



# Branch Bugle

Spring 2026

## Did You Know We Have A New Branch Website?

[Western Branch – APWA New York Chapter](#) Here you can find the latest news, including:



The Western Branch has over 80 members covering the counties of Niagara, Erie, Wyoming, Chautauque, Cattaraugus, Allegany and Steuben. The branch meets monthly to discuss pertinent issues regarding chapter activities.

The Western Branch actively promotes and supports the Public Works community, offering special activities such as our Public Works Vendor Show, Annual Golf Tournament, Awards Program, Scholarships, and Young Professionals group gatherings, along with educational and professional development opportunities. The branch also supports the APWA student chapter at Erie Community College. Students from ECC frequently attend our educational events, and branch board members attend ECC student meetings to provide mentorship and career coaching. ECC students are eligible for an annual scholarship funded by the Branch. In addition to the Student Chapter at ECC, we also support the Buffalo Engineering Awareness for Minorities.

- Western Branch Newsletters
- Board Meeting Minutes
- Upcoming Events and Award Listings

## 2026 Beaver Island Breakout, featuring the 4th Western New York Equipment Rodeo May 21, 2026 | Grand Island, NY

Enclosed please find information on registration.

**There is no fee to compete in the rodeo. All competitors will receive a free t-shirt and prizes will be given for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place.**

## Branch Events.....

### GObike Buffalo | March 5, 2026 | How Road Design Affects Driver, Pedestrian, and Bicyclist Behavior

Thank you to Kevin Heffernan and Sakshi Surawar of GObike Buffalo for hosting us at their Community Workshop & Headquarters on Broadway in Buffalo. Attendees were happily packed into their office to hear about the direct and indirect effects that road design has on communities, simple design changes that increase safety and accessibility, and how to effectively collect data from crashes to bike and pedestrian counts to make informed decisions on where to begin.



They talked about how they generated community support for their 2022 Forest Avenue Pilot Project in the City of Buffalo by using Every Door Direct Mail, knocking on doors, social media ad campaigns, street signage in four languages, and an open streets party. The parking lane on the north side of Forest Avenue was replaced by a temporary two-way cycle track, protected by a painted buffer line and plastic delineators, from Rees Street to Niagara Street. Data showed that the total pedestrian count increased 16% and the total cyclist count increased 66%. Also, the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile vehicle speed dropped from 33mph to 27mph.

## Employee Spotlight: John Urban

Department of Public Works Superintendent  
City of North Tonawanda

John started his career for the City of North Tonawanda Department of Public Works 20 years ago. He began as a mechanic with the DPW but tested within Civil Service for as many jobs as he could, to have options. In 2016 he was promoted to be the Assistant Superintendent and took on the job of Superintendent last year. John oversees all the operations within the North Tonawanda DPW which include paving, plowing and salting, lift station and sewer maintenance, garbage and recycling pickup, and traffic maintenance to name a few!



### What led you to a career with the North Tonawanda DPW?

I was laid off from my previous job and was looking to maybe throw garbage for the summer but the City was looking for a mechanic at the time so I was hired!

### What advice would you give to someone starting out in the industry?

Keep your head down and work hard. Let them notice that you are working hard, show up on time, and be willing to work.

### What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

I enjoy hiking, hunting, and spending time with my kids and grandkids!

## 2026 Future City Competition- Mt. St. Mary's School, Kenmore



The Future City Competition held at Mt. St. Mary's School in Kenmore, which engaged students in grades 5 through 8 in designing a futuristic city centered on a **farm-to-table sustainability theme**. The event challenged students to integrate innovative infrastructure, sustainable food systems, and renewable energy solutions into their city designs.

As part of the judging and awards process, Ken Kostowniak presented the **APWA Most Sustainable Infrastructure Award to Heim Middle School** for their city, "Arvum." The student team demonstrated an impressive understanding of sustainable urban planning through extensive research and thoughtful design.



The Arvum team explored advanced farming techniques, including **aeroponic farming**, highlighting its efficiency and reduced resource use. Their city design incorporated multiple renewable energy sources—**solar, wind, and tidal power**—to support long-term sustainability and resilience. The project reflected strong teamwork, technical research, and creativity, aligning well with APWA values related to sustainable infrastructure and community planning.

Overall, the competition showcased the creativity and problem-solving skills of young students and underscored the importance of introducing sustainable infrastructure concepts at an early educational level. Not only did this team win the APWA award, the also won the NY Society of Professional Engineers award for most unique model, and ultimately winning first place in the overall competition!

Please consider being a Future City mentor for next year's competition [Future City - Future City® Competition](#)

## Presenting the 2025 Western Branch Individual Award Winners.....



**Public Works Leader of the Year**  
Don Poletto | Senior Engineer  
City of Buffalo



**Distinguished Service to Public Works**  
Michael Kessler | Director of Water Resources, Town of Tonawanda



**Award of Merit**  
Scott Klubek | Pump Mechanic Crew Chief, Erie County Water Authority



**Myron Calkins Young Leader of the Year**  
Jacob Bower, PE | Civil Engineer  
LaBella Associates



**Sustainability Practices Award**  
Green Stormwater Infrastructure Department | Buffalo Sewer Authority

## Presenting the 2025 Western Branch Project Award Winners.....



**Small Cities / Rural Communities Emergency Construction / Repair**  
Point Peter Reservoir Restoration Village of Gowanda | GPI | Legend Excavating



**Small Cities / Rural Communities Environment**  
Burmester Natural Playground  
Niagara County DPW | Fisher Associates | Scott Lawn Yard

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<https://www.linkedin.com/company/apwa-wny>



## Presenting the 2025 Western Branch Project Award Winners.....



**Transportation**  
**<\$5M | NY 240 at Fisher Road Intersection Improvements**  
 NYSDOT, Region 5 | Colliers Engineering & Design | Union Concrete & Construction Corp.



