

HISTORY

APWA Southern California Chapter

1951 - 2001



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HISTORY
of
The Southern California Chapter
American Public Works Association (APWA)

1951 - 2001

INTRODUCTION

A few years ago I suggested to the chapter's Board of Directors that a celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the organizing of the Southern California Chapter of APWA would be taking place in the year 2001. At that time I also proposed working on the chapter history which would complement an earlier history brochure entitled, "The First Thirty Years."

It soon became evident that historical information on the chapter's past was not readily available nor did we have an archive where copies of old annual reports, newsletters, photos, and chapter documents were stored. This neglect for preserving past history is probably due to the fact that APWA members are more interested in programs and projects in which they were personally involved during their career and less interested in recording general history. Some of our members saved newsletters and other items for many years, only to discard them after their retirement due to space limitations.

Because so few documents from 1950 to 1980 are available, much of the early history recorded in this publication comes from "The First Thirty Years" or from the memory of our long-time members. And because newsletter photos were discarded over time, the photos of our past presidents have been digitized and enhanced especially for this publication.

Rather than printing thousands of copies of this history for our chapter members and other interested persons, we plan to place the history on the chapter's web page for viewing and printing out, if desired. This history will be a "living document" in that each year appropriate additions to the history can be added to our web page and the links can be updated, e.g. the lists of past presidents, executive board and officers, committee chairs, and recent awards from our national organization.

May I express appreciation for any and all assistance I have received from members and friends of the chapter.

Art Krieger, Chapter Historian

AN OVERVIEW OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION

[Reprinted from APWA website: apwa.net]

The American Public Works Association (APWA) serves its members by promoting professional excellence and public awareness through education, advocacy and the exchange of knowledge. The APWA is an international educational and professional association of public agencies, private sector companies, and individuals dedicated to providing high quality public works goods and services.

Originally chartered in 1937, APWA is the largest and oldest organization of its kind in the world, with headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri, an office in Washington, D.C., and 67 chapters throughout North America.

APWA provides a forum in which public works professionals can exchange ideas, improve professional competency, increase the performance of their agencies and companies, and bring important public works-related topics to public attention in local, state and federal arenas.

The association is a highly participatory organization with hundreds of opportunities for leadership and service and a network of several dozen national committees in every area of public works. Governed by a 17-member board of directors, elected at both the regional and national levels, APWA is an open, flexible association with a diversified membership of 26,000 and a reputation for quality services and products.

THE EARLY YEARS—FORMATION OF THE CHAPTER

Back in 1947, APWA was relatively unknown when a delegation from the Northern California Chapter met in Los Angeles to stir up interest. At that time, the various public works agencies were not in touch with one another, and there was little community of interest or interchange of plans and projects between the several agencies providing public facilities. Even more important, it was evident that public utilities were avoiding contact with public works engineers in general, which made coordination of plans and operations impossible.

It was the California Freeway Act that heightened the need for joint planning between various public works agencies. Local freeways were cutting wide paths through built-up sections of cities and dislocating the existing street grids, sewers, and utilities. Freeways were even impacting the spread of population. Freeway construction soon brought together members of our chapter to practice inter-agency coordination and set the pattern for all the public works planning and construction that followed, including projects such as the multi-million dollar Los Angeles Flood Control Program.

So much public works construction was taking place during the 1950s that intense planning between all agencies was needed to fit projects together. Proven and specific money values soon resulted from coordination. Mutual understanding starts at the drafting table in joint planning—a practice not at all widespread in days past. Coordination enabled all agencies to save time and money.

It was not unusual in those days to cut into a newly paved street to install another underground utility. *Public Works Magazine* published a photo of a newly widened and paved street with utility poles still standing in the roadway. “This is nonsense,” said a utility engineer. “There’s got to be a better way to do it.”

Calling together about ten representatives for cities, counties, utilities, and consulting engineers, Milton Offner and Harry Swearingen, both from the City of Los Angeles, broached the idea of forming an APWA chapter. The idea took hold immediately, and in 1951, the Southern California Chapter was formally started. William M. Henderson, an executive of the Southern California Gas Company, a man of broad experience and distinguished professional ability, was the first president. Henderson was energetic, sincere, and dedicated, inaugurating many new ideas including the first known out-door working equipment show, demonstrating machines in operation. He was reelected president each year until 1956.

