Massachusetts Highway Association
Since 1893

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FALL NEWSLETTER

President's Message



Michael B. Hale

Giving Thanks for the Foundation We Build Together

As autumn settles across the Commonwealth and our municipal yards prepare for winter operations, the season brings a natural moment to pause and reflect on our shared calling. In Public Works, our work rarely stops for recognition, yet our impact is etched into the very framework of every community we serve.

To begin, I am profoundly grateful for the privilege of civic duty. Constructing and upholding local civic networks involves far more than laying pavement, clearing catch basins, or servicing pipes; it establishes the vital foundation enabling municipalities to flourish. Each resurfaced street, upgraded drainage line, and secured transit route delivers a meaningful, tangible benefit to the citizenries of our Commonwealth.

Whenever extreme weather arrives—be it heavy coastal storms, blizzards, or flash floods—our workforce answers the call as key emergency responders. Dedicated crews brave harsh environments to remove fallen branches, plow heavy snow, unblock critical roadways, and guarantee that emergency response units can rapidly access those requiring aid. That firm, silent dependable performance amid challenging situations represents a point of honor for us all.

Above all, I express appreciation for our workforce. The committed heavy machinery drivers, technicians, field crews, supervisors, and technical personnel working shoulder-to-shoulder make arduous operations end in successful outcomes. Their perseverance, good spirit, and mutual support render this challenging career fulfilling each day.

Reflecting upon our professional journeys, no one among us achieved success in isolation. I express continuing appreciation to the experienced leaders who devoted effort to instruct us, pass down practical wisdom, and foster our progress. Supported by the Massachusetts Highway Association, these professional ties have developed into enduring personal bonds, reliable advisors across municipal boundaries, and a permanent framework of inter-agency assistance.

I appreciate your consistent guidance, high professional standards, and devotion to our organization alongside the municipalities we serve. Wishing you, your personnel, and your loved ones a secure, healthy, and peaceful Thanksgiving holiday.

Michael B. Hale

President

74th Annual Joint Meeting to be held November 17th

The 74th annual meeting of the Massachusetts Highway Association and the Massachusetts Tri-County Highway Superintendents' Association will be held on Tuesday, November 17th at the Castle of Knights in Chicopee.
Registration link: https://tinyurl.com/ysn82hd8

MHA Winter Meeting set for February 4th

The MHA 2027 winter meeting will be held on February 4th at the College of the Holy Cross Hogan Center in Worcester. Details are being finalized and the meeting will include speakers who will discuss the mental health of DPW workers, applied AI Technology in public works, drone technology, state initiatives presented by Mass DOT, a legislative update presented by MMA, and an interactive panel of your peers. Registration information and an agenda will be available in late December.

Showcasing Emerging Leaders

by Sara Vargas Dupee, DPW Civil Engineer - Gloucester

On Thursday, September 24th, the Essex County Highway Association (ECHA) hosted its third annual Emerging Leaders Roast & Learn event at Forest River Park in Salem, MA. Formerly known as the Young Professionals event, the gathering brought together municipal public works professionals, engineers, and industry partners for an afternoon of networking, technical presentations, a pig roast BBQ, and cornhole.

Opening remarks by event coordinators highlighted the importance of empowering the next generation of decision-makers. With many cities and towns experiencing staffing constraints, leaders encouraged emerging professionals to take action, engage in roles across projects, and utilize their technical knowledge to make decisions, while also calling on senior leadership to delegate greater decision-making authority to incoming talent.

Now in its third consecutive year, the event serves as a vital platform for recognizing incoming leaders across Essex County communities and surrounding areas and sharing insights into ongoing public works challenges. Key topics discussed during this year's event included municipal strategies for compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule (LCRR) and the transformative role and help of artificial intelligence in public infrastructure. Leaders emphasized leveraging AI to build accurate, GIS-based asset inventories, share data transparently with staff and the public, and maintain high standards of quality control and assurance. Presentations from Salem, Beverly, and Haverhill demonstrated the wide scope of local infrastructure initiatives.

