APWA Florida Chapter Awards Program

Deadline for Submission – January 18, 2027

The Florida Chapter of American Public Works Association seeks your nominations for recognizing individuals, public agencies, projects, consultants, and contractors. The winners are recognized each year at the annual Florida Chapter EXPO Scholarship and Awards Banquet. Individual and agency awards on the Florida Chapter level are separate and identified below.

Along with the Florida Chapter Level awards program, your submission may be eligible for a APWA National award as well. You can find more information about national awards at APWA Awards - American Public Works Association. Submission for National Awards is not required for submission at the Florida Chapter level. However, you are encouraged to have your application for National awards endorsed by the Florida Chapter prior to submission. Please provide the award information for endorsement two weeks prior to national's submission date. The chapter will only endorse projects receiving an award from the chapter. The only exception to this policy is if your project, which did not win a state award, has some unique aspect or feature.

All award submissions should go the following committee members.

Project, contractor, or consultant submittals or questions to **Joe Sisk** at gordonnole@gmail.com

Individual awards submittals or questions to **Althea Parrish** at parrisha1a@gmail.com.

Please review your completed projects for 2026 and consider making a submittal for consideration. The deadline for submitting to the State Chapter is **January 18, 2027.** **All submittals must have a completed nomination form, supporting documentation and color photographs**. Incomplete submittals will not be considered for awards. Submission form and criteria can be found at the link below.

Annual Florida Chapter Awards Program – APWA Florida Chapter

One application must be used for project, contractor, OR consultant nominations. One application cannot be used to nominate for all three awards at the same time. Please submit a separate application for each award category and make sure to check the corresponding box under the award category.

Should you have any questions regarding which category to choose for your submission, the Awards Committee members are available to assist. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Please note that the chapter will provide winning projects one award that will be presented to the managing agency or organization. Exact duplicates of any award may be purchased.

PROJECT AWARDS

Florida Chapter Project of the Year.

These awards are in recognition of outstanding projects and awarded in the following **five** divisions. Please use the agency's total cost when selecting your project division.

- Projects less than $2 million
- Projects of $2 million, but less than $5 million
- Projects of $5 million, but less than $25 million
- Projects of $25 million to $75 million
- Projects more than $75 million

And awarded in **five** categories

- **Structures—** to include new public structures or the preservation or rehabilitation of existing public structures including, municipal buildings and parks. Other structures as defined in the Historic Restoration/Preservation and Transportation categories shall not be considered in the structures category
- **Transportation—** to include roads, bridges, mass transit that serve any or all modes of travel, including bicycles and foot traffic.
- **Environment—**to include landfill, recycling facilities, reclamation projects, potable water projects, sanitary sewer, and stormwater projects
- **Historical Restoration/Preservation—** to include historical restoration, preservation, and adaptive reuse of existing buildings, structures, and facilities, that are 75 years or older to qualify as historical.
- **Disaster or Emergency Construction/Repair—** to include the techniques and timing for safety, community relations, environmental protection, adverse conditions, and additional considerations.

Florida Chapter "Contractor" of the Year

This award is presented to contractors with documented success in the field of public works. (no project division amount required) Supporting documentation for these nominees should include project successes and client/customer/public agency endorsements.

- **Structures**
- **Transportation**
- **Environment**
- **Historical Restoration/Preservation**
- **Disaster or Emergency Construction/Repair**

Florida Chapter "Consultant" of the Year Award

This award is presented to consultants with documented success in the field of public works. (no project division amount required) Supporting documentation for these nominees should include project successes and client/customer/public agency endorsements.

- **Structures**
- **Transportation**
- **Environment**
- **Historical Restoration/Preservation**
- **Disaster or Emergency Construction/Repair**

Florida Chapter Award Review Criteria for Projects, Consultants, And Contactors

The chapter will review each submittal independently using the criteria outlined below as a starting point. The chapter will look at the totality of the project and reserves the right to declare a project a winner whether is meets all the criteria.