Harry Swearingen was the first vice president, Milton H. Irvine, city engineer of Riverside, was second vice president, and Frank E. Randall, Pacific Telephone Co., was the secretary-treasurer. Members of the executive committee were Verne A. Parker, assistant director of public works, San Diego; Stanley M. Lanham, director of planning, Los Angeles Transit Lines; and J.R. Lester Boyle, consulting engineer, Santa Ana. An interested and capable group of experienced men this turned out to be. Southern California Gas Company and Pacific Telephone provided personnel and covered the cost of notices until the chapter got on its feet. Everyone pitched in to make our chapter the best in the association.

Without doubt, Milton Offner was the driving force behind the movement until his death in 1978. In 1953, Offner was elected president of the national APWA. Offner's concept of bringing together diverse and sometimes opposing interests succeeded admirably.

Within a few years of its inception, the Southern California chapter of the American Public Works Association became the second largest chapter in APWA, second only to the combined New York-New Jersey chapter. Subsequently, it became, for a number of years, the nation's largest chapter. The San Diego-Imperial and Central California chapters that spun off later were imbued with the same spirit and activity, as evidenced by the many annual awards for excellence they received from the national APWA.

THE CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

OFFICERS AND GOVERNING BODY

When the chapter was first organized in 1951, the governing body included a three-member executive committee and four officers: a chapter president; first and second vice-presidents; and a secretary-treasurer.

By 1953 the executive committee had increased to seven members plus two officers who would provide a connection to chapters throughout California and to the national APWA. These were called "Western Vice President" and "State Chairman, Southern California." These two national offices were dropped from the executive committee six years later, and the chapter added an "Advisory Committee" composed of the two immediate past presidents.

By 1964 the executive committee increased to 11 members and included the two immediate past presidents, a chapter district representative to APWA, and a chapter member who held the title of "Director of Region VIII of National APWA." Two years later the secretary-treasurer office separated into two positions.

With the formation of the national House of Delegates, our chapter added a delegate to the executive committee, which now numbered 14 members in 1972. Two years later, the chapter delegate was listed as a separate office, and the executive committee fell back to 12 members.

All 67 chapters of APWA have a chapter delegate in the House of Delegates, a key advisory group to the National Board of APWA. Up until 1994, when Ken Montgomery assumed the role of delegate, our chapter members had routinely rotated through the position, making it a one- or two-year stint. It soon became obvious that the most effective delegates in the House were those who served continuously over several years, say, 10, even 20 years. Long term delegates wield more influence because it takes two or three years just to learn the delegate's scope of work and as many as five years to sponsor a bill through the decision-making process.

In 1977 several changes took place: the first vice president title was changed to vice president-treasurer; the second vice president position was dropped; and a new assistant secretary position was created. Up until 1977 the chapter secretary did not advance through the chairs; that position was considered a quasi-permanent service provided by a public utility member.

As chapter branches were created, a branch representative was seated on the executive committee, causing the executive committee to grow to 18 members by 1995. A year later, as we began to implement the chapter's strategic plan, the governing body took on the form it still retains. Today we have seven officers: a president, president elect, vice president for education, vice president for

member services, secretary, chapter delegate, and immediate past president; plus a six-member board of directors at large.

Since 1997 the chapter has had a part-time executive assistant to provide administrative support to the chapter executive board and the membership.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Our chapter offers the following membership categories: An *Individual Membership* is available to any official or employee of a government agency who is actively engaged in the field of public works. *Associate Memberships* are available to persons with an interest in public works activities but do not qualify for an individual membership. *Life and Retired Memberships* are available to long-term and retired members.

An *Agency Membership* has been available for many years to federal, state, local, or other public agencies concerned with public works. The annual fee for this category is based on the population served. *Corporate Memberships* are also available to non-governmental entities and public utilities that furnish public services.

At one time, *Special Chapter Memberships* were available to individuals who wished to receive meeting notifications and participate in local chapter activities but did not want to become individual members. This category was discontinued in the 1970s.

FORMING OF NEW CHAPTERS AND CHAPTER BRANCHES

In 1954 two members were transferred in their work from Los Angeles to San Diego where they immediately set about gathering a group which became the San Diego-Imperial County Chapter. The elected officers were Verne Parker, City of San Diego; Virgil Larson, Pacific Telephone; Fred Hix and Jack Davis, County of San Diego. At about the same time, Mike Carozza of Arcadia accepted appointment as Director of Public Works in Fresno, where he organized a chapter which soon became the Central California Chapter. Both of these new chapters carried the same objectives and vitality as their Southern California Chapter and over time earned a number of national awards.