As a presenter myself a few years ago, I saw the value of sharing the work with my peers, as it opened up numerous professional connections that otherwise would not have been possible. Having a dedicated venue to highlight hard work and dedication is invaluable, and our community is deeply grateful that ECHA continues to invest in the next generation of leaders.

MHA Annual Meeting Wrap-up

Massachusetts Highway Association (MHA) held its annual meeting on May 7th at the Pleasant Valley Country Club in Sutton. MHA President Roby Whitehouse of Yarmouth introduced program chair Katherine Boshar at the start of the meeting. Catherine Shoenenberger of Stay Safe Traffic Products provided a safety update and photos which emphasized that safety warnings, OSHA, speed limits, and best practices exist for a reason.

Boston City Council District 2 Councilor Ed Flynn spoke about moped and E-bike issues in the City of Boston. According to Councilor Flynn, police don't have resources to keep e-bikes, scooters and mopeds following the rules of the road, or to keep them off sidewalks because of the volume traffic in the city, which led to proposed restrictions on their use.

Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) Legislative Analyst Violet Gehr provided the legislative update and informed members of all that goes on at the state level. Her update is provided in this newsletter.

MassDOT Community Grant Administrator Kristen Rebelo spoke about the fully integrated applications for grants, noting that Grant Central is up and running and covers grants for culverts, complete streets, bottleneck reduction, small bridges, shared streets, and unpaved roads.

Watertown Director of Public Works Tom Brady and Newton Director of Urban Forestry Marc Welch discussed management of municipal trees. They covered planting, pruning, storm response, and emergency situations that arise from construction around roots, downed wires, and trees.

Special thanks to the speakers and MHA members who were in attendance.

As part of the annual meeting, the election of officers and members of the Board of Directors was held, with Michael Hale from City of Gloucester elected President. Roby Whitehouse was acknowledged for her service as President and remains on the board as Past President.

Officers:

President – Michael Hale, City of Gloucester

1st Vice President – Jeffrey Colby, Town of Yarmouth

2nd Vice President – Kevin Cafferty, Town of Scituate

County Representatives:

Barnstable County – Rich Waldo, Town of Orleans; Tri-County Highway Association – Christopher Bouchard, MassDOT District 2; Worcester County – Scott Crisafulli, Town of Milford.

Christopher Cronin was elected to a four year term on the Trust Fund.

Awards were presented by Lisa DeMeo to the following recipients:

Past President Award: Roby Whitehouse; Grainger Award: David Desrosiers, Granby DPW Director; John Kiley Award: Annie Kelly, Aquaphalt; Recognition Awards Catherine Schoenenberger, Stay Safe Products; Christopher Peck, and Rob Colson.

The highlight of the annual meeting is the awarding of scholarships. Nearly $80,000 in scholarships were presented to 37 individuals:

Joseph Borgesi, Sophia Borgesi, Jennifer Bouchard, Nicholas Breen, Amelia Cantoreggi, Joshua Colby, Faith Colby, Elizabeth Collins, Annia Combra, Sydney Crane, Conner Crane, Lucas Diaz, Lois Divoll, Megan Field, Ryan Field, Madeleine Gallentine, Siri Hale, Hayden Hail, Maxine Hail, Ella Hanlon, Richard (Rex) Kelly, Tyler Korchin, James Langley, Olivia Luchini, Sophia Lucido, Hailey Magaldi, McKensie McCarthy, Gabrielle Palmer, Danica Poirier, Nicole Rebelo, Haley Sanborn, Isabelle Thies, Natalia Tulliver, Tony Breen, Jenna Stencil and Bridget Bernard.

Congratulations to all award and scholarship winners.





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MHA Sponsored Driver Training Skills (Roadeo) Results

by Christophers Bouchard, co-chair of Driver Skills & Training Committee

The 2026 Driver Skills and Training Event was held on July 15th at Wachusett Mountain Ski Area. While it was a hot day, the sun stayed behind the clouds and didn't make it even warmer.

