town, Thunderfest and Fire in the Sky both draw crowds from surrounding cities. This allows the cities a chance to show off everything they have to offer, share local eateries and activities, and spark economic growth.

Thunderfest operates largely off of sponsorships and donations, and all funds raised go to local nonprofits that impact the lives of children.

Hosting events that easily draw crowds of thousands requires a great amount of collaboration with local enforcement agencies. Rochester, Mich., Fire Chief John Cieslik has been a firefighter for 42 years and recalls helping out with local fireworks shows every year.

While Rochester’s largest fireworks display is actually held in the winter during an event called Fire and Ice, Cieslik said the safety


procedures are the same in the summer, with the additional concern of dry grass as a hazard.

“As a member of the fire department, we follow the National Fire Protection Association’s standards to see how much clearance we’ll need around the fireworks, due to the size of the show,” he said. “Then, we station personnel around the clearance area to ensure nobody goes into the designated area and to respond quickly in case a firework fails or otherwise endangers anybody in the crowd.”

In addition to monitoring and enforcing the clearance zone, Cieslik said a large part of the job on the day of a fireworks show is actually crowd control.

“We work with our local police force to establish a security presence. An event involving fireworks will easily draw crowds of 30,000 people per night, so we make sure to establish a strong partnership to work together to keep everybody safe,” he said.

While fireworks are fun for audiences, Cieslik cautions that the use of explosives is not a game.

“As beautiful as fireworks are, they’re best left to professionals,” he said. “Be aware of your surroundings when you’re at these events, and especially if you choose to use fireworks in a non-commercial way. (Fireworks) may go sideways, and have been known to set fire to structures. You don’t want to turn something fun into a tragedy.” 



Thunderfest is held at the local amphitheater and, in addition to a large fireworks show, features everything from food trucks and carnival-style games to inflatables, a local band, a hot dog eating contest with community leaders and an Army National Guard-operated obstacle course. (Photo provided)



Orrville, Ohio’s, Fire in the Sky event features fireworks and a carnival, complete with games, rides and food. (Photo provided)



Orrville’s fire department acts as the primary planning team behind Fire in the Sky and works in coordination with multiple local departments to pull off the special weekend. (Photo provided)

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# Punta Gorda, Fla., hosts epic Fourth of July festivities

By BARB SIEMINSKI | The Municipal

All over the country, flags are unfurling, the national anthem is being sung to summer skies and high-spirited parades of red, white and blue stride down Main Street USA while high school bands blare their toe-tapping marches. School-free children frolic in the sun and cheer on the baton twirlers. Boats in the harbor gleam with just-washed sails and polished decks; tall ships pull into port to take part in the picturesque festivities.

Happy Fourth of July to everyone from lovely Punta Gorda, Fla.!

This scenic harbor-fronted city of 16,641, according to the 2010 census, takes great pride in its patriotism, thanks to the restoring efforts of TEAM Punta Gorda and the local citizens that are dedicated to keeping their area looking beautiful.

The only incorporated municipality in Charlotte County, Punta Gorda had a lot to overcome in 2004 when that bad boy Hurricane Charley unleashed his wrath on the beleaguered town.

Nancy Johnson, CEO of TEAM Punta Gorda, recalls the destruction well.

"After Charley, local government appropriately had its hands full with public safety, infrastructure and residents' needs," said Johnson. "A group of citizens was concerned about the vision for the town's recovery and very quickly raised more than \$250,000 in just four months to hire noted design firm Jaime Correa & Associates to lead the town in developing a vision for the future.

"It is called the 2005 Citizens Master Plan and was adopted by the city as a guiding document for the recovery and beyond. TEAM Punta Gorda, a 501c3 nonprofit, was formed from this effort and continues to this day to protect and implement the vision. Such areas as preserving our beautiful waterfront, valuing our historic district and building a healthy downtown without sacrificing our community personality are issues we continue to be committed to."

More than a decade later, the group is still hard at work, although its focus has shifted from recovery to community development, said Johnson, who enjoys building partnerships and getting things done.

"TEAM PG works in three major areas: community advocacy, community projects and community service. In addition to monitoring and supporting the careful development of our community, we are especially proud of our service projects. An example would be the Paint Your Heart Out Punta Gorda project, in partnership with Charlotte Habitat for Humanity. Each year 150 volunteers paint



*Pictured is Marion Avenue and a glimpse of the damage left behind by Hurricane Charley. (Photo provided by Punta Gorda)*

eight homes in one day for needy homeowners who need a helping hand. The heart of TEAM PG is its collaboration with the many fine organizations and businesses in this town. We are much stronger when we work together.

She added, "The engine of TEAM is its volunteers - 700 in 2016. Of these, some like to participate only once a year for our service projects or special events. There is a core of 300 volunteers who work on our 20 committees all year-round."

According to Mitchell Austin, AICP, CNU-A, an urban planner/bicycle and pedestrian coordinator in Punta Gorda, the Fourth of July is one of the largest celebrations in the

**LEFT:** Southwest Florida Vietnam Memorial Wall can be seen from the Veterans Garden Gazebo. The project was a collaboration of a constellation of veterans groups in the area, the state of Florida and the city. (Photo provided by Punta Gorda)

**RIGHT:** Moments after the Southwest Florida Vietnam Memorial Wall dedication people walk along it, some seeking names. (Photo provided by Punta Gorda)



The Fourth of July Freedom Swim draws in many water-loving participants. (Photo provided by Punta Gorda)



Punta Gorda takes pride in its patriotism and was even ranked No. 14 on Business Insider's 2014 list of "The 25 Most Patriotic Cities in the U.S." Pictured are flags at Laishley Park. (Photo provided by Punta Gorda)

town. The Punta Gorda fireworks are even 100 percent funded by sponsors and donations; no municipal monies are used.

"Our 4th Fest is spearheaded by the Smuggler's Event Management LLC and is a community-sponsored at Laishley Park that does not receive any taxpayer funds directly from the city of Punta Gorda," said Austin. "The event begins at 11 a.m. with vendors, displays, waterslides—more than a dozen—and live music all day. Of course the grand finale is a spectacular fireworks display at 9 p.m. over the waters of beautiful Charlotte Harbor.

"Another unique aspect of our Fourth of July in Punta Gorda is the annual Freedom Swim. This is an informal event that was begun many years ago by some local freedom seekers who decided to swim, well, more float with the current, across the harbor from the northern


side of the US 42 bridge southwest to Fishermen's Village. The time of the Freedom Swim is dependent on the tidal conditions for that date in 2017."

Also, said Austin, the city had very recently completed an award-winning project at Veterans Park and authorized engineering and construction documents for a phase II project to complete renovations at Veterans Park. The phase I work was to construct the Southwest Florida Vietnam Memorial Wall. This project was a collaboration of a constellation of veterans groups in the area, the state of Florida and the city.

Asked what he personally liked best about Punta Gorda's Fourth of July event, Austin said the greatest part for him was that "it happens on the harbor." He noted, "Growing up in landlocked Atlanta, Ga., I always marveled at video and photos of fireworks in cities that

host the displays over water. It just doubles the excitement of the fireworks in the air with the reflection in the rippled surface of Charlotte Harbor.

"The location also provides the opportunity to view the fireworks from different vantage points along the shore, walking across the bridge, from a small private gathering at a waterfront condo, from a rooftop bar or from the best spot—the event lawn at Laishley Park."

Austin added, "Today, there are times when folks talking to me about planning or something completely random will say how great the city looks now compared to post-Charley days. I just smile and say, 'Yes, it does, doesn't it?'" 

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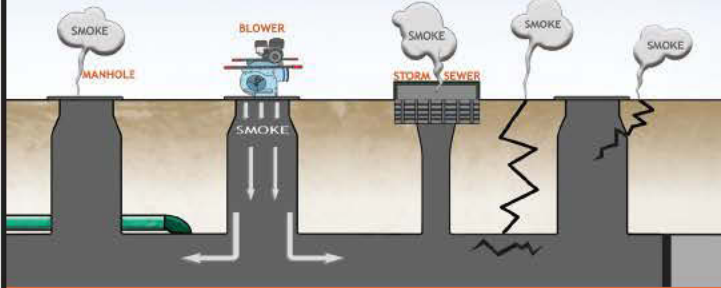
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# Pools show value, albeit costly

By ANNE MEYER BYLER | The Municipal

**Pools are a sparkling part of summertime, especially for children. And while many cities operate pools, they can be difficult to maintain; however, most cities see value in them when it comes to the entertainment and recreational exercise opportunities they provide for citizens. Following are snapshots of various cities' experiences with their pools.**

## **Newnan, Ga.'s, pool and expansion**

In Newnan, Gina Snider, public information officer, said that the city was expanding hours and partnering up with the local YMCA. Previously, Newnan had been partnered with the local county parks and recreation department — though debates exist about starting up a city parks and recreation department — but the county parks and recreation didn't mind giving up the pool contract.

Snider said, "We engaged nonprofit companies, calling them up to see if there's anything they wanted to do with the pool. We looked at public pools and private and

homeowner's association pools in subdivisions. We decided to work with the YMCA because private companies would be a big cost and they didn't want to do such a little program because of liability. The YMCA of metropolitan Atlanta is a huge YMCA just outside the city limits. Their members can come to the city pool now."

YMCA is managing the pool and the city is providing maintenance. Prices will be kept at \$3 per day.

There are 35,000 people living in Newnan now. In 2010, Newnan used a \$942,000 special purpose local option sales tax fund to

expand the pool to 4,200 square feet, which includes a forty-two-foot-wide zero entry; a mushroom water feature; four lap lanes; a waterslide and dedicated catch pool; a splash fountain; tables; pool chairs; and umbrellas as well as a 3,000-square-foot concessions and administration area. They are looking at pool hours expansion during the 2017 season, from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Assistant City Manager Hasco Craver said they are asking the public what its priorities are for the pool and will try to work that out for the city.