The bylaws of national APWA permit the establishment of chapter branches. Generally, the need for a branch arises when a chapter extends over a large geographic area and when members are at some distance from the usual meeting location. With a local branch in their area, members can schedule local meetings yet retain the advantages of membership in the parent chapter.

To the east of Los Angeles and Orange counties, the Inland Empire Branch covering Riverside and San Bernardino counties and the the Ventura County Branch north of Los Angeles were both formed in 1981. The latter branch separated from the Southern California Chapter and became the Ventura County Chapter of APWA in 1995. More recently in 1999 the High Desert branch was formed and the following year in 2000 the Coachella Valley branch came into existence.

CHAPTER STANDING COMMITTEES

In 1958 our members believed the time had come to delegate chapter operations to committees on the reasoning that committees had two purposes: to accomplish some beneficial objective; and to foster understanding among a variety of members with diverse, even conflicting, backgrounds and interests.

One good example of diverse interests getting together came about when several task forces drafted a *Model Street Excavation Ordinance*. Over a period of several months, these task forces completed a lasting contribution to the public works field. A Model Ordinance and Standard Practices Committee was formed, and quite a few model ordinances and practice manuals were published over a period of several decades.

The Associated General Contractors–American Public Works Association Joint Cooperative Committee is another example of an activity that produced several top-rated *Standards Specifications for Construction*. This committee is now called the Greenbook Committee.

There is no doubt that coordination and cooperation between all agencies has saved money and time-consuming trouble for valuable employees. By the 1980s there were 21 committees meeting regularly, with occasional subcommittees for special studies. All were producing beneficial results in areas of vital concern to chapter members. For example, the former Uniform Practices and Utility Committee issued ten publications, one of which, the *Work Area Traffic Control Handbook (WATCH)*, is still available today.

The committee system that developed in 1958 still continues to be the heart of the chapter organization. Depending on the needs of the time and the desires of the membership, specific committees have been added, modified, or discontinued during the life of the chapter. However, many of the chapter committees that existed 20, 30, or 40 years ago are still operating—some have a modified name or a somewhat different objective in keeping with the times.

Following is a brief overview of the chapter committees that currently exist:

The Career Guidance/Scholarship Committee introduces high school students to the public works field by providing real life experiences with public works people while it assists the students in career planning, college selection, and financial aid information. The committee helps students find summer and post-graduate job opportunities and student internships.

The Dinner-Dance Committee provides the planning, arrangements and implementation of the chapter's annual banquet in January of each year.

The Education and Training Committee assesses chapter members' education and training needs, consults with educational institutions, and sponsors continuing education programs to meet our members' needs.

The Engineering Technology Committee plans a program of seminars to ensure that members learn how to manage public works infrastructure and deliver cost-effective services.

The Finance Committee's primary annual activity is the fiscal audit. The committee also reviews and comments on finance reports made by the chapter.

The Greenbook Committee has the responsibility to produce and promote a triennial edition of the *Greenbook (Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction)* and the *Greenbook Plans (Standard Plans for Public Works Construction)* along with annual supplements.

The Leadership / Management Committee develops questionnaires and reports on leadership and management in the public works field and proposes membership workshops on the subject.

The Legislative Review Committee reviews pending legislation and advises the membership as to the impact of that legislation on the field of public works.

The Membership Committee's responsibility is to answer general inquiries concerning membership, assist prospective members with applications, and maintain membership records.

The Program Committee solicits opinions as to desirable and timely meeting topics, chooses subjects for technical sessions, invites speakers, promotes attendance, and handles the logistics associated with meetings and special events.

The Public Relations and Awards Committee (1) solicits editorial contributions and monitors costs for publishing the chapter's bimonthly newsletter, (2) proposes and documents nominations for APWA awards for service to the chapter or outstanding professional achievements, (3) oversees chapter participation in National Public Works Week, and (4) maintains/updates the chapter's history, preserving the accomplishments of the chapter and its members in the public works field.

The Solid Waste Committee examines contract administration and project financing, monitors the selection of appropriate equipment, and seeks updated information on managing solid waste programs for collecting, storing, utilizing, or otherwise disposing of solid wastes.

