

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/>

June / July 2015

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A Day in the Life of a Gatehouse Attendant

Bonnie "Lou" Campbell begins the work day at the North 48th Street facility after dodging three deer and, on this particular morning, a skunk near the door to the gatehouse. With morning coffee in hand, she speaks with the gatehouse attendant at Bluff Road to discuss pertinent information for the day.



Lou is prepared for the first customer of the day who has been waiting patiently for the facility to open. Because it has rained again, the Bluff Road facility will route some vehicles to the North 48th Street location. While this policy is in place to ensure safety and efficiency for both facilities and the customer, Lou understands there will be those who are frustrated. But she also knows there will also be customers who say "thank you" despite the disruption. During the day, Lou will serve as many as 300 customers and nearly 700 vehicles will process through both facilities – about one every 50 seconds.

If the mere volume of traffic isn't enough to keep Lou busy, she also answers a multitude of phone calls, monitors radio calls among operations staff, clarifies load information, directs other site visitors and vendors and compiles and reviews daily reports, payment vouchers, special waste permits and charge account information.

Lou is sympathetic as she often tells the customers the news they don't want to hear. Such is life – a day in the life of a gatehouse attendant.

EXTRAORDINARY EVENT, EXTRAORDINARY RESPONSE



May 7 was an extraordinary day in Lincoln.

For me personally, May 7 is always significant. My son turned 17 that day, but the celebration was cut short.

Following a night of heavy rain, Salt Creek was higher than anyone had witnessed before. At 6.5 feet over flood stage, experts called it a historic event and the highest crest in the Creek since 1908. Since Salt Creek was so full, additional stormwater couldn't flow into the creek and instead inundated City and County streets as well as businesses and residences. Along the creek, the flooding extended from Roca all the way to Greenwood, closing Saltillo, South 14th and 27th streets, Old Cheney, Pioneers, Salt Creek Roadway, West "O," North 84th Street and Fletcher.

As a result, both the Governor and Mayor declared a State of Emergency, the City/County Emergency Operations Center was activated and response teams were deployed, including Police, Fire, Health and yes – Public Works and Utilities.

Many people aren't aware of the crucial role our agency plays year round in emergencies and natural disasters. We are regularly the first to respond to crises – under extreme conditions and pressure – for such things as water main breaks, street closures and detours, traffic accidents and signal failures, winter operations, debris management, and flooding or other severe weather events. With our specialized capabilities to respond to any disaster, we actively participate in emergency and incident planning, training, response and recovery operations so that we can continue integrating the PWU team into the overall fabric of a City, County, State or even nationwide response. Disasters, big or small, can significantly affect the lives and livelihood of our citizens. And we all have a hand in protecting the community from potentially devastating outcomes.

The more I reflect on this flooding incident, the more I appreciate your superior capabilities and competency. I'm so thankful and proud of your level of dedication, preparedness and effort in responding to this extraordinary event.

Miki Esposito
Director of Public Works and Utilities

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 **Good Communication**. Please congratulate these Strong Lincs for their valued service.

Shane Dostal

(Engineering Services)

Shane has demonstrated exceptional communication skills in his work with both special events and incident management coordination. He helped lead the coordination of major traffic control deployments for both the Mayor's Run and the 2015 Lincoln Marathon, which required long weekend hours and communications with nearly 20 staff members. In addition, his ability to communicate and work in several sections during the May flood events again highlighted his great communication skills and dedication to public safety.

Sue Agena *(StarTran)*

On a daily basis, Sue handles a large volume of phone calls. Some are inquiries regarding Handi-Van service, but most are trip requests. This can become very challenging with some clients who have limited speech abilities. With skill and patience, Sue determines what their needs are and accommodates their requests. While absent recently, Sue communicated on an almost daily basis with her replacement to ensure that the Handi-Van operation ran smoothly. This is a testament to her dedication to StarTran and the City of Lincoln.

Kitty Elliott *(StarTran)*

Kitty is an excellent communicator with both coworkers and the general public. She is effective at communicating both verbally and in writing and ensures that customers are reached in many different ways, including social media. She is also very timely in her communications.

Chuck Seuferer *(Water)*

Chuck has outstanding communication skills and interacts daily with a wide variety of people. Chuck has a calm and thoughtful approach to communicating. Much of his work is related to problem solving where listening and subject matter expertise are keys to effective communications. He speaks with clarity, is concise, seeks input from others and is comfortable with compromise when appropriate. He has participated in public events and has an enthusiastic, approachable and informed style as a spokesperson for the Water Division.

Gerardo Martinez

(Compliance Administration)

Gerardo routinely assists PWU personnel in recognizing and resolving safety concerns in the workplace. Gerardo is a consistent advocate for safety, coordinates the annual Spring Safety Workshop and represents PWU on the Citywide Safety Committee.

The next workplace principle will focus on **competency**. Nominations are due to Miki by July 17.

A FAREWELL NOTE...

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

Nick McElvain

(Water) – 40 years

Steven Faust

(Engineering Services) – 38 years

Dennis Haakenson

(Water) – 33 years

City Service Awards

The City of Lincoln Service Awards ceremony May 11 honored employees who have completed 10 or more years of service to the City.

