

For Information

DATE: August 13, 2010

REPORT TITLE: **SELECTION OF LINDA PETELKA, MANAGER OF WASTEWATER PROGRAM PLANNING, PUBLIC WORKS, AS THE RECIPIENT OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION, COMMUNITY INVOLVMENT AWARD**

FROM: Dan Labrecque, Commissioner of Public Works

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this report is to update Regional Council on the selection of Linda Petelka, Manager of Wastewater Program Planning, Public Works, as the recipient of the American Public Works Association Community Involvement Award.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Linda Petelka has been selected by the American Public Works Association (APWA) to receive the Community Involvement Award in 2010 recognizing a public works leader that demonstrates leadership and community service.
- Linda Petelka received this award from the President of the APWA at the Annual Congress and Exposition in August 2010.

DISCUSSION**1. Background**

The American Public Works Association (APWA) represents over 29,000 members dedicated to providing Public Works infrastructure and service in small and large rural and urban communities in North America. The Association is one of the longest serving associations of its kind with chapters in the United States and Canada.

The APWA Awards Program was established to recognize outstanding individuals, groups, and chapters representing the best in the Public Works profession. The Community Involvement Award seeks to recognize public works leaders who are also leaders in their community and to inure public trust in public works professionals, through recognition of outstanding leadership.

Linda Petelka's career progression has constantly moved in a positive direction, in both the public and private sectors. Linda Petelka has held numerous positions including estimator, inspector, Manager, Director of Strategic Planning and Business Administration in the transportation industry. She has also held various technical and management positions including Acting Director and is now a manager in the municipal environment.

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Linda Petelka is educated by profession as an architect but has spent her entire career as a public works professional, with considerable additional academic and practical training thorough Ryerson University, Queen's University and the University of Toronto, Rotman School of Business.

2. Leadership

In addition to holding numerous leadership roles with the Ontario Public Works Association (OPWA), including the President position, Linda Petelka is now the Ontario Delegate to the Canadian Public Works Association. In 2009, she was the recipient of APWA Top Ten Leaders of the Year Award. While this year represents the 50th anniversary for this award, during that history Linda Petelka is one of only 28 women receiving it and the first woman with Canadian citizenship to ever receive it. Accolades have come forward from numerous colleagues and dignitaries including Premier Dalton McGuinty, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Senator Nancy Greene, Canadian Female Athlete of the 20th Century.

3. Community

In January 2010, Linda Petelka received the Pat McDonald Distinguished Community Involvement Award from the OPWA. The late Pat McDonald was an individual that gave considerable support to her community. She was the wife of the late, retired Angus McDonald, P. Eng., Commissioner of Works, City of Mississauga.

Linda Petelka's community involvement is extensive, acting as an advocate for students with learning disabilities, as a senior care giver, being a guest speaker encouraging students to seek higher education and participating in numerous charities such as Heart and Stroke, United Way, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and World Vision.

In wake of the Hurricane Katrina, APWA led an initiative to help during the APWA Congress in 2008. The following is a quote from Liz McCartney, Co-Founder and Director, St. Bernard Project and CNN Top Hero of the Year 2009, clearly articulating one of Linda's outstanding achievements.

"When New Orleans was hit by Katrina, St. Bernard Parish was one of the areas that saw considerable devastation. It took more than five days before first responders arrived. Those who did arrive were the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). As such, Canadians hold a special place in the hearts of the community. When APWA raised the challenge last year, it was again Canadians, through the leadership of the Ontario Chapter's President Linda Petelka, that made it possible for more than 30 of the 200 (15 per cent) volunteers to come from Ontario. This is very impressive considering the chapter makes up less than 2% of all of APWA. She led a campaign with all the major Commissioners of Public Works in Ontario to solicit support and being the inspiring leader she is, she was able to deliver.

In addition, she has launched a request through the Young Professionals Organization in an attempt to secure even additional community support.

As the Co-Founder and Director of the St. Bernard Project, a community based rebuilding organization located in St. Bernard Parish, I have been able to meet more than 10,000 volunteers. However, members of the APWA stand out in our minds as providing dedicated

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and lasting service to our non-profit, and this is surely due, in part, to the commitment Linda provided to the St. Bernard Project.

Lastly even before we launched our most recent request, she passed a recommendation through her board to have the Chapter donate an additional \$1,000 making the Ontario Chapter and SBP partner.

I can say that her efforts in supporting this community have taken courage and exceptional leadership."

CONCLUSION


The American Public Works Association Community Involvement Award is reserved for superior Public Works leaders who have distinguished themselves through leadership and giving back to the community. This award reflects the extent of the Association's esteem, respect and regard for Linda Petelka's long standing contributions.



for Dan Labrecque
Commissioner of Public Works

Approved for Submission:



for D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

For further information regarding this report, please contact Ric Robertshaw at extension 4404 or via email at ric.robertshaw@peelregion.ca

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