## **Kalamazoo, Mich.'s, pool remaining open**

"Kalamazoo's Kik Pool will be open again this summer," Patrick McVerry of Kalamazoo's Department of Parks and Recreation said. "We never had intentions of closing the pool. The idea of the Kik Pool closing came from a budget presentation in front of our city commission in 2016. Our department provided operating numbers for our pool and what the subsidy level was to educate the commission.

**LEFT:** Municipal pools provide fun, a chance to learn swimming in a largely controlled environment and a way to cool off on a summer's day; however, they can be costly to maintain, leaving municipalities to decide whether or not to keep them open. (Shutterstock.com)

We also presented different options, including it becoming a splash pad to save money and generate revenue. After this meeting, we held meetings with key customers who use the pool, as well as community members.”

McVerry added, “Kik Pool is a valuable asset to our community as a place that children can learn to swim and cool off during the summer. It is an aging facility and will definitely need to be updated in the next few years, but the community and our commission won't let it close.”

Pools are expensive to maintain. Between utilities, lifeguards, chemicals, heating, cleaning, water and sewer costs, Sean Fletcher, director of Kalamazoo's Parks and Recreation Department, said the city spent \$103,752 on Kik Pool in 2015, and the pool generated about \$32,000 in revenue from swim groups, pool rentals, open swimming and passes. On top of annual operating expenses, there are hundreds of thousands of dollars needed for longer-term maintenance issues.

### **Ingham County, Mich.'s, pools: some open, some closed**

Lisa StClair, university sanitarian with Michigan State University, had information about some of the pools in Ingham County — those municipal-owned and not run through school districts, etc. During her work for more than the past 35 years with pools, she is aware of pools in Lansing and East Lansing that are remaining open and ones in Leslie that closed in 2015 and Williamston that closed around 2008.

An information sheet on the Leslie pool stated: “The expenses and costs to renovate the pool have outpaced the city's ability to support the pool despite the generous donations, grants and fees collected over the years. Recently, there have been questions raised

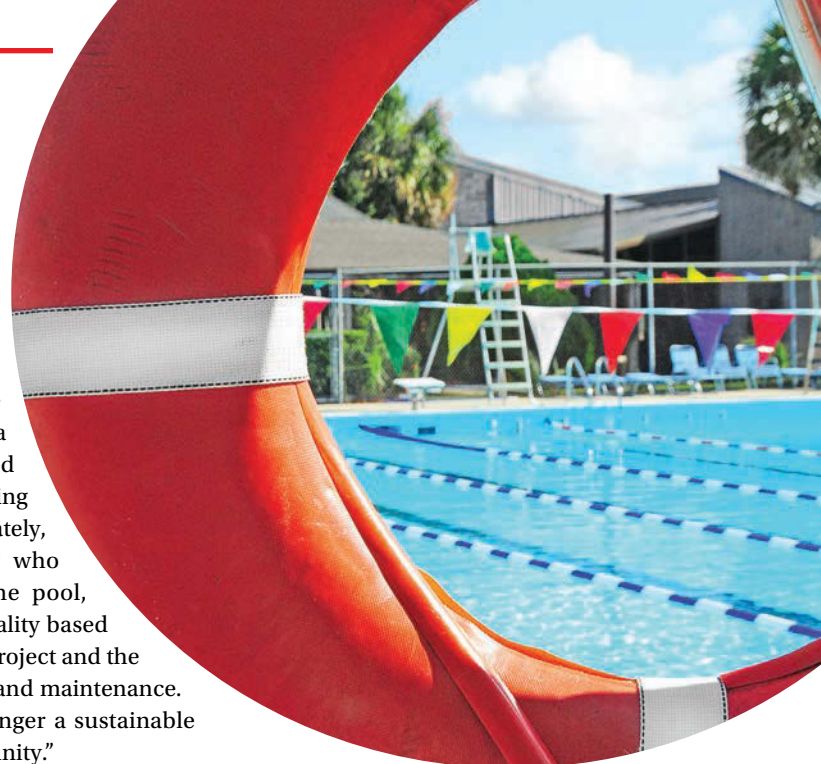
about the city's decision to close the pool. There was a long process behind this decision spanning several years. Ultimately, there was nobody who wanted to close the pool, however it was a reality based on the costs of the project and the costs of operations and maintenance. The pool was no longer a sustainable asset for the community.”

The city had received a \$100,000 land and water grant from the state of Michigan and federal government for pools, which was the highest amount available. But bids for the minimum necessary renovations came in between \$279,000 and \$322,000. The city could not pay the remaining sums.

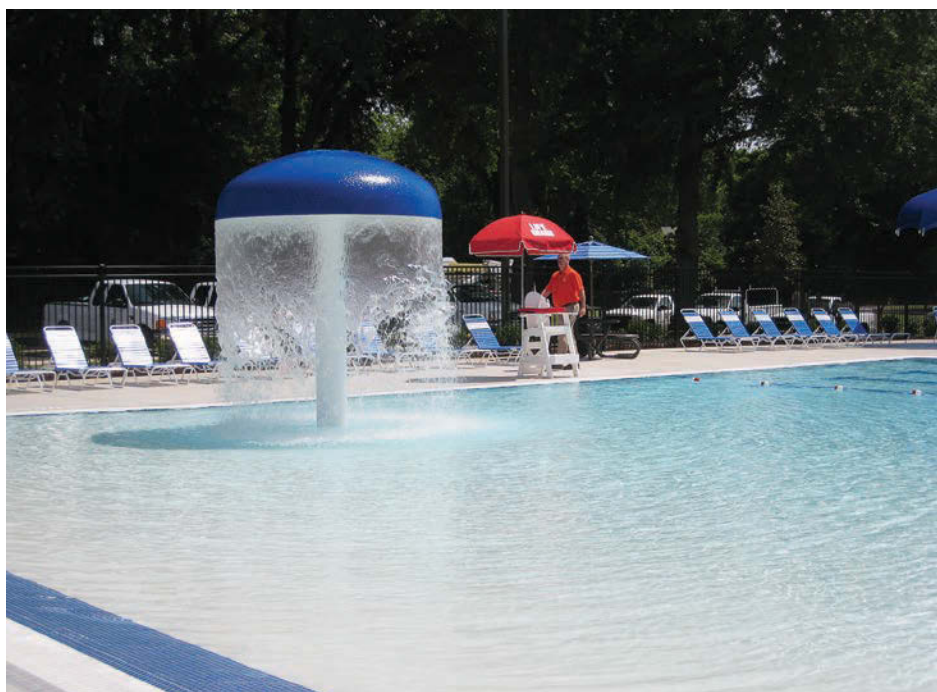
Jeremy Hoeh, with Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality, is part of the office that issues operating licenses to public swimming pools, including hotel and apartment pools, in Michigan. The office had information on the number of licenses issued over the last several years. It works

with local health departments at the county level in regulation of these pools, said Jeremy. “They conduct routine annual compliance inspections as part of a contract for this work.”

For the year 2014, 4,941 licenses were issued, which includes 214 multi-year; for 2015, 4,870 were issued, including 158 multi-year; and then in 2016, 4,835 licenses were issued, including 159 multi-year. This data shows that over those recent three years there was a slight decline in the number of licenses issued, which could correspond to some pool closures during that time. ▶



Shutterstock photo



**RIGHT:** Newnan, Ga., is expanding its pool operations by partnering with the YMCA. The YMCA is managing the pool while the city is providing maintenance. (Photo provided by Newnan, Ga.)

### Troy, N.Y.'s, closings

In Troy, a parks and recreation employee said the pools there need major repairs and there are two pools that will be closed. Deputy Mayor Monica Kurzejeski said in a public meeting that "It would cost as much as \$800,000 just to get the pools in South Troy and Knickerbocker Park in condition to reopen." Even if the city could spend that much, she warned that there were larger structural problems that would continue to need attention.

The information office of Troy issued the following statement, "Upon receipt of the final assessment and condition report of the city's municipal swimming pools conducted by the city's engineering consultant, the administration will work with our team to analyze the results and develop a financially responsible long-term action plan. The administration remains committed to finding solutions which will best serve our residents and strengthen the long-term viability and sustainability of our recreational facilities and programs."



From expansion to closure, the snapshots included showed that no community really wanted to close its pool — pools were seen as an asset to the residents. But when the costs of maintenance and renovation became too high for the revenue sources, some pools had to close. M

*Kalamazoo's Kik Pool will remain open this summer. While it is expensive to keep running, it provides value to its community as a place where children can learn to swim and cool off during the summer. (Provided by Kalamazoo, Mich.)*