The Transportation Committee concentrates on the development and management of the infrastructure necessary for the several modes of transportation used to move people and goods in a safe and expeditious manner.

The Water Resources Committee monitors the development and protection of water resources and the management of water supply, evaluates wastewater collection, treatment and disposal systems, drainage and flood control facilities.

See the chapter's web page for more detailed information on each standing committee—its activities and contact person.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Southern California Chapter strategic plan was developed in 1993 during Ray Holland's presidency and implemented in conformance with the basic strategies of the parent American Public Works Association. Between 1994 and 1995, the plan was refined during the terms of presidents Harold Williams and George Miller.

In order to meet the challenges of the strategic plan, a new structure for the chapter's organization was put in place in 1996 during Jim Biery's presidency. Finally in 1997, under the guidance of President Richard Burtt, the strategic plan was fully implemented.

The goals and objectives of our chapter's strategic plan were inspired by four goals set forth by the national association. In essence, these goals were:

1. APWA will aim to meet the needs of a multi-disciplinary membership and capitalize on emerging opportunities in both the public and private sector in order to increase the value of membership and strengthen services to members,
2. APWA will become the voice of the public works profession to policy-makers, agencies, and the general public by increasing its own visibility and credibility and raising public awareness of public works issues.
3. APWA members who benefit from programs in management practices, accreditation, and skills training will attain the knowledge to successfully manage public works infrastructure and deliver services in a cost effective manner.
4. APWA members who increase awareness of the importance of public works to the community and create strong constituent support through public involvement will deliver public works services consistent with community expectations for a quality of life in harmony with the need for sustainable development.

MAJOR PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE CHAPTER

CAREER GUIDANCE AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

In the summer of 1992, the chapter's executive committee established a committee to develop a public works career guidance program to be offered to high school students throughout our area. The overall goal of the program has been to provide young men and women in the chapter area with information about the different careers available in **all** aspects of the public works field.

At the same time, the chapter produced a 13-minute video entitled "Public Works – Building Opportunities" which focused on the career choices in public works and the level of education and training needed for various career opportunities. A "Public Works Careers" brochure was also developed.

Under the leadership of Roy Butler, the committee established five goals for the program: to introduce the public works field to students; provide real life experiences with public works people; assist in career planning and educational goal setting; provide college selection and financial aid information and assistance; and to find student intern and post education employment opportunities.

Six high schools throughout the chapter's five county area were selected for pilot programs. Meetings with school administrators determined the level of APWA participation appropriate for each school, and the program started during the spring semester of 1993. A chapter member serves as the "champion" and coordinator for the program at each of the schools.

At the initial meeting with the students, several public works people share their career experiences. The video is shown and students are given a brochure on public works careers. Students who show an interest in joining the program are sent a welcoming letter and information about the various career choices found in a typical public works organization.

In some schools, students with similar interests are divided into small discussion groups led by public works people with an expertise in their interest. Such groups typically include engineering, computer science, construction, maintenance, and administration. Students participate actively in these discussions.

Students make field trips to public works operations such as airports, harbors, corporate yards, transit systems, maintenance operations, water and wastewater treatment plants, computerized traffic signal centers, construction sites, consulting engineering, and city or county offices.

For many years, the chapter awarded annual scholarships to Southern California college students. In 1997 the chapter decided that only participants in the career guidance program would be eligible for these scholarships.

Students in their senior year are encouraged to apply for a chapter scholarship. An essay about their education goals and interest in public works accompanies their application. The applicants at each school are interviewed by a panel of public works people and given a ranking based on their essay, grades, and interview. The final decisions are made by a review committee which includes one of the chapter officers.

Students are eligible to receive up to three additional scholarships as long as they continue pursuing a public works career. All scholarship winners are asked to spend six hours assisting in the career guidance program.

In the past four years, thanks to contributions from local consulting firms, individual chapter members, and the Los Angeles Area City/County Engineers Association, scholarships totaling \$20,500 were awarded to 29 students pursuing public works careers. Two of these scholars obtained part-time internships.

In the first seven years of the program, more than 7500 young men and women at twelve high schools were introduced to public works. More than 1500 of these students actively participated in the career guidance program.

In 2001, the program was offered to students at eight high schools in the Los Angeles/Orange County area, two in the High Desert branch area, and one in the Inland Empire branch area.