**Environment**  
**<\$5M | Delevan Trunk Sewer Improvements at Florida Street**  
 Buffalo Sewer Authority | Hazen and Sawyer | Kandey Company, Inc.



**Structures**  
**\$25-75M | Youth, Parks and Recreation Enhancement Project**  
 Town of Tonawanda | Carmina Wood Design | R.P. Oak Hill Building Co.



**Emergency Construction / Repair**  
**<\$5M | 48-inch Transmission Main Rehabilitation**  
 Erie County Water Authority | E&R General Construction, Inc.



**Environment**  
**\$5-25M | Aircraft Deicing Containment Facility Expansion**  
 NFTA | WSP | Kandey Company, Inc.



**Award of Merit**  
**<\$5M | Marrano Drive Culvert Replacement**  
 Village of Depew | DiDonato Associates | E&R General Const.



**Emergency Construction / Repair**  
**\$5M-25M | Allegany CR 26 Emergency Response & Bridge Replacement**  
 Allegany County DPW | LaBella Associates | L.M. Sessler Excavating & Wrecking | Twin Tier Constructors



**Structures**  
**<\$5M | Replacement of North French Road and County Road Bridges**  
 Erie County DPW | CHA Consulting, Inc. | Oakgrove Construction



**Small Cities / Rural Communities**  
**Transportation**  
**South Union Street Gateway**  
 City of Olean | CPL | Millennium Construction

# 2026 BEAVER ISLAND BREAKOUT

## 4<sup>TH</sup> WESTERN NEW YORK EQUIPMENT ROADEO

### THURSDAY MAY 21<sup>ST</sup> | RAIN OR SHINE

This event is organized by the American Public Works Association New York Chapter Western Branch and the New York Water Environment Association Western Chapter to celebrate National Public Works Week



[CLICK HERE](#)  
OR SCAN QR CODE  
TO REGISTER



No fee to compete  
Prizes for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> place  
Free t-shirt

- 8:30 - 9 AM Check-in and Coffee
- 8:30 AM - 2 PM Equipment, Product and Services Show
- 9 - 10 AM Safety Class
- 10 - 10:30 AM Roadeo Competitor Safety Briefing
- 10:30 AM - 12 PM Roadeo Competition
- 12 - 1:30 PM Lunch
- 1:30 PM Prize Raffle (visit vendors to get raffle tickets)
- 2:00 PM Golf Course Tee Time: Email [dbritton@nussclarke.com](mailto:dbritton@nussclarke.com) by May 13th if interested

For any questions,  
contact Taylor Brown

 [tbrown@jmdavidsoneng.com](mailto:tbrown@jmdavidsoneng.com)

 716-361-8734



# Branch Legacy Scholarship

## Directions

For spouse, children, grandchildren, and siblings of APWA Western Branch Members working in public works or related industries serving Western New York.

All winning candidates will be automatically eligible for the Robert A. Armstrong scholarship to recognize the applicant who best exhibits a combination of academic achievement and community service.

Complete application, including all attachments, and mail to the following before April 3, 2026:

Mr. Jason J. LaMonaco, P.E.  
City of Tonawanda  
200 Niagara Street  
Tonawanda, NY 14150

## Application

### Applicant Information

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Last First M.I.*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Street Address Apartment/Unit #*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*City State ZIP Code*

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

What is your relationship to the APWA member in the Western Branch? \_\_\_\_\_

Enter the APWA member's membership number: \_\_\_\_\_

## Education

Complete one of the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ I will complete high school and enter college in 20 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I am currently attending college at \_\_\_\_\_ and will graduate college in \_\_\_\_\_

I have taken the PSAT/NMSQT      YES      NO  
        

School presently attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

Honors/Awards: \_\_\_\_\_

School Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Civic Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

*If applicable:*

College you are planning to attend: \_\_\_\_\_

Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Scholarships Awarded: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected date of graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

## Employment

Are you employed?      YES      NO  
        

If yes, employer name/address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Photograph

Please attach a recent photograph of yourself.

## Letters of Endorsement

Include one (1) letter of endorsement from responsible person, other than teachers and relatives, certifying the applicant's character, purposefulness, and general worthiness of such scholarship.

Include one (1) letter of endorsement from school authorities.

## Transcript

Attach a current transcript or copy of high school or college grades.

## Signature

Once all sections have been completed, including the essay in the following section, please print, sign and date:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Essay

Please write a two-hundred and fifty (250) word essay below on “How do you feel Public Works affects you in your daily life?”

Click or tap here to enter text.

## Acknowledgement

**The Robert A. Armstrong Scholarship is offered in memory of Bob Armstrong, a longtime member and supporter of the American Public Works Association. Bob received his undergraduate and masters degrees in civil and environmental engineering from Clarkson University, and managed the Buffalo office of the engineering firm GHD for over 20 years. He specialized in delivering water and wastewater treatment plant upgrade projects to numerous local municipalities. Bob served on the Board of Directors for the Western Branch of APWA, and was the New York Chapter President from 1998 to 1999. Bob was a well-rounded member of his community outside the engineering profession. He was an All American and team captain on the Clarkson hockey team and tried out for the Montreal Canadiens. He was the head coach for numerous travel baseball and hockey teams, and was the league coordinator for Clarence girls softball. In Bob’s honor, this scholarship recognizes students who excel not only academically but are also active in their community.**