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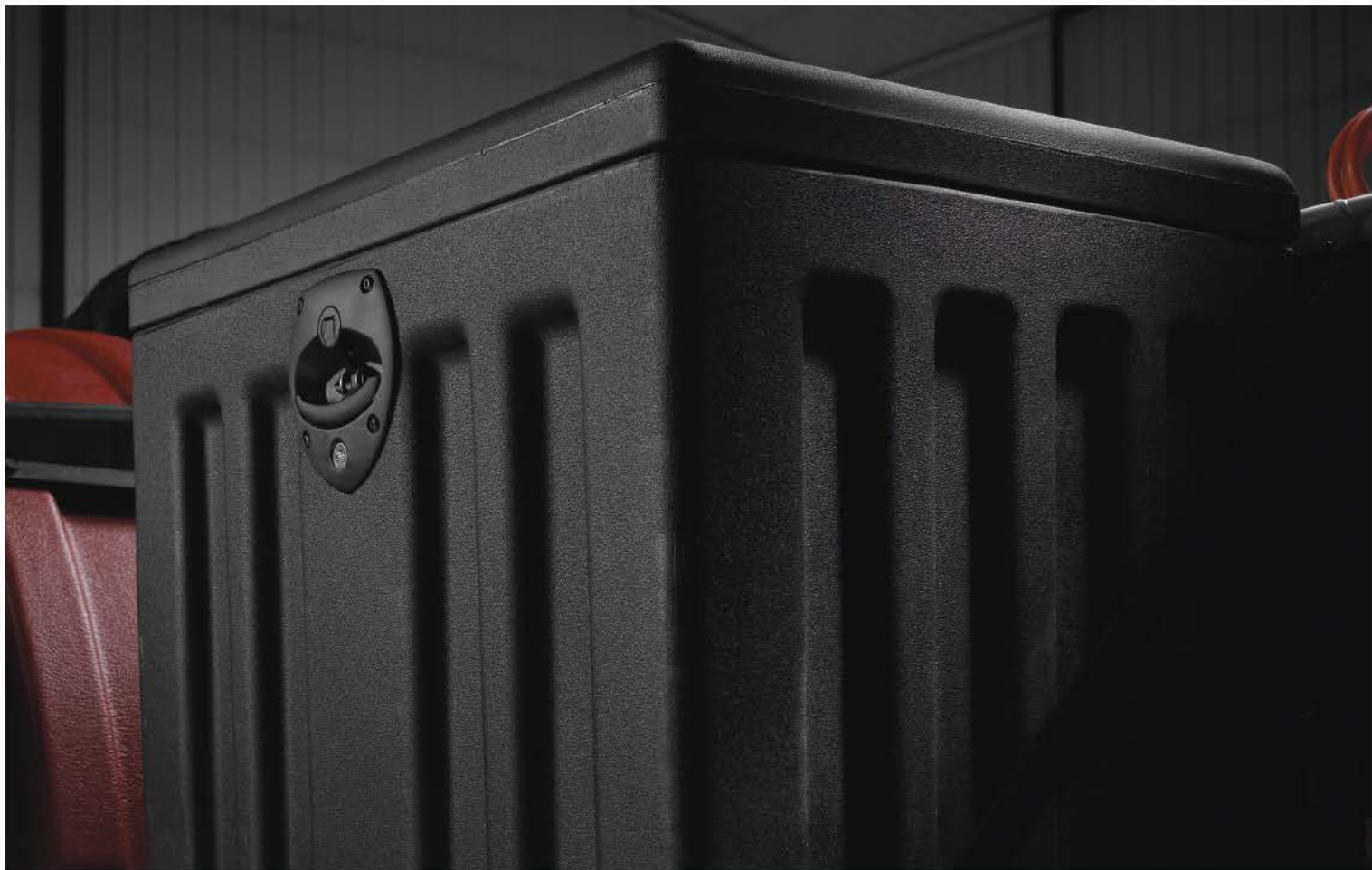
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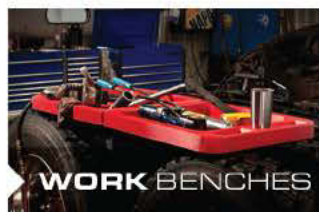
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# Abandoned malls call for creativity

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by CATEY TRAYLOR | The Municipal

**Malls bring a vibrant center to many towns — new restaurants, specialty shops and something for people to do on weekends or to swing by for convenience. But when a mall goes south and becomes abandoned, it's not only an eyesore, it's also an economic trap for cities. That's where Christopher Carreiro sees a huge opportunity.**

A Swansea, Ill., selectman, Carreiro watched as his city's mall went from being a bustling epicenter of town to a largely abandoned shell of what it used to be.

"We have a mall here that's been rapidly deteriorating for the last decade," he said. "After one of our largest anchor stores closed, they were never able to find another tenant. We're in danger of that happening again with the Sears store location now and I don't want to see that."

With the deteriorating space in the back of his mind, Carreiro started brainstorming on some other town projects that needed attention. Then, the Sears branch located in the mall announced it would be closing in April of this year. That's when it clicked.

"We have some huge municipal capital needs that the city needs to get taken care of, and at the same time, we have this mall that's just sitting there," he said.

Carreiro started putting together a proposal that sounded crazy — using the abandoned space in the mall to fulfill the city's capital needs.

Swansea's municipal affairs are currently operating out of two town hall facilities, as the division had grown too large to be housed in one. The highway department is in great need of a new garage for its vehicles, and the local animal shelter has been on the hunt for a new location for a while. Not to mention, Swansea has very little recreational space for citizens, and lacks ample storage for municipal supplies.

In Carreiro's proposal, each of these concerns is addressed.

The abandoned Sears store in Swansea mall leaves more than 100,000 square feet of space unoccupied. According to Carreiro's estimate, this would be more than enough room for all of the city's needs, with room to expand in the future.

"We could buy the building," he said. "Sears already has a fully operational car facility, so that's a plug-and-play for the highway department. The store has an open floor plan, so we'd be able to do a minimal buildout to create office space for our town hall needs, and we could dedicate between 20,000 and 30,000 square feet to storage alone. There's



*Swansea, Ill.'s, once bustling mall has declined over the years; however, a proposal is in the works that would transfer city government departments into its abandoned Sears, giving room to expand while taking care of an eyesore. (Photo provided)*

also a portion of the building that's detached that could serve as the new animal shelter."

In addition to being convenient, the proposal would save the city major dollars in the long run.

According to Carreiro, the municipal needs for Swansea would total nearly \$12 million if they were to build new facilities. His proposal would eliminate that cost and expedite the time it would take to make those changes.

"Cost is definitely a driving factor here," he said. "Think of the millions of dollars this



*Swansea's animal shelter has been looking for a new space for quite some time. If the proposal to purchase the vacant Sears store becomes reality, the shelter could move into a detached portion of the building. (Photo provided)*

would save taxpayers if we did this. If the municipality wanted to build new construction, it'd cost about \$550 per square foot, multiplied by the 10,000 square feet minimum we'd need. This facility is already there and, at 100,000 square feet, is plenty large."

While Carreiro's idea might seem off the wall, it's not totally unheard of.

The Alton Square Mall in Alton, Ill., faced similar problems with anchor stores failing to thrive.

In an effort to avoid storefronts sitting abandoned, the city constructed the Hayner Public Library in Alton Square Mall. Still surrounded by other shops as well as eateries, the library has brought new life to an otherwise deteriorating space.

According to a March article in The Telegraph, Alton's local newspaper, additional plans are being made for the mall, including a major renovation from the traditional mall concept to an enclosed mall, featuring smaller, up-and-coming stores. The proposal also features the construction of a movie theater, the demolition of the former Macy's building and the relocation of small stores on the top floor to ground level.

John Mulherin, vice president of Government Relations for Hull Property Group, which is handling the construction, said this project has been a long time coming, but uncertainty about the future of the mall's anchor stores has slowed progress.

"You aren't very stable when you don't have an understanding where you are," Mulherin said in an interview with The Telegraph. "We now have a little more clarity."

The Alton Square Mall lost Macy's, leaving 135,000 square feet of abandoned space. That space, which isn't easily filled, would not only be an eyesore but also compromise the integrity of the mall itself.

"(The store) can remain empty, and then it is an empty appendage on an otherwise full mall," Mulherin said. "It could cast a negative pall on the rest of what is being successful."

Abandoned malls aren't a problem unique to Swansea and Alton, either. In fact, abandoned malls across the nation and what's being done with them are tracked by websites like deadmalls.com, which follows the death and "rebirth" of thousands of former mall spaces.

But sometimes, it's best to take a shot in the dark and see what happens.

"Unconventional is the way to go," Carreiro said. "You've got to think outside of the box and see what would work for your city. Although nothing has been set in motion yet, we've received a lot of positive feedback on our proposal, and I'm looking forward to revitalizing the center of town once again." **DN**



*Swansea's municipal affairs are currently operating out of two town hall facilities, as the division had grown too large to be housed in one. (Photo provided)*



*The move to the abandoned Sears building would allow Swansea to move its municipal affairs into one 100,000-square-foot building that would save taxpayer money, rather than building new. There would also be plenty of space left for storage and to expand. (Photo provided)*



*Swansea's highway department is in great need of a new garage for its vehicles, making the abandoned Sears' fully operational car facility appealing. (Photo provided)*

# The move back to gravel

by LAUREN CAGGIANO | The Municipal

**Budget crises have forced many rural governments around the country to revert back to gravel roads. Montpelier, Vt., and Franklin County, Ala., are among them.**

In order to understand the decision, it's important to put the moves in context. It's been generally understood that unpaved roads have been considered the lowest level of service provided. In recent years, some agencies have adopted a more forward-thinking approach by paving less traveled roads with little or no base preparation. Asphalt and construction prices were low, which entered into the equation. Those asphalt roads have run their course and are now difficult and expensive to maintain.

## A myriad of concerns

Michigan is a great example of where these concerns hit home hard. The Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy at the University of Michigan released findings of a public policy survey. The report presents the opinions of Michigan's local government leaders on a range of issues surrounding roads and



*Montpelier, Vt.'s, first street conversion from paved to gravel was the result of feedback from a couple who lived on the street, who noted that the gravel section of the road in an adjoining town was usually in much better condition. (Shutterstock.com)*

bridges in their jurisdictions, from their current condition and maintenance to state and local road funding. Findings in the report are based on statewide surveys of local government leaders in the fall 2014 wave of the Michigan Public Policy Survey.

Poor road conditions pose threats beyond everyday commutes to work, school or other venues. According to the report, "this discrepancy is most striking — and perhaps most troubling — when looking at the impact on the ability of public safety personnel to

**LEFT:** Some citizens may consider gravel a temporary measure, which makes education important to ensure that it is understood that only when revenue matches the costs of the investment will a road be repaved. (Shutterstock.com)

**RIGHT:** Budget crises and maintenance costs are driving some cities and counties to eye different approaches when it comes to crumbling roads, including reverting back to gravel. (Shutterstock.com)



respond to an emergency. Where roads are reported to be in overall poor condition, 52 percent of local leaders say that they have a negative impact on emergency response capabilities in the jurisdiction. But where roads are 'good,' 78 percent say they positively impact emergency response."

The concerns don't end here. Per the report, less tangible ones include "citizen satisfaction with local government, local economic development, the jurisdiction's fiscal health, and local tourism." Although not at the forefront, 31 percent of local leaders in Michigan rated their roads as poor, also citing negative impacts on the local agricultural sector.