Five PWU employees were honored for 40 years of service: Timothy Beckman, Robert Brown, Dwight Elliott, Douglas Schwartz and Timothy VanMeveren.

Also recognized for years of service were:

<i>Number of employees</i>	<i>Years of service</i>
13	35
6	30
7	25
8	20
17	15
28	10

Thank you and congratulations to all of our award recipients!

KUDOS for Flood Relief Efforts

PWU Director Miki Esposito would also like to recognize those employees whose efforts were exemplary and greatly appreciated during the May flooding. Your hard work and dedication in protecting our community did not go unrecognized. Thank you!

David Thurber – David's persistence and passion for emergency response, safety and security is unparalleled. He has continued to communicate and advocate for the Department's role as a first responder when natural disasters occur. Ever faithful and steadfast in his commitment to the City, David serves as the agency liaison to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). All of us can thank him for his continual presence and service at the EOC during the storm and relief effort.

Engineering Services, Street Maintenance and Traffic Operations – Following an emergency declaration from the Mayor, our transportation agency staff worked hand-in-hand to keep our citizens safe. They communicated effectively and mobilized quickly to barricade flooded streets; remove obstacles from impassable roads; replace countless manhole covers that were displaced and presented a traffic hazard to drivers; as well as manage the influx of citizen calls and service requests at the PWU operations center during and after the event.

Wastewater – Wastewater staff deserves a HUGE thank you for capably managing operations while the facility was overwhelmed with record amounts of water! These extraordinary conditions certainly taxed our system, resources and staff. Without this group of dedicated employees effectively communicating and working with each other conditions could have been much worse Citywide.

*Continued on page 3.
Flood photos on page 4.*

IMAGES OF FLOOD CONTROL IN ACTION



Haymarket Park



Antelope Creek north from Big X



Antelope Valley and Military Rd.



Salt Creek at Haymarket Park South



Holmes Lake

Water Conservation Poster Contest Winners



Mayor Chris Beutler presented awards May 14 to the winners of the annual water conservation poster contest. Lincoln fifth-graders participated in the art contest, sponsored by Lincoln Water System and the Mayor's Environmental Task Force. The top two entries were submitted by Kaidence Boyd of Huntington Elementary School, whose artwork will be displayed on a StarTran busboard, and Natalie O'Neill of Morley Elementary School, whose artwork will be displayed on billboards at various Lincoln locations. The third-place winner was Livia Swanson of Swanson Home School. Seven other students received honorable mention awards.

All the winners are pictured above with Mayor Beutler. The students, from the left are Kaidence; Natalie; Bryce Malin, Morley Elementary; Brooke Ohnoutka, Morley Elementary; Livia; Makiya Longs, Morley Elementary; Oriana Hawley, Morley Elementary; Cora Bauer-Lee, Morley Elementary; Ashlyn DeBoer, Trinity Lutheran; and Joshua Hoff, Huntington Elementary.

Congratulations to all the winners!



Pictured at right with Mayor Beutler and their winning artwork are Kaidence, Natalie and Livia.

Mayor Presents Award of Excellence to Solid Waste Management Team

Mayor Chris Beutler presented the [Mayor's Award of Excellence for April](#) to a team from the Solid Waste Management division of Public Works and Utilities: Solid Waste Operations Supervisor Kevin Patak and Landfill Operators Jason Killingsworth and Mark Reynolds. They were nominated by the Superintendent of Solid Waste Operations Karla Welding for their work to repair and rebuild the walking floor and pedestal boom at the Transfer Station last year. The award was presented at the beginning of the June 8 City Council meeting.

Congratulations Kevin, Jason and Mark!



From left: Karla, Mayor, Mark, Kevin, Jason and Assistant PWU Director Donna Garden.



Friday, July 3
Uncle Sam Jam
Oak Lake Park

Sunday, July 5
Oak Lake Cleanup
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Kudos continued from page 2

Business Office – For some in our agency, emergency management begins after the storm. Kudos to our finance and budget personnel for coordinating with divisions to quickly calculate and communicate our share of reimbursement from NEMA/FEMA.

StarTran, Water and Solid Waste Operations – We must all recognize the continuity of operations and service provided by StarTran, Lincoln Water System and Solid Waste Operations during the flood. Even though the event damaged some of our facility infrastructure, these operating divisions remained steady, focused and in control during the incident thanks to staff's ability to communicate and work together.

Watershed Management and Drainage Maintenance (*Streets*) – We can all thank Watershed Management and Street Maintenance/Drainage for their years of devoted service protecting the floodplain and designing, building and maintaining critical infrastructure to manage stormwater. They persistently communicate to the public and foster community support for the stormwater bond issues, which are the reason flooding wasn't worse in Lincoln.

MONITORING FOR LANDFILL EMISSIONS TO MEET REQUIREMENTS OF CLEAN AIR ACT

Surface monitoring for landfill gas emissions must be conducted quarterly to meet the requirements of the New Source Performance Standard of the Clean Air Act (CAA). This frequent operational activity at the Bluff Road Landfill ensures that methane is not being emitted to the atmosphere.

