

# Kansas City Metro Chapter and Johnson County Community College work together for a brighter future

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**A**PWA's Kansas City Metro Chapter has long recognized the need to build relationships with its local and regional education partners. The Kansas City region is rich with a multitude of public and private education systems K-12 as well as community colleges and universities. Johnson County Community College (JCCC) has proven to be a helpful resource for the needs of this chapter. In fact, both organizations realized a huge win during the latest Kansas City Metro Public Works Equipment Expo. With vendors showcasing their latest pieces of equipment and demonstrations, JCCC was able to provide several short courses which received great reviews and provided a welding simulator to show those unfamiliar with welding a safe environment to weld in the virtual world. Not only did JCCC provide courses, it also assisted with a turnkey solution for registrations for the event at no cost to the chapter. It

was a true demonstration of our collaborative efforts.

For quite a while members of the Kansas City Metro Chapter have recognized a need to host more meaningful training for public works operations employees. Those who work in the field every day become masters of their crafts, but they don't always find courses made available that are in demand by both the operator or their supervisors. JCCC has been asked to assist the Kansas City Metro Chapter to determine the specific training needs and create an action plan for development and delivery.

Meetings between the chapter leadership, municipality operations employees and JCCC fettered out a list of courses that would be applicable to those in the field and beyond. The idea was to understand not only what was needed from a management perspective but what was needed by the operations employees themselves. The

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meetings held were very informative and the results truly reflective of a team wanting to ensure that success can be realized by all.

The resulting courses designed by JCCC culminate in a comprehensive program that brings to the forefront training that is designed and intended for the operations teams. Everything from Problem Solving, Mentorship, Civil Engineering Plan Reading, Proper Equipment Selection, and Advanced Equipment Operations will be provided in the program and, once completed, each student will receive a certificate of completion from the community college.

The great thing about collaboration is that each party brings to the table their capabilities, strengths and various levels of overall support that they can offer to the cause. The relationship between APWA, local member municipalities, and JCCC is no different. They each have agreed to put forth what they can to the training project, including that participating municipalities will be allowing use of space for training and equipment to greatly offset the cost of training. JCCC is bringing forward high-quality program development with a course developer who has experience in the field. They will also be using instructors with relevant experience; these will not be the sage-on-the-stage kind of programs and JCCC prides itself on using instructors from industry.


The training will take place throughout the Greater Kansas City region with multiple municipalities hosting

the training. The Kansas City Metro Chapter has been a huge leader in this program taking shape by bringing forth the idea that innovative training can still take place and by providing experts in the field to guide program development.

To ensure the public works employees remain at the top of their game, the Kansas City Metro Chapter and Johnson County Community College will be launching their innovative

Operations Training Program this year. As we all know, continued training provides employees with opportunities to hone their skills and grow within an organization. This is just the beginning of the relationship that both organizations believe will continue to grow as the industry recognizes the benefit of such relationships to educate the next generation of public works employees.

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*APWA is looking for information on similar programs and initiatives in your area. If you are currently running a Public Works Academy, working with community colleges to develop training or are wanting to get started, please contact Phyllis Muder, APWA Career Development Manager, at (816) 595-5211 or [pmuder@apwa.net](mailto:pmuder@apwa.net). *



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