#### **A means to evaluate**

But how does one evaluate the condition of the roads? The city of Montpelier, Vt., has embraced a formula to do just that. According to a 2016 report from the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine, the city uses a 100-point scale to assess road conditions. For example, "with a rating of 0 indicating a completely failed road and 100 an excellent road. PCI ratings from 1 to 13 are low enough to be considered 9 or 10 for conversion from paved to unpaved"

#### **A viable alternative**

According to Montpelier Director of Public Works Thomas McArdle, the initial conversion was prompted in part by taxpayer feedback. Around 2009, funding for street maintenance was also very limited, so they were in need of a viable alternative to meet the demands of drivers.

"The idea for our first street conversion was actually suggested by a couple residing on the street who commented that the street is only paved for about a mile and the gravel section

of the road in the adjoining town was usually in much better condition," he said.

Since that time, funding for street maintenance has increased significantly, he noted. However, if circumstances called for converting other roads to gravel, he said his team would certainly consider it.

#### **A tough spot**

Franklin County, Ala, which has a population of about 31,000, still faces the same budgetary challenges. David Palmer, county engineer and a 27-year veteran with the county government, said the budget has remained flat while costs have risen disproportionately. In order to slash costs, the agency reduced personnel from 48 in 1991 to 17 currently, he said.

The agency runs lean, but that still doesn't resolve budget shortfalls. The county government, he said, has no authority to raise revenue, which puts them in a tough spot. They must grapple with the statehouse to lobby for local infrastructure. All the while, constituents view the government as the enemy, yet still expect it to provide basic services, like infrastructure.

Serving taxpayers meant looking at ways to curb costs while still delivering on its promise. According to Palmer, the current ratio is 540 miles of paved versus 260 miles of unpaved, compared to a 600 to 200 ratio in 1991.

The move to converting a portion of its roads back to gravel has been a boon to the community in some ways. He said the converted roads, which are gravel with a layer of crushed limestone, are holding up well.



*David Palmer, county engineer, Franklin County, Ala.*

Taxpayer feedback has been largely positive or neutral.

"By using the lowest common denominator, some people are glad that they are getting off roads that were once deplorable," he said.

Others have asked when the roads will be repaved and see the gravel as a temporary measure. This calls for some education on the part of the county. Only when revenue matches the costs of the investment will the county be able to return to exclusively paved roads, he said.

Palmer is aware that day might never come if the status quo remains. That's why he encourages public works leaders to take a proactive approach to infrastructure. Sometimes that calls for going back to gravel roads. His advice? "Enter into it with the understanding that it's not going to be easy," he said. "You gotta fight ... to convince leaders at the state and federal levels that infrastructure is critical." ■

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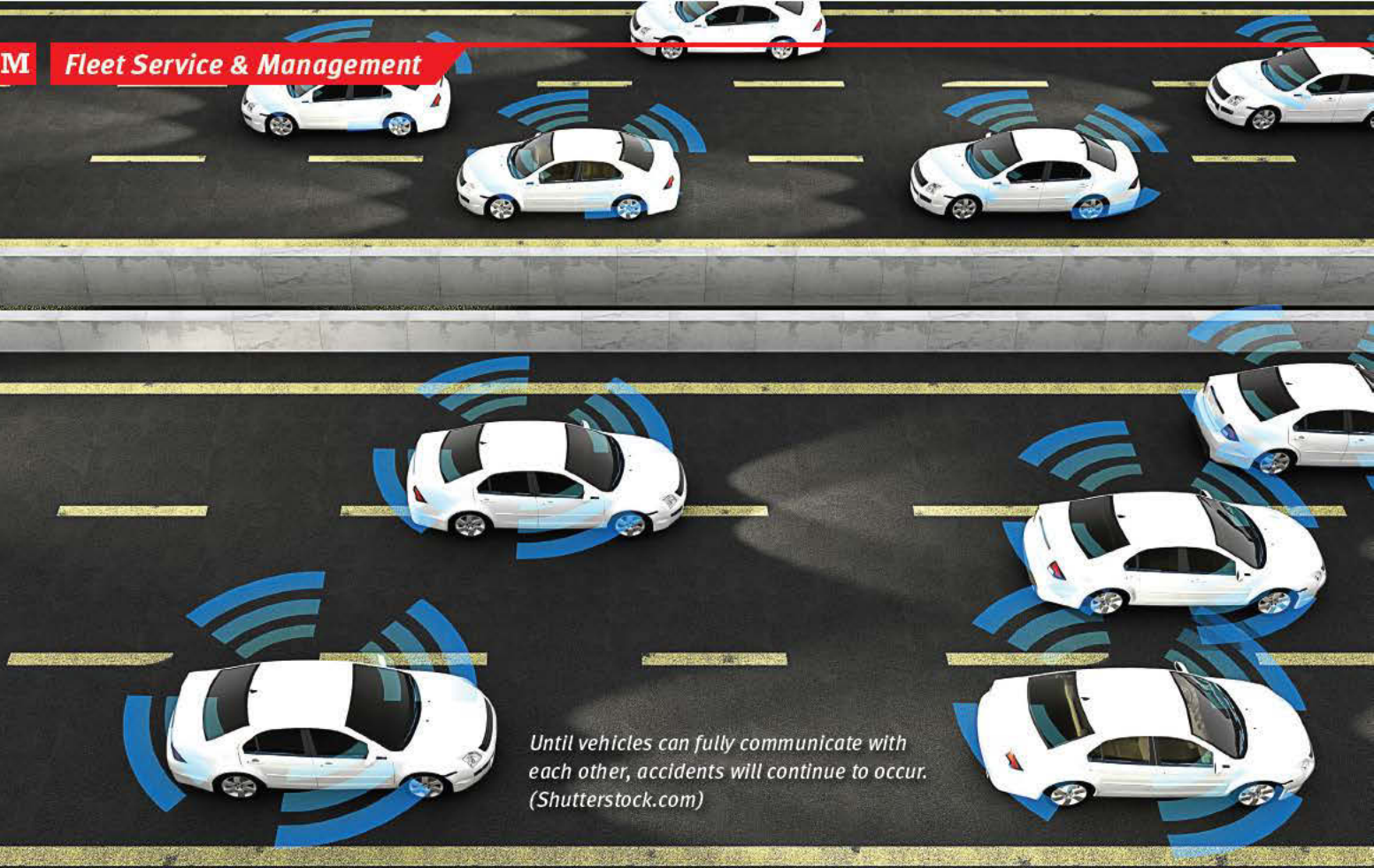
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*Until vehicles can fully communicate with each other, accidents will continue to occur. (Shutterstock.com)*

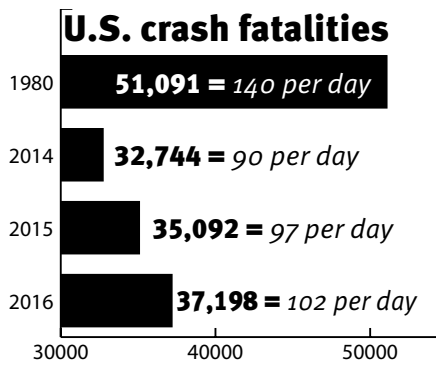
# Maintaining good driving habits, even as technology makes things ‘easier’

by SARAH WRIGHT | The Municipal

**Autonomous vehicles are leading headlines, with expectations that by 2020 there will be nearly 10 million cars with defined self-driving car features, according to a report from BI Intelligence. Motley Fool noted in August 2016 driverless cars could save about 33,000 lives every year in the U.S. alone. “We could see up to 90 percent reduction in traffic fatalities and save about 10 million lives worldwide every decade,” Chris Neiger wrote in his article “12 Jaw-Dropping Driverless Car Facts.”**

While this statistic is promising, autonomous vehicle technology is not there yet, as seen by a fatal crash May 7, 2016, in Florida. The autonomous car, on a bright day, failed to detect an 18-wheeler that was making a left-hand turn, resulting in the autonomous vehicle going under the truck and killing its driver who made no evasive maneuvers. The truck driver noted he had heard a “Harry Potter” film playing from the other vehicle.





*Pictured are U.S. crash fatalities. In 2015, fatalities increased for the first time in decades to 35,092, or 97 deaths each day. 2016 saw an additional increase by 6 percent to 37,198 deaths. Distracted driving is considered to be a factor in these increases. (Data provided)*



*Electronics are considered by many to be the main culprit in distracted driving. Moser recommends banning the use of electronic devices in vehicles by completely shutting them off, noting even notification sounds can have a Pavlov's dog effect on drivers. (Shutterstock.com)*

Some driving events prove too complex for self-driving vehicles' algorithms to deduce the proper action.

While fully autonomous vehicles remain in the future, there are autonomous features making appearances in vehicles across the market.

"My fear is that with a lot of the autonomous features being placed in vehicles now drivers are starting to lose their safe driving habits," Phil Moser, vice president of Advanced Driver Training and a former accident investigation reconstruction specialist with the Philadelphia Police Department, said during his presentation at the 2017 NAFA Institute & Expo in April.



*Phil Moser*

He warned drivers can become too dependent on technology, allowing drivers to become dumb and lazy. Using as an example the calculator, he said, "We used to be able to do long division with a piece of paper and a pencil, right? Now it's seven times nine plus eight, hold on let me get my calculator out. Really these things have made us dumb ... We've become too dependent on some of this stuff. I'm not saying that we are less intelligent; I'm just saying we're not as versed as we used to be. The same can happen with driving."

#### Driving the statistics

He noted there are some scary statistics. In the '80s, 51,091 Americans died in one year, an average of 140 per day. With the advent of passenger safety features — seat belts, airbags, etc. — that number had continually decreased until in 2014 the number of U.S. deaths was down to 32,744. However, in 2015, there was an 8 percent increase to 35,092 deaths, a figure followed by a 6 percent increase to 37,198 in 2016 — 102 deaths each day.

"In two years, we had a 14 percent increase in fatalities," Moser said. "I think a lot of that has to do with distraction, and I think electronics have a lot to do with that distraction."

