

PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES

PAVING THE WAY FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE BY EDUCATING, ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING OUR EMPLOYEES.

<http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/pworks/docs/newsletter/>

December 2013 / January 2014

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DONNA GARDEN is New PWU Assistant Director



Director Miki Esposito is pleased to announce that Donna Garden will start work as the Department's new Assistant Director January 6. Donna was born and raised in Norfolk and currently serves as the Financial Assistance Section Supervisor at the State Department of Environmental Quality, managing all aspects of the State Revolving Fund for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure.

Garden supervised the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permits and Compliance Unit for the State following nine years in private engineering. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Nebraska. Garden has two sons, one in Lincoln and one in Germany. She and her husband share a love of the outdoors, gardening and travel. She could add golf to the list, but confesses it is really all about the laughter and being outdoors!

She can be reached at 402-441-8605. Please help welcome Donna Garden to Public Works and Utilities!

Self Assessment

Not so scary after all . . .

Abraham Lincoln said, "With public sentiment, nothing can fail. Without it, nothing can succeed." As an agency charged with serving the public, maintaining credibility and public trust is critical to our success. Today, citizens are informed. They are connected. They demand more for their tax dollar. And nobody will believe in us if we say, "this is how we've always done it" but can't tell them **why**.



The American Public Works Association (APWA) Self-Assessment process we began in January provided an established, nationally-recognized framework for evaluation and improvement of our policies, practices and procedures. We used this tool to articulate how we do business and more importantly, **WHY** we do business. That is how we fill a credibility gap – by articulating intelligently **WHY** we do the things we do. It takes a lot of courage to embrace the change necessary to improve as an organization. While scary at first, we got through it!

In doing so, we are creating a comprehensive and publicly accessible Best Management Practices Manual. This memorializes the institutional knowledge in our collective heads, educates new employees, identifies gaps for our strategic planning efforts, and puts us on the road to seeking accreditation, if we so choose. Moreover, we are reminded of why we're all here – to provide valuable, essential, life-dependent services to the public, a noble and honorable cause. There is no greater service or calling!

SIMMERING is New Engineering Services Development Section Manager

Robert Simmering began work December 16 as the new PWU Engineering Services Development Section Manager, replacing Dennis Bartels. Simmering is a professional engineer licensed in both Iowa and Illinois with significant experience in private development. He also served 18 years as County Engineer in two locations. He was most recently employed at VSP Engineering in Muscatine, IA. Please help welcome Robert Simmering to PWU and the Development Services Center!



STRONG LINCS

"THERE IS NO 'DIVISION' AMONG OUR DIVISIONS."

Miki Esposito

PWU Director Miki Esposito is pleased to announce the Strong Linc Award recipients for the workplace principle of **Honesty**. Please congratulate these Strong Lincs for their valued service:

Amy Cornelius-Jones (*Engineering Services*) – Amy is always willing to tell the whole truth on any issue that comes her way. You can count on her to give you all the facts on any situation.

Jerry Hockemeier (*Water*) – Jerry, a 47-year veteran, has always taken an honest approach to work. Managers and coworkers depend on Jerry for good, honest advice on operating and maintaining the distribution system. He has mentored many employees who appreciate Jerry's approach when it comes to supervision and guidance. He has high integrity and remains one of the department's most respected employees. We can only assume that he maintains this same level of honesty and integrity in his weekly fishing reports.

Gae Miller (*StarTran*) – Gae exemplifies honesty and integrity. The fact that she is straightforward in contributing ideas and does this in a friendly, trusting way is greatly appreciated.

Dave Witt, Bonnie Campbell, Tom Lawson, Shawnadee Morris, Elaine Thurber and Scott Rhen (*Solid Waste Management*) – The landfill gatehouse staff are honest and trustworthy in handling the cash and charge transactions for Solid Waste Operations. They are responsible for monetary transactions with a customer on average every two minutes, 362 days per year. No customer has ever questioned the honesty or integrity of the current gatehouse staff.

Gene Hanlon, Ryan Boyer, Kevin Patak, Steve Groesser, John Nemecek, Rudy Nuttelman, Mark Reynolds, Clint Bundy (*Solid Waste Management*) – These individuals from Solid Waste Operations are consistently perceived as honest individuals by many who have interacted with them over the course of their employment.

In addition, for the principle of **Humanity**, please congratulate:

Mardie Kincheloe (*Business Office*) – Mardie is always so pleasant at the office. You can always count on her for a quick smile, a "how are you doing?" or simply having a wonderful attitude at work. Recently, Mardie graciously extended a helping hand to a complete stranger. A mother had her hands full with a newborn baby, while also trying to get her two-year-old daughter to wash her hands. Seeing that this was a challenge for the young mom, Mardie jumped right in with "can I help you wash your hands?" Mardie turned on the water, pushed up the little girl's coat, got some soap and started washing her hands as any mother would – with her own hands! Mardie's random act of kindness reminds us that there are great people in this world contributing to it every day. Thanks to Mardie for demonstrating the quality of benevolence and principle of Humanity.

The next workplace principle will focus on **Patience**. Nominations are due to Miki no later than Friday, January 17.

A FAREWELL NOTE...

Best wishes to our Public Works and Utilities colleagues on their retirement from City employment. Their service to our community is greatly appreciated. May they find success in all their future endeavors!