REBUILD AMERICA COALITION

The Rebuild America Coalition (RAC) was founded in 1987 by the National Association of Counties and is composed of more than 70 national public and private organizations committed to reversing the decline in America's infrastructure investment and making that investment a national priority.

Our chapter is a supporting organization within the Southern California Chapter of Rebuild America. Together, our mission is to develop key messages about increased infrastructure investment, then

deliver those messages to opinion leaders and policy makers and encourage government to upgrade or replace California's faltering physical infrastructure.

PUBLICATIONS AND OUTREACH

Public Works Week

One of the major annual events of the American Public Works Association throughout the United States and Canada is the annual celebration of National Public Works Week. According to 2001 APWA President Judith Mueller, "National Public Works Week provides the opportunity for public works professionals and departments to highlight to our communities the work that we do for all of our citizens."

The Southern California Chapter of APWA has been active for many years in celebrating Public Works Week and encouraging community recognition of the many public works activities. These efforts typically include proclamations by local agencies recognizing public works accomplishments; open house activities showing the latest techniques in engineering; display and demonstration of construction and maintenance equipment; honoring outstanding public works employees; and, more recently, establishing an outreach to students through school visits by public works representatives. Community television channels provide another resource for highlighting Public Works Week and promoting public works accomplishments.

The chapter's Public Works Week Committee promotes and encourages participation by chapter members. The committee forwards information to every public works organization suggesting activities in their respective communities and supplying forms of proclamations for action by their governing body. The more enthusiastic the public works leader, the more effort his or her organization will make in celebrating Public Works Week, regardless of the size or demographics of the community.

In 1998, the chapter began to request entries from each community in the chapter area, identifying the specific activities during Public Works Week under the following categories: (1) reaching out to the community, (2) honoring of public employees, and (3) reaching out to the schools. A chapter committee reviews the entries, names a winner in each category plus an overall winner for the agency judged to have the most comprehensive and effective Public Works Week Program. These awards are presented to representatives of the winning communities.

Chapter Newsletters

Since its beginning, the chapter has distributed a newsletter for members promoting the program for the next scheduled chapter meeting. Until the latter part of the 1990s, the newsletters were printed and distributed by one of the large member agencies or utilities at little cost to the chapter. Since 1997, with the advent of bimonthly membership meeting schedules, the frequency of publication has changed from quarterly to bimonthly.

In the beginning, the chapter newsletter was a rather small booklet announcing the programs for the forthcoming meeting and providing a brief background on each of the program speakers. Occasionally it would include a message from the chapter president or announcements of future chapter activities such as forthcoming national or regional APWA meetings.

In 1955 the newsletter began including abstracts of the program talks or panel discussions. These summaries were beneficial to members who were unable to attend the meeting. By the end of the 1950s, a message from the chapter president and a roster of the committees was regularly included. Later in 1965, a map showing the meeting location was occasionally printed on the cover, and scheduled APWA courses and other public works training activities in the chapter area were publicized.

About 1970 photographs of the chapter officers and snapshots from chapter activities began to appear in the newsletters. The May 1971 issue included many photographs of the damage from the San Fernando earthquake. Articles explaining changes to the chapter organization and recognition of chapter members receiving APWA awards to chapter members began to appear. About this time excerpts of the program talks were dropped.

From 1975 until today, the newsletter has remained a standard 8 1/2" by 11" format with gradual modifications of the front page. With the increase of newsworthy information on chapter activities, programs, and reports, the newsletter has grown from four to, at times, 16 pages and is published six times a year in advance of each membership meeting.

Chapter Membership Directories

The oldest surviving membership directory for our chapter was printed in 1977. This directory provided a roster of the members with their respective addresses and telephone numbers, plus a copy of the bylaws and a list of our chapter and branch officers, the executive committee, and past presidents. Each chapter committee was listed along with its chairperson.

The directory that was printed in 1995 added FAX numbers to the roster plus additional listings of life members, sustaining members, and national APWA headquarters staff. Business cards for each of the corporate sponsors were printed in the back pages.

The latest chapter directory issued in 1999 not only added e-mail addresses to the roster, but expanded beyond its customary membership roster to include four more rosters—one for each county in the chapter: Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino. Within the county rosters, members were listed by their agency or jurisdiction. This breakdown by category was a helpful way to locate members by their agency.