During the years of decreased fatalities, seat belts — along with airbags — played a vital role in reducing deaths in vehicle crashes. Seat belt usage grew from 14 percent in 1987 to 87 percent in 2013. Moser explained increased usage owed a lot to public service announcements, education and enforcement of seat belt laws — to the point seat belt usage became a habit for vehicle passengers.

However, some autonomous safety features have contributed to bad habits. Still, Moser said, "I love it (autonomous features); I love all that stuff. Anything that will save (lives)... But we haven't used the stuff properly."

With autonomous features like forward brakes, lane-keep assistance, steering assist and others, drivers can get lazy, thinking "Well, this will take care of me. Therefore, I don't have to scan ahead. I don't have to see

the car up ahead. I don't have to obey suggested speed signs." Moser added, "Don't be too dependent on that technology."

If a driver is dependent on automatic forward-collision braking and not scanning ahead, the people behind might be caught off-guard when the feature suddenly kicks in. Technology can also fail. He noted some people have turned off features like lane departure because they kept getting false readings. Similarly, features like blind spot notifications can miss something. In other instances, drivers might feel comfortable doing other things while driving, such as texting, because they have certain features.

Moser said, "Don't lose your good habits."

#### Ingrain good habits in your fleet

When it comes to fleets, Moser stresses the need to develop good habits by cultivating positive attitudes in drivers. And while he does not work with many municipalities, he advised, "Don't just throw someone into a dump truck, or a car even. They might have a driver's license, but they might have spent most of their life riding the bus."

At the very least, cities and towns should check motor vehicle reports, with Moser saying, "Anyone can do those. You have to be prepared."

Moser, who served as a police officer, recounted while he was with a borough in Pennsylvania, a snowplow driver had been involved in an accident. The driver had a suspended license and ultimately lost his ▶

job. Fortunately, there had been no injuries. "They hadn't done a records check."

Even if records clear, cities and towns should complete an evaluation of a driver to ensure they are able to drive and can drive the specific vehicle they will be using for the job, which includes having the proper license. This evaluation requires further considerations, with Moser posing the questions: Who will do the evaluation? Who knows what driving will be required?

"It could be another driver with good standing," he said.

An additional step is training. Moser noted many drivers don't know basic rules, such as the three second following rule, keeping enough space when stopping so the rear tires of the vehicle in front can be seen or even how to routinely scan their surroundings.

"These are little things they are not aware of," Moser said, noting while they are common sense, municipalities need to discover a way to have their drivers buy into them. This is particularly true for the younger generations of drivers who have never been without the internet.

"It's an addiction," Moser said of electronics. "There needs to be education ... There needs to be a policy in place that there are no electronics in the vehicle. Headsets are no different."

He explained studies have shown hands-free cellphones are just as dangerous. "There is more focus on the phone than if there is someone beside you in the passenger seat," Moser said, adding



Drivers should not become too dependent on technology, including backup cameras. (Shutterstock.com)

passengers in the car will be quiet when the situation requires it or let the driver know to "look out," something someone on a phone cannot do. "Hands-free is no different. Every study has come up with the same results."

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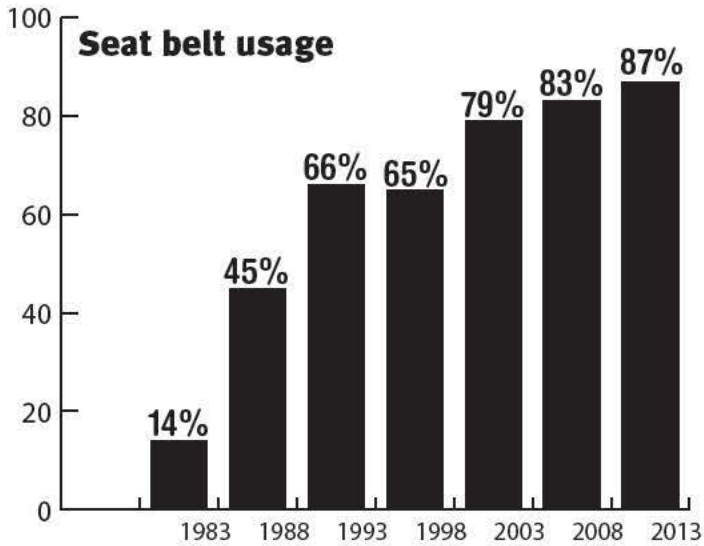
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Education and enforcement have led to seat belts becoming second nature over the years. Similar steps may be needed to keep good driving habits intact as new technologies emerge. (Data provided)

up: 'Did you have a policy in place?' ... In civil litigation, everything is admissible.'

Moser noted backup cameras have their uses, such as if a child darts behind a vehicle and for depth perception, but they don't give a full view of surroundings. Walk-arounds and looking over the right shoulder still remain the best course of action.

"We have to make sure that our drivers are aware of what is going on and they aren't too dependent on technology," Moser said. "They have to be safe. They can't lose their safe driving habits." He noted if there is an accident, it's the city's name and logo on the vehicle people are going to see.

Moser said he hopes one day his grandchildren will not have to worry about crashes. "I look forward to that day," he said. "But until vehicles are talking with each other, it's not going to happen."

And even when that technology becomes reality, there are some dilemmas that remain to be seen: Namely, when presented with a group of children in the roadway or crashing into a tree at the side of the road or a tractor trailer, which would the car chose to hit? "They are preprogrammed," Moser said. "Who is going to make those decisions? It's going to have to make a split second decision, probably quicker than we can as humans. But what decision does it make?" **M**

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### July 24-26 Fleet Safety Conference

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### July 26-29 International Association of Fire Chiefs' Annual Conference & Expo

Charlotte Convention Center, Charlotte, N.C.  
[events.iafc.org/micrositeFRIconf](http://events.iafc.org/micrositeFRIconf)

### July 30-Aug. 2 Joint ITE/CITE 2017 Annual Meeting and Exhibit

Sheraton Centre Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
[www.ite.org](http://www.ite.org)

## AUGUST

### Aug. 2-4 2017 Midwest Green Fleets Forum and Expo

Hilton Columbus Downtown, Columbus, Ohio  
[www.cleanfuelsohio.org](http://www.cleanfuelsohio.org)

### Aug. 15-16 Midwest Security & Police Conference/Expo

Tinley Park Convention Center, Tinley Park, Ill.  
[mspce.com](http://mspce.com)

### Aug. 17-19 Florida League of Cities Annual Conference

World Center Marriott, Orlando, Fla.  
[www.floridaleagueofcities.com](http://www.floridaleagueofcities.com)

### Aug. 27-30 NIGP Forum

Salt Lake City, Utah  
[nsite.nigp.org/forum2016/home](http://nsite.nigp.org/forum2016/home)

### Aug. 27-31 StormCon The Surface Water Quality Conference & Expo

Bellevue, Wash.  
[www.stormcon.com](http://www.stormcon.com)

### Aug. 27-30 American Public Works Association Public Works Expo (PWX)

Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Fla.  
[pw.xapwa.net](http://pw.xapwa.net)

### Aug. 28-31 Florida Recreation & Park Association Annual Conference

Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate, ChampionsGate, Fla.  
[www.frpa.org/conference/confgeneral](http://www.frpa.org/conference/confgeneral)

## SEPTEMBER

### Sept. 10-13 Missouri Municipal League Annual Conference

Tan-Tar-A, Osage Beach, Mo.  
[www.mocities.com/?page=AnnConf](http://www.mocities.com/?page=AnnConf)

### Sept. 12-14 NCSFA 2017 State Fleet Managers Workshop

Des Moines, Iowa  
[www.ncsfa.net](http://www.ncsfa.net)

### Sept. 13-15 Michigan Municipal League Convention

Holland, Mich.  
<http://blogs.mml.org/wp/events/>

### Sept. 17-20 International Economic Development Council Annual Conference

Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
[www.iedcevents.org/Toronto/index.html](http://www.iedcevents.org/Toronto/index.html)

### Sept. 17-20 ARTBA National Convention

Omni Amelia Island Hotel, Fernandina Beach, Fla.  
[www.artba.org/news/training-events](http://www.artba.org/news/training-events)

### Sept. 20-23 North Carolina League of Municipalities' CityVision 2017

Greenville Convention Center, Greenville, N.C.  
[www.nclm.org](http://www.nclm.org)

### Sept. 21-23 Illinois Municipal League 104th Annual Conference

Hilton Chicago, Chicago, Ill.  
[conference.impl.org](http://conference.impl.org)

### Sept. 25-27 ISWA World Congress and WASTECON 2017

Baltimore Convention Center, Baltimore, Md.  
[swana.org/Events/WASTECON.aspx](http://swana.org/Events/WASTECON.aspx)

### Sept. 25-27 F.I.E.R.O. Fire Station Design Symposium

Sheraton Raleigh Hotel, Raleigh, N.C.  
[www.fierofirestation.com](http://www.fierofirestation.com)

### Sept. 25-29 Emergency and Municipal Apparatus Maintenance Symposium

Ohio Fire Academy, Reynoldsburg, Ohio  
[www.oaevt.org](http://www.oaevt.org)

### Sept. 26-28 NRPA 2017 Annual Conference

Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, New Orleans, La.  
[www.nrpa.org/conference2017](http://www.nrpa.org/conference2017)

### Sept. 27-29 Iowa League of Cities 2017 Annual Conference and Exhibit

Davenport, Iowa  
[www.iowaleague.org/Conference2017/Pages/2017PreConference.aspx](http://www.iowaleague.org/Conference2017/Pages/2017PreConference.aspx)

### Sept. 30-Oct. 4 WEFTEC 2017

McCormick Place, Chicago, Ill.  
[www.weftec.org](http://www.weftec.org)

## OCTOBER

### Oct. 1-3 Virginia Municipal League Annual Conference

Williamsburg Lodge, Williamsburg, Va.  
[www.vml.org/2017-annual-conference-williamsburg](http://www.vml.org/2017-annual-conference-williamsburg)