Criteria:

1. Use of good construction management techniques and completion of the project on schedule
2. Safety performance and demonstrated awareness of the need for a good overall safety program for workers and the public during and after construction, where applicable
3. Community relations as evidenced by efforts to minimize public inconvenience due to construction, safety precautions to protect public lives and property, provision of observation areas, guided tours, or other means of improving relations between agency and the public
4. Demonstrated awareness for the need to protect the environment. This includes any special considerations given to particular environmental concerns raised during the project, as well as climate change and/or resiliency components for long-term community benefit
5. Unusual accomplishments under adverse conditions including, but not limited to age or condition of the facility, adverse weather, soil or other site conditions over which there is no control
6. Additional conditions deemed of importance to the public works agency, such as exceptional efforts to maintain quality control and, if value engineering is used, construction innovations as evidenced by time and/or money saving techniques developed and/or successfully utilized
7. Use of alternative materials, practices, or funding that demonstrates a commitment to sustainability, climate change resiliency, and/or use of sustainable infrastructure rating system or the equivalent.

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

- **Florida Chapter Award of Excellence**. This award is presented to individual(s) who have volunteered services or assistance under special conditions as representative(s) of the Florida Chapter.
- **President's Award for Branch Excellence (PABE).** This award recognizes Florida Chapter Branches for contributions made to positively impact their membership, profession, and community. There are five categories in which the branch is evaluated. Each category has specific goals that are used to evaluate the branch's programs and services to the membership and community. All branches, regardless of size, are strongly encouraged to submit for this award.

The criteria for this award are as follows:

1. Membership:
   - Document net Membership gain/retention
   - Outline membership recruitment events
   - Evidence of innovative membership development and retention efforts regardless of whether net growth has occurred
2. Service to Chapter Members:
   - Number of members attending meetings/events
   - Member-to-Member Outreach - Defined as member surveys, newsletters, meeting notices, member welcome packages, annual meetings, educational opportunities, leadership training, etc.
   - Evidence that the branch is successfully meeting APWA Chapter objectives.
3. Best Practices:
   - Branch to Branch Outreach - Defined as ranging from combined meetings with other Branches to successful programs that can be applied to other Branches
   - Variety of programs or activities.
4. Advancement of Public Works:
   - Awards/recognition programs - Defined as branch/chapter/national awards recognizing members/nonmembers.
   - Public Works Promotion - Defined as National Public Works Week, educational outreach, and other programs geared to promote the profession
   - Professional Development - Defined as branches that promoted the development of its members through educational and scholarship opportunities
   - Creative Innovation - Definition has been left open to allow for any innovative programs and opportunities that call attention to public works in a positive way
5. Service to the Community
   - Education Outreach Programs - Outside scholarships, partnerships schools/universities, mentoring programs, shadow-days, etc.
   - Community Service Programs - Participation in the community as a branch of APWA, including partnering with other service organizations such as Harvesters, Red Cross, United Way, Habitat for Humanity, etc.
   - Environmental Enhancement – Adopt-a-Highway programs, environmental cleanup, participation in Earth Day, recycling education, etc.

- **Mac Ulsch Award.** Mr. Mac Ulsch, better known as Uncle Mac, was instrumental in getting the Florida Chapter their "Charter" from National APWA back in 1961. Mac was extremely active on the Chapter and National level. He was honored by National for his 41 consecutive meetings without an absence and for his untiring efforts on behalf of the Membership Committee he chaired. This award named in his memory and honor and is one of the longest running awards for the Florida Chapter. **It is presented to a member who has shown long term, outstanding, on-going, dedication, and excellent service to the Florida Chapter.**

- **Ben Pratt Award.** Ben Pratt was a long-time member of the West Coast Branch where he served the branch in each of the officer's positions. He then moved on to the Florida Chapter where he served on many committees either as a committee member or committee chair. In 1984-85 he served as District Representative for Region IX, later moved on to be Vice President of the Chapter in 1986-87, then served as President of the Chapter in 1987-88. After serving as President, he then became Secretary of the Chapter. APWA has recognized Ben for several prestigious Chapter awards and several national awards most notably in 1982 as Top Ten Public Works Leader, in 1983 as Florida Member of the Year, and in 1991 for the Swearingen Award for Chapter Excellence. Ben was very active with the Boy Scouts of America and many other youth programs. Ben was a friend to many and a gentleman to all who had the pleasure of knowing him. **This award named in his memory and honor and given to an individual in recognition of their support of APWA's national, state, and professional goals. Applications for this award should indicate membership activities, branch activities, attendance at chapter events, and support for public works.**