It should be noted that many other organizations no longer print and distribute membership directories, but provide their rosters online, linked to their web page. This is currently under consideration by the chapter.

Committee Reports

As part of a chapter committee's work program, technical reports, surveys, or procedure manuals on relevant public works subjects may be prepared from time to time. These reports are submitted to the chapter's executive committee for approval and are included in the newsletter or distributed at membership meetings. Technical manuals and uniform practice guides are generally sold at the cost of publication and updated periodically.

Some of the chapter reports, guides, and manuals have been of interest to agencies elsewhere in California and other states and provinces. The Greenbook series and the uniform practices or procedural manuals are publications with a broad interest.

Greenbook Publications

During the early years of the chapter, seven agencies of the City of Los Angeles and four agencies of the County of Los Angeles each had construction specifications, similar but just different enough to require a contractor to study in depth each specification to be sure his bid was acceptable. This developed a corps of contractors bidding in just one or two agencies and, of course, reduced competitive bidding.

In 1961 the chapter's Associated General Contractors and APWA Joint Cooperative Committee began to develop standard specifications for public works construction which would be suitable for adoption by agencies in the Southern California area. Silas Birch of the City of Los Angeles was the chairman at that time, and representatives of contractors and suppliers participated with the public agencies to develop the specifications.

Over the next five years, the full committee met at least once a month, and subcommittees more often. The committee's task was to refine, thrash out, research, and receive input from public agencies, contractors, material suppliers, utilities, and other interested parties. Most meetings were held at the AGC offices on Beverly Boulevard in Los Angeles.

In February of 1965, drafts of the specifications were submitted to the heads of the five major agencies in the Los Angeles County area: City of Los Angeles; County Road Department; County Engineer; County Flood Control District; and County Sanitation District. Specifications were reviewed by the agencies and returned with comments in August 1965.

Four blue ribbon subcommittees empowered to make final decisions and/or revisions reviewed the comments and the suggested revisions. In January of 1966, final specifications were resubmitted to the agencies. The new specifications were formally approved by the City Council of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, and several smaller cities.

Methods of publishing the new specifications were explored, and after extensive analysis of various proposals, agreement was reached with Sam Jaffe of Building News, Inc., for publication. In November of 1966, the first edition of the now familiar *Greenbook Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction* was published.

Special mention must be made of Silas Birch, retired director of the Los Angeles Bureau of Contract Administration, who excelled in pushing through this multi-year project, and to the late Joseph Hayes of AGC who provided invaluable advice and guidance.

The committee's work continues. Every year since 1967, an addendum to the specifications has been issued; and every three years a new edition has been published. The Greenbook Committee conducts continual research on new construction methods and materials in order to keep the specifications up-to-date and effective.

In 1985 a supplemental publication, *Standard Plans for Public Works Construction*, was finalized and printed by the chapter. This publication also receives periodic review and updating by the committee.

The threat of an anti-trust lawsuit in 1995 led to the formation of an independent group, Public Works Standards, Inc. (PWSI). PWSI assumed direction of the Greenbook Committee, the WATCH manual, and the publication of *Standard Plans*. The purpose was to eliminate future legal action against the national APWA and its chapters as a result of any decisions by those committees.

The Board of the PWSI is composed of nine members, five of whom are appointed by APWA, three by various contractor's associations, and one appointed by the publisher of the Greenbook series.

Profits from the sale of the *Greenbook Standard Plans* and the WATCH manual are distributed to the Southern California, San Diego, and Ventura Chapters based on sales within their boundaries. The membership makeup of the committees has not changed as a result of PWSI assuming direction.

EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

For many years during the 1980s, the chapter, through its education committee chaired by Hal Harris, and more recently by Dino D'Emila, offered chapter courses at a modest fee. In time, as the number of seminars and workshops increased, the profit from registration fees became available for chapter-sponsored scholarships. More recently, under the coordination of the education committee the chapter has participated in a number of satellite teleconferences on national and state levels.

Today the format of the quarterly meeting is marked by flexibility. The chapter often stages seminars and video conferences on management and financing or co-sponsors partnership forums with outside organizations that share our interest in solid waste, street maintenance, and water resources.

A plan to provide undergraduate course work for our members began as a joint effort between the chapter and faculty members from local colleges or universities. Courses covered a variety of subjects such as construction, inspection, highway design, traffic engineering, and drainage. Graduate level courses on specific public works management topics were also offered. Some of these courses continue today.

PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Over the years, the chapter has coordinated with a number of professional organizations on specific projects and is always seeking to associate with other professional organizations within the chapter area. Since public works includes many activities and interests, chapter members are active members of a number of other professional groups. This crossover is helpful for planning joint activities and programs.

For many years in connection with the Greenbook Committee, the chapter has actively worked with the Associated General Contractors (AGC). Similarly, with the preparation of the *Work Area Traffic Control Handbook* (WATCH), the chapter has been in contact with local representatives of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). For many years, we have maintained a joint scholarship program with the Los Angeles City and County Engineers Association. That activity is now part of the chapter's Career Guidance and Scholarship program.

Each year the chapter and the Southern California Waste Management Forum present a Waste Management Conference that includes educational programs covering the various areas of solid and

liquid waste management. Also, the Southern California chapter of the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA) and our chapter have jointly sponsored programs and conferences related to geographic information systems in the public works field.

During the 1990s the chapter endeavored to develop partnerships with organizations that had branches within the chapter area. These included the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and the Orange County Water Association (OCWA) with whom we have held joint membership meetings from time to time.

In 1995 the chapter joined with the Los Angeles Area Maintenance Superintendent Association (MSA) in co-sponsoring an annual golf tournament as a scholarship fund-raising event for each organization. This program has brought the two organizations closer together, encouraging their respective members to attend the other organization's meetings.

EVENTS OF THE CHAPTER

Chapter Membership Meetings

From the beginning, the key pattern of the chapter meeting programs was educational, and it has continued to be educational to the present day. Meetings are well attended because the programs are topical and timely. Panel members openly discuss practices in their specific field of public works and are very willing to share information with others. Experts from various fields attend regularly; these include agency attorneys, county supervisors, mayors, legislators, financiers, oil and utility executives, engineers from all branches, and suppliers of materials and equipment.

In the early years, the quarterly meetings began late in the afternoon with a technical panel or workshop followed by a social hour and dinner. Following a brief business meeting, an after-dinner speaker would talk on a matter of current interest, sometimes related to the afternoon topic. Although most of the meetings were held at restaurants with meeting rooms, occasionally a meeting was held at a public golf course with early starting times for those interested. When the meetings shifted to luncheon meetings with a workshop in mid-morning, the chapter's quarterly meetings were scheduled regularly at golf courses in Los Angeles and Orange Counties.

In 1996 as a result of the chapter's strategic plan, the number of annual chapter membership meetings was increased from four to six. Four luncheon meetings are currently held at a centrally located restaurant in the city of Santa Fe Springs. In August, an outdoor luncheon barbecue is held at the Clarke Estate in Santa Fe Springs, where certificates of appreciation are given to chapter members, and career guidance recipients are introduced to the membership.

In December 1998, the first inaugural chapter dinner dance was held at the Long Beach Aquarium of the Pacific. The program included the installation of chapter officers and board of directors by National President Bob Miller and the presentation of chapter awards for the year 1998. This successful chapter dinner dance became an annual event although the date shifted to January date in 2000 to avoid conflicts during the December holiday season.

National Congress & Equipment Shows

In 1955 the APWA National Congress and Equipment Show was held in Los Angeles. The sessions were held at the Ambassador Hotel and the equipment show at the Shrine Auditorium. An outdoor barbecue for some 5,000 people, —members, wives and guests—was staged in Elysian Park. It was a gigantic project for the new chapter, but Milt Offner and Harry Swearingen put it over, and it was a great success.

The National Congress and Equipment Show in Los Angeles in the fall of 1965 drew some 7,000 APWA members from across the nation. The equipment show at the Los Angeles Sports Arena was some distance away from the headquarter hotels, so the Transit Distinct was most helpful in meeting the logistic problem of getting large numbers of people to the arena where the equipment and most of the technical panels were staged.

As a side event, many visitors wanted to see Disneyland in Anaheim. The Chief Engineer of the Los Angeles Airport arranged air tickets to include helicopter transit to Anaheim. At Anaheim, Thorton Piersall, public works director, welcomed the arrivals with refreshments and ferried them to the Disneyland Hotel.

In 1985 the APWA Congress and Equipment Show was held in Los Angeles with technical meetings and seminars at major downtown hotels and equipment displays at the convention center. Tours were available for visitors to view outstanding public works facilities and operations throughout the greater Los Angeles area.