### Oct. 5 Southeastern Wisconsin Fourth Annual Outdoor Public Works/Parks/Building and Grounds Expo

5151 W. Layton Ave., Greenfield, Wis.  
[www.ci.greenfield.wi.us/564/2017-Public-Works-Expo](http://www.ci.greenfield.wi.us/564/2017-Public-Works-Expo)

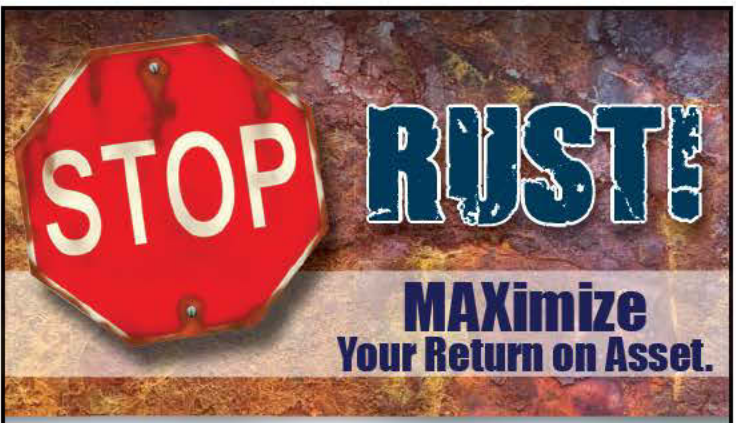


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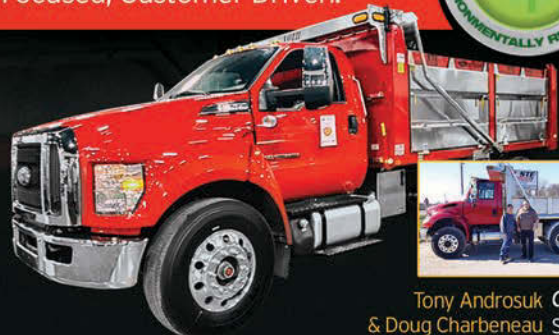


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# MGM leads the pack *in commercial vehicle actuator technology*

By LEN GONZALEZ, JACKIE EDWARDS AND KIM JONES | MGM Brakes

**For 60 years, MGM Brakes has been a leader in commercial vehicle actuator technology, providing service chambers and spring parking brakes engineered to operate in the harshest environments.**

In 1956, when heavy over-the-road vehicles, lacking a reliable air-brake backup device, were experiencing air system failures, MGM's founders came up with an innovative solution to this industry safety problem: designing and patenting the first spring parking brake. Their innovation achieved worldwide acceptance as a simple solution to a serious problem that had plagued the transportation industry for decades.

MGM Brakes rapidly progressed from its humble origins to industry-leader status, developing drum and air disc actuators designed to address the operational

requirements and varied environments of all segments of the commercial vehicle industry. Whichever MGM Brakes product you select, you'll be getting the best product designed and manufactured in the USA by the acknowledged worldwide leader.

MGM manufactures specifically designed brake chamber products for the municipal fleet, to meet the physical demands of the vocational truck fleet. With advances in design that includes Corrosion Fighter Technology and the new Hybrid Neoprene Diaphragm, MGM continues to add value by

decreasing downtime and lowering overall costs-per-hour for the fleet.

For the refuse market, MGM Brakes offers brake chambers featuring the new Hybrid Neoprene Diaphragm, an exclusive MGM Brakes feature. This diaphragm provides additional durability by comprising the oil-resistant benefits of the neoprene diaphragm that faces the air system, while supported by a nitrile rubber diaphragm shell. Combined, these two materials allow for extended chamber life, even through heavy air compressor cycling due to repetitive brake applications. Also included is the patented positive alignment feature that assures proper alignment throughout the brake chamber to prevent power spring skewing, allowing for smoother cycling through brake applications.

**LEFT:** MGM's Severe Service Chamber is a completely epoxy-coated chamber designed to operate in the most challenging environments. (Photo provided)

**RIGHT:** MGM thoroughly tests its chambers for durability under the most adverse conditions. Here, a technician is performing a salt spray test. (Photo provided)

MGM offers a wide range of brake chambers for the fire, first responder, ambulance or other air-braked emergency vehicles. When dependability counts, MGM Brakes responds with the availability of double-diaphragm, wedge and piston brakes in both s-cam and air disc to match all OEM applications.

For the utility/service vehicle, vacuum truck, snowplow or dump truck applications, MGM Brakes manufactures chambers to withstand even the harshest environments. Our tube-type brake chambers have the external breather tube technology, designed to seal out foreign contaminants that could ingest within the brake chamber. Our severe service brake chambers offer additional protection from the elements by providing complete epoxy powder coating on all the metal surfaces on the outside and inside of the chamber in order to resist corrosion from salt spray, brine and other corrosive materials.

MGM offers chambers that exceed the OEM specification for school/activity bus applications. Available with increased power spring force output on our heavy-duty chambers to assure secure parking when loaded on steep hills or grades.

MGM also features the welded yoke technology on all models throughout the product line. The welded yoke provides a positive measurement for the brake chamber's push-rod, assuring the OEM-designated length for maximum efficiency for brake applications. The welded yoke also provides ease of replacement for vehicle shops as well as mobile service and can cut as much as 30 minutes from the standard brake chamber replacement time. MGM Brakes has more welded yoke availability of any brake chamber manufacturer.


Keeping safety at the forefront, MGM offers advanced technologies for the pre-trip inspection. To help with this daily task,



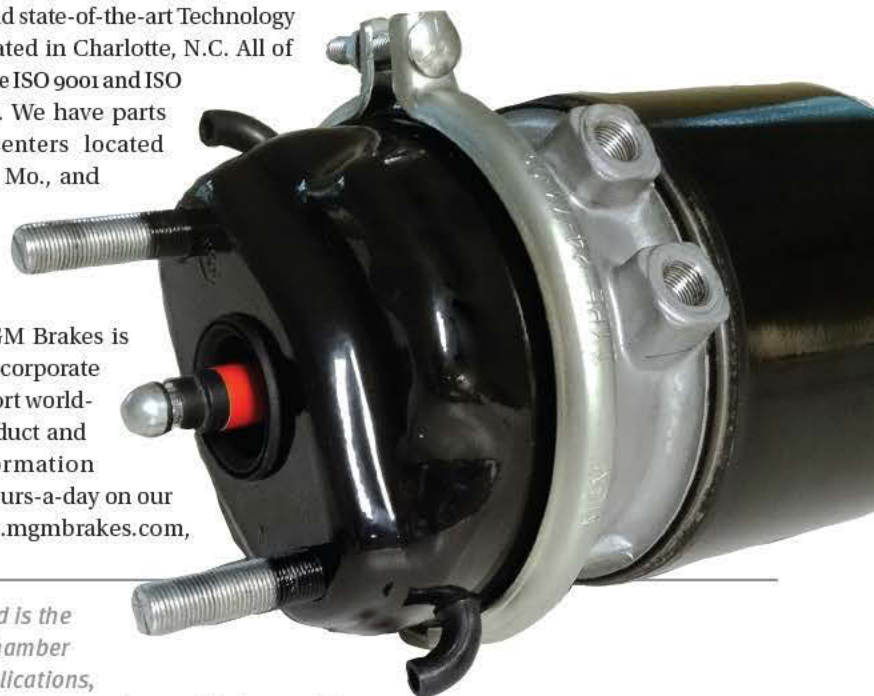
MGM designed and patented, e-STROKE, electronic brake monitoring systems. These systems help with verifying proper brake setup and operation on commercial vehicle drum and air disc brakes, as well as provide continuous real-time brake monitoring on any air brake equipped vehicle.

MGM Brakes is manufactured right here in the USA, with manufacturing plants in Murphy, N.C., and Cloverdale, Calif. Our corporate office and state-of-the-art Technology Center are located in Charlotte, N.C. All of our locations are ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 certified. We have parts distribution centers located in Springfield, Mo., and Toronto, Canada.

Customer service and support at MGM Brakes is superior. From corporate and field support worldwide, plus product and service information available 24-hours-a-day on our website, [www.mgmbrakes.com](http://www.mgmbrakes.com),

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**RIGHT:** Pictured is the piston brake chamber for air disc applications, featuring low air consumption and higher parking spring force in a compact design. (Photo provided)



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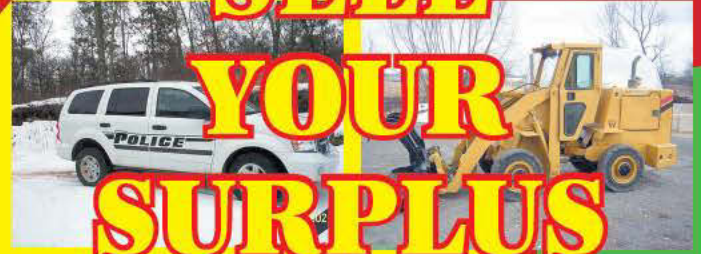
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## Monroe Truck Equipment acquires Towmaster

**MONROE, WIS.** — Monroe Truck Equipment Inc. recently announced it has acquired Towmaster Inc., based in Litchfield, Minn., a leading manufacturer of high-quality tag and large fifth-wheel trailers for the construction and rental markets. In addition, Towmaster is a manufacturer, distributor and installer of truck equipment for the municipal and commercial markets specializing in snow and ice related equipment.



Monroe is a designer, manufacturer, distributor and installer of specialized truck equipment. The company upfits heavy-, medium- and light-duty vehicles for municipal, commercial and fleet customers. Monroe is a portfolio company of Industrial Opportunity Partners, an operations-focused private equity firm based in Evanston, Ill.

The company will remain based in Monroe, Wis. The acquisition of Towmaster will add the Litchfield, Minn., location to its installation facilities in Marshfield, Wis.; DePere, Wis.; Flint, Mich.; Joliet, Ill.; and Louisville, Ky.