Andrew "Bub" Edwards,
ES/Street and Traffic Operations
– 46 years

Dave Bernt, ES/Street and Traffic
Operations - 39 years

Scott Cockrill, ES/Design and
Construction – 36 years

Dennis Bartels, ES/Development
Services - 35 years

Mike Abbott, Lincoln Water
System (Ashland Treatment
Plant) - 31 years

Irv Hague, Solid Waste
Management - 27 years

Richard G. Wolfe, ES/Street and
Traffic Operations - 25 years

Louise Morningstar, Lincoln
Water System - 18 years

PWU Recognized at NWEA and AWWA Conferences

Water and Wastewater employees were recognized for their great achievements at the Nebraska Water Environment Association (NWEA) and American Water Works Association (AWWA) conferences November 6 through 8 in Kearney.

LINCOLN WATER SYSTEM

Silver Drop Awards (presented for 30-plus years of continuous AWWA service):

Jerry Obrist
John Miriovsky

2013 Top-Ops Competition

Second Place – Nick McElvain,
Ana Williams and Chuck Seuferer

LINCOLN WASTEWATER SYSTEM

Scott Wilbur Awards (presented for outstanding operation and maintenance of a wastewater treatment facility):

Large Facility award

Theresa Street Treatment Facility

Medium Facility award

Northeast Treatment Facility

2013 Top-Ops Competition

Third Place – Brad Barber





FEBRUARY 7 - 9

2014 Home and Garden Show
Lancaster Event Center

Changes at ENGINEERING SERVICES

Engineering Services now accepts credit and debit card payments for:

- Block party permits
- Over-dimensional permits
- Site supervisor testing fees

This replaces the previous use of escrow accounts, increasing convenience and protection for customers while requiring less account tracking for staff. To find out more, call 402-441-7711.

Looking for the newsletter online?

Visit lincoln.ne.gov (keyword: [pwu newsletter](#)) to view past newsletters or to sign up and have our newsletter sent directly to your e-mail.



Trinity Lutheran



Hill

SNOW EFFORTS HELP CONNECT PWU TO COMMUNITY



Holmes



Lincoln Northeast



Lincoln High



Mickle



Saratoga



Norwood Park



Kooser



Prescott

The second annual “Artistic Snow Plow” program decorated 10 additional snow plows to be used to clear over 1,200 miles of snow routes. The program was coordinated this year by Clay Engelman in Engineering Services.

Some of the Lincoln-area schools made the activity part of their school’s family fun night. Each participating school had three weeks to paint the plow blades. Thank you to all the school administrators, teachers and students who made this year’s theme “community and school spirit” a success, including Sherwin Williams and Lowe’s Home Improvement who donated paint supplies.

Another community effort PWU supports is the “Snow Angels” program that focuses on aiding Lincoln residents who are physically unable to clear snow from their sidewalks. Volunteers and organizations wishing to assist their community can register at lincoln.ne.gov (keyword: [snow](#)).

These efforts go a long way in connecting the community to PWU and helping residents understand the services provided.

Happy Holidays!

Avoiding the dreaded holiday weight-gain can be difficult, especially when all you want to do is enjoy and indulge right before those New Year's resolutions begin. From the mashed potatoes and gravy to the homemade desserts, make the holiday season more enjoyable by practicing a few good habits. The PWU Wellness Committee encourages employees to:

- Wash your hands often.
- Manage stress.
- Use a smaller plate to limit the amount of food during one sitting.
- Take advantage of the great vegetable and fresh fruit trays.
- Start a new tradition by getting outside for a family walk.
- Take just a few bites to satisfy the craving.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Participate in wellness activities.
- Maintain health screenings.

And always take the time to sit back and enjoy the true meaning of the holiday season – family, friends and memories.

Have a safe, happy holiday season.



graphic by Gary Lacy, Watershed Management

Central Renewable Energy System to Serve Innovation Campus

The City of Lincoln and the University of Nebraska have formed a partnership to use reclaimed, non-drinkable water from the City's Theresa Street Wastewater treatment plant to heat and cool facilities at Innovation Campus. The Central Renewable Energy System will be one of only a few of its kind in the world. The campus, developed to be a center for innovation, is the ideal place to use this environmentally sustainable system.

The reclaimed water from the City's Theresa Street Wastewater Treatment Plant will be diverted to a heat exchange facility at Innovation Campus. The reclaimed water will then return to Salt Creek. A closed-loop, similar to a geothermal heat pump system, will be installed to serve the individual buildings. Depending on the season, heat content will either be absorbed or rejected to provide heating and cooling energy to Innovation Campus. This system can provide capacity for up to an estimated 1.8 million square feet of space.

The system will be fully operational in late spring or early summer of 2014.

Christmas Tree Recycling Program

The City will accept trees for recycling at seven sites from Christmas Day through Sunday, January 12. A list of the sites can be found at recycle.lincoln.ne.gov.

Hofeling Enterprises has again donated grinding services, and the tree mulch will be distributed free to Lincoln residents beginning Tuesday, January 14. The mulch will be available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays at 2200 S. Folsom Court on a first-come, first-served basis.



This year marks the 27th anniversary of the Christmas Tree Recycling Program. It is the oldest program of its kind in the state. Since 1987, the City has recycled more than 210,662 Christmas trees (about 3,160 tons).

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