This year's event was the largest to date with 80 attendees, including 34 truck teams and 52 loader operators representing communities from every region of the state.

One of the highlights this year was the improvement in the walk-around inspection and written test scores, which were consistently higher than in previous years. Based on participant feedback, we introduced the course walk-through using the course map displayed on a large video screen inside as it explained how the event would run for the day. This change saved time and made it much easier for participants to hear the instructions, ask questions, and take photos of the course maps before heading outside to participate.

This year also had the highest number of judges than in past years, which allowed judges to rotate for breaks while keeping the event running smoothly throughout the day.

2026 Truck Event Results

- 1st Place: City of Worcester – Anthony Eagleton and Paul Snape
- 2nd Place: Town of Erving – Aiden Bailey and Cody Pease
- 3rd Place: Town of Athol – Jason Lichenberger and Jordan Vescovi

2026 Loader Event Results

- 1st Place: Town of Concord – Taylor Maslowski
- 2nd Place: City of Newton – Rodolfo Marquez
- 3rd Place: Town of Arlington – Gene Cody

Congratulations to all this year's winners and to every participant for taking part in this training event.

The first-place truck team and first-place loader operator went on to represent Massachusetts at the Western Snow and Ice National Finals. The single axle truck placed 32nd out of 49 teams, Tandem axle truck came in 51st out of 70 teams, Wheel loader placed 22nd out of 91, Skid Steer placed 19th out of 81, and Motor Grader 22nd out of 49.

Other East Coast team results: Single axle truck East Providence, RI 6th, Delaware DOT 17th, and Maine DOT 29th, Tandem axle truck Delaware DOT 17th, East Providence, RI 45th, Narragansett, RI 52nd, Wheel Loader Delaware DOT 21st, 26th, 27th, North Kingstown, RI 41st, Narragansett, RI 67th, RI Public Works 77th, Skid Steer Delaware DOT 22nd, 54th. Congratulations to all on a great job.

Conference attendees participated in a number of workshops including Contrasts and Similarities of Winter Operations Small City vs Large City, which discussed internal and external communications, and different operational approaches to better manage community expectations; and There's Been an Accident; Dad's Not Coming Home, which discussed how working around equipment can be dangerous and even fatal. Discussion about how to prevent them from happening with an open round table allowing participants to share an experience to raise awareness and what they would have done differently.

Special thanks to the teams for their professionalism, cheering others on, and networking with other public works teams who represented 29 different states and hundreds of organizations at the event.

The Driver Skills and Training Committee would like to extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who helped make this year's event such a success.

Thank you to the MHA Board of Directors for its continued support of this training event and for sponsoring the first-place truck team and first-place loader operator who represented Massachusetts at the Western Snow and Ice National Finals. This opportunity would not be possible without the ongoing commitment of support for this training event.

Thank you to the county highway organizations for continually encouraging the communities you represent to participate and your support for this training event. A special thank you to the Baystate Roads Program for assisting with advertising, registration, and providing support on the day of the event. Your help continues to be invaluable. Thank you to Kevin Collins and the Town of Westminster DPW for providing the vehicles used during the walk-around inspection portion of the competition and for assisting as judges. Thank you to Advantage Truck Group for its continued support, including helping secure trucks for the driving competition and coordinating the logistics of getting them to the event. Thank you to C.N. Wood Company for your continued partnership by providing the wheel loaders used in the competition and coordinating the transportation of the equipment.

We also appreciate the Town of Wilbraham for providing trucks for the event. Your support is greatly appreciated, and this event would not be possible without it.

Thank you to Wachusett Mountain and its staff being outstanding hosts once again. From providing a great venue and great food to keeping the water stations stocked throughout the day—and, of course, arranging the weather (I always make that a requirement!)—your hospitality continues to make the event a great success.

To all our judges, thank you for volunteering your time. This event simply would not be possible without their participation. We also appreciate the vendors, municipalities, and state agencies that support everyone's involvement and allow everyone to volunteer.