During testing, a technician walks the surface of the entire landfill – except the active filling area – with a portable flame ionization detector (FID) to measure the methane component of landfill gas that is being emitted to the atmosphere. The technician must hold the tip of the “sniffer” wand no farther than four inches above the surface and must walk a serpentine path that results in a grid of roughly 100 square feet. At the Bluff Road Landfill, this serpentine path is slightly more than six miles in length to meet regulatory requirements. The technician must also “sniff” each of the 74 gas extraction wells.

Each location where the emissions exceed 500 parts per million (ppm) is marked, and additional work must occur in an intense effort to reduce the amount of emissions below the threshold of 500 ppm. Those efforts may include increasing the vacuum on the gas extraction wells near the marked exceedance, compacting additional soil in and around the marked exceedance, using bentonite to create a new or additional seal around a well or, as a last resort, installing additional gas extraction wells.

Each location where an emission above 500 ppm occurs must be tested again within 10 days. If the exceedance is still present, additional efforts must be undertaken, and the location checked again within 10 days. If the exceedance still exists, there is one last remaining 10-day period to bring the reading under 500 ppm. All exceedances must be checked again within 30 days of the original surface monitoring event.

Exceedances as high as 30,000 ppm have been recorded in the one-year period that surface emission monitoring has been required. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will consider revisions to the regulations which would reduce the grid dimensions to 25 feet and lower the threshold to 25 ppm averaged emissions, similar to what California implemented in June 2010.

The EPA has the authority to levy maximum per day civil penalties of \$37,500 for violations of the Clean Air Act, up to a maximum of \$320,000 for individual violations in administrative enforcement actions. The EPA also has the authority to pursue criminal penalties for violations of the Clean Air Act.

Tina Baker, Environmental Compliance Technician, uses a FID to check the level of methane emissions at one of 74 vertical landfill gas extraction wells installed at the Bluff Road Landfill.



A Look Back

In 1915, the City of Lincoln Engineer's Department was directed by Adna Dobson. George Bates served as his Deputy, and D.L. Erickson was the Assistant City Engineer.

Lincoln boasted 65 miles of paved streets, with an additional 155 miles of unpaved streets inside the City limits. Paving projects that year included North 10th Street from "T" Street to the viaduct and Holdrege Street from 27th to 33rd. At the time of the 1915 Annual Report, a number of petitions were on file from property owners wanting asphalt pavement or asphaltic concrete. A number of contracts were scheduled to be let in the spring of 1916.

The ongoing maintenance of paved streets included the completion of 9,622 yards of asphalt pavement and 4,144 square yards of brick pavement repairs. A hot mixer machine had been purchased the previous year, which helped keep down the cost for asphalt repairs. A number of streets that were paved with brick between 1888 and 1891 needed complete replacement. The City Engineer's Department advised that those streets could be resurfaced with asphalt for about one-half the cost of new pavement.

The County also was busy with the paving of Sheridan Boulevard, which connected Lincoln and College View. A similar paving project also connected the City with the town of University Place.

Today, the City of Lincoln maintains 1,055 lineal miles of paved streets and 15 lineal miles of unpaved roads. During fiscal year 2013-2014, Street Maintenance replaced 2,044 tons of asphalt and 2,718 cubic yards of concrete.



Circa late 1950's or early 1960's Dobson Brothers Construction repaving "O" Street near 20th Street.



This asphalt recycler is used by Street Maintenance during winter months to make hot asphalt mix from previously used asphalt chunks and oil.

City Projects Help Save on Flood Insurance Premiums

If you live in a floodplain and have a mortgage, your lender probably requires that you purchase flood insurance for the full cost of replacing the buildings on your property. Flood insurance is available through local private insurance companies from two sources: the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), subsidized by the federal government through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), or policies entirely backed by private insurance companies.

Under FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS) program, the City was recently upgraded to a Class 5, which will provide a 25-percent reduction for Lincoln residents who participate in NFIP and whose properties are located in the floodplain. The average savings for policy-holders will increase from \$288 per year to \$360 per year. Flood insurance premiums are being increased due to federal changes, but the total savings still adds up to about \$500,000 Citywide.

"This system rewards cities like Lincoln for taking extra steps to protect residents from floods," said Mayor Beutler. "With this upgrade, Lincoln will be one of the highest rated cities in the nation, and that adds up to significant savings for our residents." Lincoln is one of six cities in Nebraska to take advantage of the NFIP.

"A significant reason for the upgrade was the City's work with FEMA to take into account the amount of open space the City has along major creeks and other drainage corridors," said Mayor Beutler. More information is available at lincoln.ne.gov (keyword: [stormwater](#)).

The flooding that took place as a result of May's heavy rains could have been much worse had these open space areas and floodplain projects not been available to hold and then drain away flood waters. These open space projects include the [Antelope Valley Project](#), Haymarket Park baseball stadium, [regional neighborhood stormwater detention ponds](#), [wetland preservation](#) and Parks properties along drainage ways.

The three goals of the CRS program are to reduce flood losses, facilitate accurate insurance ratings and promote awareness of flood insurance. More information on the CRS and the NFIP is available at floodsmart.gov.

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