Dave Quade, president of Monroe, commented, “The addition of Towmaster to our company is exciting on a number of fronts. Towmaster is a well-run company with an experienced and capable management team. Their trailer product line is a nice extension to our current products. Towmaster’s truck equipment division is well-established and gives us a larger footprint in the upper Midwest.”

Lennie Stulc, president of Towmaster, said, “We are very excited to move our company to the next level. By entering into this relationship with Monroe, we will have access to capital, engineering resources, manufacturing capabilities and an expanded operational perspective. Our goals are to reduce lead times, increase product offerings for both divisions and maintain our high standards of quality and service. The current management team will remain in their roles at the Litchfield facility.”

## Robin Krimminger joins Ranch Hand as outside sales representative

Robin Krimminger has joined Ranch Hand as outside sales representative for the North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia areas.

Krimminger has worked closely with national and regional automotive aftermarket warehouses for over 15 years. Her experience includes sales, business development and market launch and trend analysis.

“Robin has unique and broad industry knowledge. Her experience is in product-based knowledge, understanding new market areas as well as the distributing and manufacturing



Robin Krimminger

processes,” Vice President of Sales Scott McClaugherty said. “Robin is a forward-thinking individual that truly understands the nature of our aftermarket industry, and the way it will shape our future,” McClaugherty added.

Robin holds numerous aftermarket automotive certificates and attended Central Virginia College in Lynchburg, Va.

## Felling Trailers Inc.’s Myhre and Wald earn CWI Certifications

**SAUK CENTRE, MINN.** — In early April, Ben Myhre, a welding trainer for Felling’s Weld Training Center, and Kyle Wald, the vice president of engineering for Felling Trailers Inc., obtained their Certified Welding Inspector Certifications through the American Welding Society. Myhre will utilize his CWI certification to provide a higher level of training for the welding students he



Ben Myhre (left) Kyle Wald (right)

teaches at Felling’s Weld Training Center. For Wald, the knowledge gained from the CWI certification will play an intricate part in engineering Felling’s extensive model offerings. The pair will also work together to create a set of Felling Trailers Certified Weld standards that will be implemented throughout the company.

“Our long-term goal is to become an AWS Certified shop,” Wald said.

Myhre and Wald completed approximately 80 hours of online training covering subjects such as Fabrication Math I; Fabrication Math II; Metallurgy I: Fundamentals; Safety in Welding; Science of Non-Destructive Testing; Understanding Welding Symbols; and Welding Fundamentals. Following this, the two then completed an additional 40-hour Certified Welding Inspector seminar that took place at a testing/training center in Bloomington, Minn.

“Having Certified Welding Inspectors on our team demonstrates Felling Trailers’ commitment to its quality standard and customer satisfaction. Ben and Kyle’s accomplishments took much effort, and all of us at Felling Trailers, Inc. commend them on their achievement,” said Brenda Jennissen, CEO of Felling Trailers Inc.

For information, visit [www.felling.com](http://www.felling.com), or call (800) 245-2809.

## Aries Clean Energy project awarded state’s highest environmental stewardship recognition

**NASHVILLE, TENN.** — Aries Clean Energy’s biomass gasification plant just outside Nashville has been recognized as the driving force behind the city of Lebanon’s receipt of a 2017 Governor’s Environmental Stewardship Award, the most prestigious conservation award in Tennessee.

Now in its 31st year, the awards annually showcase exceptional voluntary actions that improve or protect the environment. Governor Bill Haslam and Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation



Commissioner Bill Martineau jointly announced the award in the energy and renewable resources category after a panel of 22 independent professionals, representing conservation, environmental, agricultural and academic sectors, judged nearly 90 entries from across the state.

Aries Clean Energy deployed its patented gasification technology in design and construction of the plant that was commissioned in late 2016. It is the world's largest downdraft gasification facility, and it utilizes a blend of wood waste from local industries, scrap tires from Wilson County and biosolids from the city's wastewater treatment plant to produce green electrical power.

"We're reducing landfill use, creating clean energy and keeping thousands of tons of carbon out of the air each year, all with a positive cash flow," said Lebanon Mayor Bernie Ash. "This is a win all the way around."



Developing the project involved implementing a partnership between the city and county, as well as a private company, Rockwood Recycling, which specializes in logistics and preparation of commercial wood waste and scrap tires. The gasification plant can

process up to 64 tons per day of material and produce 420 kW of electricity utilizing Organic Rankine Cycle generators.

Because of the partnerships in place, the Lebanon facility annually diverts 8,000 tons of wood waste from the landfill, enough to fill a line of tractor-trailers four miles long; makes beneficial use of 36,000 scrap tires; eliminates 2,500 tons of carbon emissions from the air, equivalent to that produced by 479 automobiles; and generates 1.8 million kilowatt-hours of electricity – sufficient to power 350 average homes for the year.


## APWA announces 2017 Top Ten Public Works Leaders of the Year

**KANSAS CITY, MO.** — The American Public Works Association announced the 2017 Top Ten Public Works Leaders of the Year, which are recognized for the career service achievements of public works professionals.

The Top Ten Public Works Leaders program focuses on outstanding career service achievements



of individual public works professionals and officials from both the public and private sectors in North America. Each of the Top Ten Leaders are recognized for their accomplishments in federal, state, provincial, county or municipal engineering or administration, including career advancement, contribution to technology or job knowledge, commitment to the profession as evidenced by education, training, certification or registration and continuing education, as well as professional excellence and service to the community in large and small municipalities.

This year's APWA 2017 Top Ten Public Works Leaders list includes David Fabiano, P.E., PWLF — town engineer, town of Gilbert, Ariz.; Lee Gustafson, P.E. — senior project manager, WSB & Associates Inc., Minneapolis, Minn.; Patricia Hilderbrand, P.E. — division manager, coordination services, public works department, Kansas City, Mo.; Richard Howard, CFM, P.E., PWLF — public works director, city of Orlando, Fla.; Paul May, P.Eng. — chief engineer, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation, Markham, Ontario, Canada; Robert Newman — director of public works, city of Santa Clarita, Calif.; Jeanne Nyquist — president, Nyquist & Associates Inc., Tigard, Ore.; Darren Schulz, P.E. — director of public works, city of Carson City, Nev.; Kevin Sheppard, P.E., PWLF — public works director, city of Manchester, N.H.; and Larry Stevens, P.E., PWLF — project director, HR Green Inc., Johnston, Iowa. 

News releases regarding personnel changes, other non-product-related company changes, association news and awards are printed as space allows.

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# Moline prioritizes growth



**Tony Loete** | Guest columnist  
utilities general manager,  
Public Works Department, Moline, Ill.

**ABOVE:** Faced with stagnation over the past 20 years, Moline, Ill., is taking a proactive approach with its utilities by partnering with other Illinois Quad Cities to spur development. Moline is specifically looking at marketing reserve drinking water and wastewater treatment plant capacity to nearby jurisdictions on a wholesale basis. (Photo provided)

**T**HE CITY OF MOLINE, ILL., SITS ON THE BANKS OF THE MISSISSIPPI River across from Davenport, Iowa, and is part of a larger bi-state metropolitan area called the Quad Cities. Moline has seen population — approximately 45,000 — stagnation over the past 20 years. This stagnation has plagued all of the Illinois Quad Cities, even while the Iowa side has seen moderate growth. Moline is home to John Deere's world headquarters and was formerly an agricultural manufacturing center. While manufacturing still exists locally, Moline has worked hard to redevelop the city's core rather than focusing on sprawl. Moline and other Illinois Quad Cities also compete for development, trying to keep pace with the Iowa neighbors. An international airport and the Rock River along Moline's south side have served as barriers to growth.

Moline City Council has made new residential starts a top goal, and staff has united like never before in an attempt to implement this goal. Water and sewer piping has been installed around the international airport and needs further extension south to help prompt this growth.

Additionally, Moline is seeking regional partners to help meet this goal. Adjacent communities also seeking to grow have similar challenges with their utilities. Moline has taken the lead in an attempt to promote a regional growth initiative on the Illinois side of the Quad Cities. Timing is everything as contractors begin to mobilize to

replace the Interstate 74 Bridge, the main link to Iowa, which promises traffic headaches for three-plus years. A regional approach, where jurisdictions cooperate rather than compete, has yet to be tried.

Primary obstacles for growth are water and sewer utilities. Moline and other drinking water utilities are facing a challenge as customer usage continues to decline in Moline — and nationally. A recent American Water Works Association study found that within the past 10 years, per capita water usage has declined from 70 to 58 gallons per person per day. This study further noted that per capita usage is expected to continue a declining trend, eventually stabilizing near 39 gallons per person per day. Funding extensions into development areas while holding existing customer rates stable are opposing challenges.

Moline's surface water — the Mississippi — treatment plant was renovated — a \$25 million project — in 2003, but because of declining usage, continues to produce less water each year. Within the past year, Moline's water plant produced on average 4.8 million gallons per day. The production capacity is 12 million gallons per day. We have several million gallons of excess capacity. With the recent multi-million dollar investment in this plant, utility leaders believe that marketing this excess capacity will help offset future rate increases to Moline citizens as labor, energy and chemical costs increase.