This event in Los Angeles had the largest display of equipment ever assembled and the highest membership attendance from the United States and Canada of any prior congress in APWA's history. As in the past, chapter membership provided local support to APWA headquarters in planning and carrying out this event. The chapter was again fortunate in sharing net proceeds of the conference. These monies were used toward chapter education and scholarships.

One cannot praise too much the way so many chapter members (and some who were not members) pitched in to make the whole program easy. Perhaps the basis of it all was the spirit of working together and having some fun out of piecing the parts into a well-run whole.

Regional Equipment Shows

In order to keep public works professionals knowledgeable of new equipment and procedures in the various operations of the public works field, a Western Regional Conference and Equipment Show was held on alternate years in different parts of the western United States under the auspices of one of the chapters. This provided for physical demonstrations of the latest products, services, and equipment. The demonstrations were especially helpful to individuals unable to attend the annual National Congress and Equipment Shows which were held in distant parts of the country.

One of the first Western Regional Conference and Equipment Shows held under the auspices of the Southern California Chapter was in Long Beach in May 1962. Frank Randall acted as general chairman and 38 panelists made presentations to some 700 APWA members from the western states. Equipment demonstrations were located a short distance from the conference auditorium. The

conference netted the chapter more than \$5,000 which was used to establish a Chapter Scholarship Fund. This successful conference also netted the largest increase in chapter membership from any previous year.

In April 1970 another Western Regional Conference with assistance from the Southern California Chapter was held in Fresno, California. It was also very successful with excellent programs and an exhibition of the latest products, services, and equipment available. In addition, technical tours in the area were scheduled during the conference, and scheduled events were available for guests who accompanied the conference attendees.

The Western Regional Conference and Equipment Show in May 1974 again attracted members from all the western states. Panelist and speakers were headquartered in the Anaheim Convention Center and Disneyland Hotel. Chaired by Thorton Piersall, the event demonstrated how a large attendance will respond to a top program.

These biennial conferences and equipment shows were soon discontinued as more and more public works leaders were able to attend the annual APWA Congress and Equipment Shows. Also, other major organizations within the specific public works operations such as street maintenance, refuse collection, and sanitation were beginning to schedule their own product and equipment shows in the chapter area.

Chapter Golf Activities

In the earlier years, some of the quarterly chapter meetings were scheduled at public golf courses. Early starting times were arranged so members could play a round of golf before the meeting began. When the chapter moved from its longtime meeting place at the Roger Young Auditorium, there was a shift to having *all* the quarterly meetings at golf courses. This continued into the 1990s.

In 1997 a change in meeting locale was finalized; luncheon meetings would be scheduled at suitable restaurants, and the golfing activity would be scheduled as a special event on a different day. In 1996 the chapter had already joined with the Los Angeles Area Maintenance Superintendents Association in sponsoring an annual golf tournament as a fund-raising event for the scholarship and career guidance efforts of each organization.

Chapter Awards Programs

Since it's inception, the chapter has encouraged its members to compete for national APWA awards. The Southern California chapter has received nine President's Plaques awarded each year to the most outstanding chapter of APWA.

With respect to individual awards the chapter has often times selected and nominated chapter members for specific national awards including the *Top Ten Public Works Leaders of the Year*, the *Harry S. Swearington Award*, the *Donald C. Stone Award*, and the *Charles Walter Nichols Award*. For the most part, however, until the 1980s the chapter rarely honored individuals or agencies with local chapter awards. (Chapter individuals who have received national APWA awards are listed elsewhere on the chapter's home page.)

However, starting in the 1980s the chapter began to annually recognize meritorious individuals and agencies within the chapter membership through a number of award programs. For the year 2001 the following programs were offered:

- Awards to agencies for their outstanding National Public Works Week programs
- Recognition of outstanding projects of the year within the chapter area
- Selection of two outstanding leaders of the chapter during the calendar year
- Outstanding legislator of the year

(The chapter's most recent award recipients are also listed elsewhere on the chapter's web page.)

For national APWA recognition of public works projects within the chapter area, formerly it had been up to the specific agency involved to nominate its project directly to the national award committee without chapter support. Now, however, the chapter will review projects and support one or more outstanding projects for a national APWA award. The agency involved with a project would still submit the completed award application form with supporting information to the national APWA award review committee.