- **Anthony W. Leffin Lifetime Achievement Award.** Tony Leffin was a long-time member of APWA, who during his tenure had excelled to the top of the APWA ranks in every fashion possible. He was a leader in his field, in his community, and in his life. Having held practically every position within the Branch and the Chapter, being the Florida Chapter Past President, rising to the top as the Chair for the House of Delegates on the National level, being a multi-award winner in the Florida Chapter and being a Top Ten Public Works Leader, Tony was the exemplary model of what an APWA champion should be. **In honor of his memory, this award is given each year to the most deserving of long-term member having met the following most stringent criteria. This award seeks to inspire excellence and dedication in public service by recognizing the outstanding career service achievements of an individual public works professional. The primary focus of the award is on career service to the public works profession rather than on any one single event or project. It is the intent of this award to recognize the career service accomplishments of a public works professional. The candidate must be an active member in the year he or she is considered. This award is restricted to the most elite of those who have illustrated public works leadership throughout their career. Candidates should have 20 years or more of service in the public works field as well as 20 years or more membership in APWA; they should have been an active member, a strong or key sponsor of APWA during their tenure, and should have held key positions in the branch, chapter, or national offices; they should have made significant contributions to all levels of APWA on branch, chapter, and national efforts; being a prior award winner of other awards, although not required, will be considered in the evaluation; they should have exhibited other community service activities; and branch endorsement is strongly recommended.**

- **Professional Manager of the Year Award for Administrative Management.** To recognizes outstanding achievements in administration within the public works field who inspires excellence, leadership and dedication to the public good. The primary focus of this award is the recognition of exceptional leadership and management.

    - **Eligibility:** Any person working in the Public Works field whose primary responsibility is to manage Public Works to include Project Management/Construction Management, Solid Waste, Stormwater, Water and Wastewater, Facility and Grounds and Landscaping, and other related activities. Candidates may be employed by either the public or private sector. However, their career service must have an impact on the public sector.
    - **Criteria:** The criteria used in the selection process include:

        - Career Length—Candidates with a minimum of 10 years qualifying experience may be nominated.

        - Employment—Candidates may be employed in either the public or private sector; however, career service must be in the field of public works, specifically providing agency support in the administrative management field.

        - Qualities - Outstanding leadership and vision evidenced by employing progressive management techniques, implementation of effective methods to optimize fiscal management, direct impact to the community, agency, or customers served.

        - Scope—Candidates must provide administrative management support and have made significant contributions in the field of public works.

- **Legislator of the Year Award.** This award is given annually to the Florida legislator who best supports the programs and activities of Public Works in Florida. The candidate for this award does not have to be a member of APWA, but this person must show legislative leadership for Public Works through legislative actions, personal guidance or support, championship, or otherwise active involvement in Public Works.

- **Orange Heart Medal.** This medal is awarded to public works employees who show meritorious service in emergency situations. Typically, this includes extraordinary or life-saving actions on behalf of the recipient.

- **Community Involvement Award.** To recognize a member who is actively involved in their community, either where they work or where they live. This award acknowledges outstanding involvement to enhance quality of life and to be a positive role model.

- **Exemplary Practices Award.** To recognize exceptional performance in individuals, teams, or organizations in the effective contributions in their course of performance that raises the level of the public works profession.

- **Young Leader Award.** To recognize and encourage young APWA members who have demonstrated an initial commitment to the profession and the association and show potential for future growth with the association. The award promotes the concept that length of career does not necessarily indicate leadership abilities or potential for service.

- **Technical Innovation Award.** To recognize an individual, team or organization for the development, management and implementation of a creative idea, program, process, or system that enhances the delivery of public works services to the public.

- **Management Innovation Award.** To recognize an individual, team or organization for the development, management and implementation of a creative idea, program, process, or system that enhances the delivery of public works services to the public. A management innovation is defined as a procedure such as a system, program or process.

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5. Unusual accomplishments under adverse conditions including, but not limited to age or condition of the facility, adverse weather, soil or other site conditions over which there is no control
6. Additional conditions deemed of importance to the public works agency, such as exceptional efforts to maintain quality control and, if value engineering is used, construction innovations as evidenced by time and/or money saving techniques developed and/or successfully utilized
7. Use of alternative materials, practices, or funding that demonstrates a commitment to sustainability, climate change resiliency, and/or use of sustainable infrastructure rating system or the equivalent.

Please remember that the awards committee is here to answer your questions.

- For project, contractor, or consultant questions please contact **Bill Vest** at 941-374-6506 or vestwd@cdmsmith.com or **Joe Sisk** at 850-570-1348 or gordonnole@gmail.com

- For individual awards questions please contact **Althea Parrish** at parrisha1a@gmail.com.