In an effort to meet the city council goal of increasing residential housing growth, utility management is looking to also partner with neighboring jurisdictions to meet mutual needs. City staffers are





Rock Island County is set to dedicate two surplus water tanks — a 150,000 elevated spheroid and 100,000-gallon steel ground storage — to Moline as part of a regional effort to encourage development within the Illinois Quad Cities. (Photo provided)




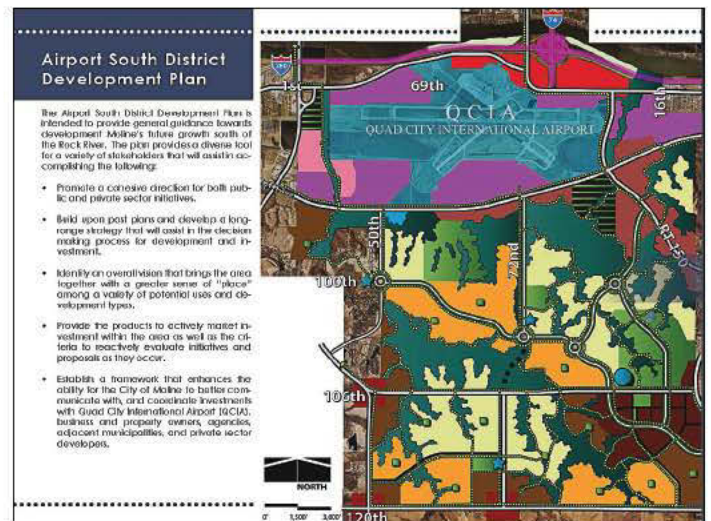
Moline City Council has made new residential starts a top goal, and as a result, water and sewer piping has been installed around the international airport. Further extension south is needed to help prompt this growth. Pictured is a prime development area. (Photo provided)

putting all resources to work, hoping to grow Moline south of the Rock River. In addition, Moline is working with Rock Island County and other jurisdictions, pressing a cooperative approach to regional growth in the Illinois Quad Cities. Moline is specifically looking at marketing reserve drinking water and wastewater treatment plant capacity to nearby jurisdictions on a wholesale basis. Putting their money where their mouth is, Rock Island County is set to dedicate two surplus water tanks — a 150,000 elevated spheroid and 100,000-gallon steel ground storage — to Moline. Each jurisdiction understands that cooperation will promote growth and save taxpayers in the Illinois Quad Cities.

Additionally, talks are underway with other neighboring jurisdictions that use groundwater sources for drinking water with inferior quality. Moline has developed a wholesale water rate for such communities. AWWA and other professional trade groups have commented that regional utility cooperatives will be imperative in the future as regulations tighten and competition for trained staff strengthens.

With a cooperative spirit leading the way, Moline is positioned well as our water was recently voted best tasting in Illinois. Excellent taste, coupled with outstanding reliability, firefighting volume and regulatory compliance places Moline in excellent position in this marketing effort. This effort will help to ensure competitive rates for Moline citizens for decades to come.

Time will evaluate Illinois Quad Cities' regional approach, but with Iowa marching ahead and utility usage declining, communities can wait and react or be proactive and take control. There is nothing wrong with waiting, but action is eventually necessary as Fulton J. Sheen comments: "Patience is Power. Patience is not the absence of action; rather it is 'timing' it waits on the right time to act, for the right principles and in the right way." Moline believes the time is now for action. 



Pictured is Moline, Ill.'s, airport south district development plan, which is intended to provide general guidance toward development, furthering the city's goal to grow south of the Rock River. (Photo provided)

Loete is a lifelong Moliner, having attended high school, community college — Black Hawk — and Western Illinois University in Moline. He has been employed by the city of Moline in various capacities within public works for 27 years. He was promoted to utilities general manager in August 2016. He manages the operations of two public works divisions. The Drinking Water Division and Water Pollution Control Division employ in total 60 employees and ensure continuous delivery and collection of water and wastewater from Moline homes and businesses.

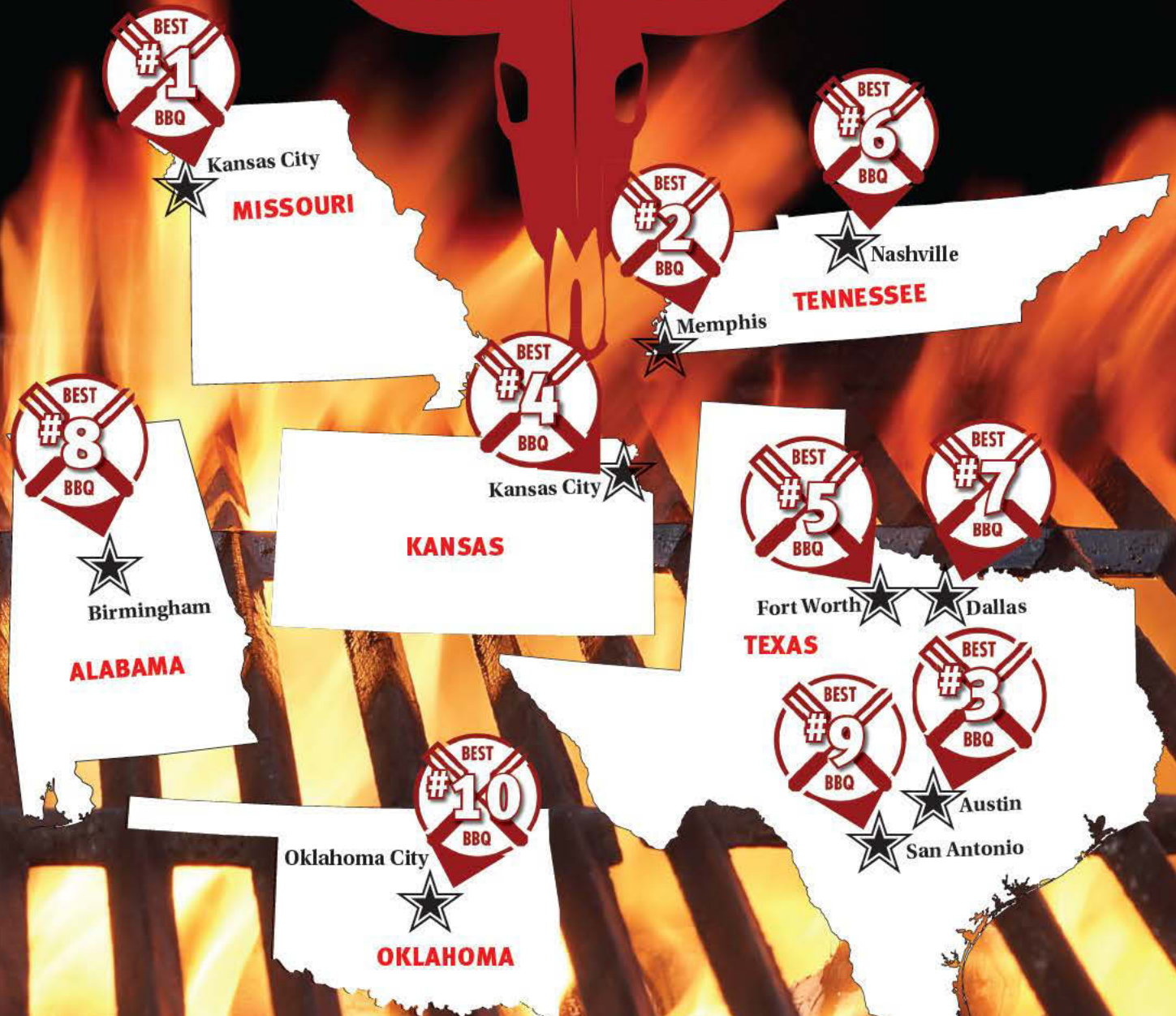
# M TOP 10

## Top 10 cities with the best barbecue

This Fourth of July weekend will undoubtedly see the lighting of thousands of grills across this great nation. To honor the holiday and celebrate one of the U.S.'s tasty pastimes, we are sharing the top 10 cities from Conde Nast Traveler's

April 2016 list of the "Best BBQ in America." These cities were voted for by participants in Conde Nast Traveler's 2015 Reader's Choice Awards. If you are a fan of barbecue, add these cities to your bucket list:

# Best **BBQ** in America



Source: <http://www.cntraveler.com/galleries/2016-04-07/best-bbq-in-america-top-15-cities/1>

**A**

---

AASHTO Re:Source ..... **76**

Alumitank..... **55**

Ampliroll Hooklift Systems..... **48**

Andy Mohr Ford..... **45**

AP/M Permaform..... **28**

APWA..... **79**

Automotive International, Incorporated ..... **61**

**B**

---

Bigfoot Construction Equipment ..... **54**

Bonnell Industries..... **Back Cover**

**C**

---

CTECH Manufacturing ..... **29**

Clearspan Fabric Structures ..... **5**

CVG..... **36**

**E**

---

Ebac Industrial Products, Incorporated ..... **40**

ECM Performance ..... **64**

**F**

---

Fol-da-tank..... **24**

**G**

---

Global Environmental Products ..... **68**

GPS Insight ..... **77**

**H**

---

Harmsco Filtration Products ..... **69**

Henke Manufacturing ..... **5**

Horst Welding ..... **69**

Hotsy ..... **44**

Husky Portable Containment ..... **45**

**I**

---

Imel Motor Sales, Incorporated ..... **63**

**J**

---

JMR Quick Release..... **33**

**L**

---

Land Pride ..... **14**

Lock America ..... **25**

**M**

---

MGM Brakes ..... **66-67**

Mile-X Equipment, Incorporated ..... **40**

Minimizer..... **49**

Monroe Truck Equipment ..... **65**

Moore Industrial Hardware..... **65**

**N**

---

National Construction Rentals ..... **32**

National Joint Powers Alliance ..... **9**

NCFI Polyurethanes ..... **15**

**O**

---

Ohio Association of Emergency Vehicle Training ..... **65**

Old Dominion Brush Company..... **7**

**P**

---

Par-Kan Company ..... **59**

Pik Rite, Incorporated ..... **40**

Pro-Tainer, Incorporated ..... **20**

**S**

---

Scott Bader Company Ltd. .... **61**

Superior Signal ..... **45**

Superior Tire & Rubber Company..... **63**

Switch-N-Go..... **Cover, 10-11, 37**

Syntex Industries..... **44**

**T**

---

The Power Gripz..... **2**

Thor Manufacturing/All Power Supply..... **58**

Toledo Ticket ..... **78**

Trinity Highway Products, LLC..... **37**

Trusco Manufacturing..... **64**

**U**

---

Unique Paving Materials..... **3**

United Storm Water Incorporated..... **21**

**V**

---

Ventrac..... **44**

Victor Stanley ..... **41**

Voth Truck Bodies ..... **64**

**W**

---

Wisconsin Surplus Auctions..... **69**

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