Finally, to the Driver Skills and Training Committee—Jason Page, Dave Desrosiers, and Jamie Boyer—thank you for their hard work, dedication, and the ideas they bring each year to help the event run smoothly, continue to grow, and become even better than the year before. I am especially thankful for the friendships and peer interaction that have developed through this event.

Thank you again to everyone who participated, volunteered, sponsored, judged, and supported the 2026 Driver Skills and Training Event. We look forward to making next year's event even better.

Save the date for next year's event, which will be held on July 14, 2027.



Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) Fall Update

by Violet Gehr, MMA Legislative Analyst - Vgehr@mma.org

Hello Massachusetts Highway Association members!

Formal sessions ended July 31, but under the new joint rules, any bill passed by both chambers and sitting in conference can still be taken up in a formal session this fall or at year-end. Informal sessions continue until January 6, 2027. Several of the bills that matter most to cities and towns remain unresolved, and there is still time to weigh in. Make sure that you are subscribed to the MMA's legislative alerts to receive timely updates and templates for how to best reach out to your state legislators.

Energy Affordability

The House passed its energy affordability bill in March, and the Senate passed its version July 1. Conferees held their first meeting July 29 and said they wanted to finish before households turn the heat on this fall. As of October 14, there is still no deal.

Municipalities share the state's clean energy, decarbonization, and public health goals. Local solar and municipal aggregation deliver direct savings to taxpayers and residents. The final bill should maximize municipal clean energy adoption while avoiding strict mandates that burden local administrative capacity.

Provisions we urge conferees to adopt:

- **Eliminate the municipal net metering cap entirely.** The MMA advocates for the full removal of the 10 MW cap over the partial increase to 20 MW in the House version. Full removal eliminates an arbitrary barrier, encourages local solar, and gives towns long-term predictability without another round of legislative adjustments.
- **Authorize technical consultants for permitting.** This would explicitly allow cities and towns to use Section 53G consultants during the consolidated 12-month local clean energy permitting process, giving smaller, under-resourced communities expertise to evaluate complex solar, battery, and other infrastructure projects.
- **Give municipalities authority over third-party suppliers.** Communities could bar predatory competitive suppliers, marketers, and brokers from executing or renewing contracts locally, protecting residents from deceptive pricing.

Both bills would mandate "smart solar permitting platforms," requiring automated, virtual permit review for residential solar. That would be a heavy operational burden for all 351 municipalities, some of which lack digital permitting infrastructure. Bypassing manual review also weakens fire and electrical code oversight and creates unresolved liability risk for municipalities and taxpayers. We recommend pausing or revising this requirement until recent permitting reforms are fully implemented and municipal liability protections are thoroughly examined.

Environmental Bond Bill

The MMA strongly supports the Environmental Bond Bill, which funds climate resilience, clean water, and critical municipal infrastructure. The final bill should fund environmental programs at the highest proposed levels while rejecting top-down mandates, unfunded administrative burdens, and provisions that strip local environmental control.

Funding to adopt:

- **Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program:** the Senate's $500 million authorization. Some 349 of 351 municipalities participate in this flagship resilience program.
- **Clean Water Trust:** the Senate's $450 million authorization, which will help with costly local water projects, especially now that the 0% interest PFAS remediation loan program has sunset.
- **PFAS remediation and flood defense:** maintain $120 million for PFAS cleanup, $93.5 million for inland flood control and dams, $250 million for coastal infrastructure, and $50 million for climate mitigation and adaptation.

Policy provisions to retain:

- **Resilience Revolving Fund:** a sustainable, low-interest loan source for municipal infrastructure, dams, culverts, urban heat, and flood protection.
- **Extended Producer Responsibility:** combine the Senate's paint recycling program with the House's mattress recycling program to shift disposal costs from taxpayers to producers.
- **Wipes labeling and public education:** clear "Do Not Flush" labels to help prevent costly sewer clogs and backups.
- **Shade tree law modernization:** updating antiquated public tree statutes to streamline routine local maintenance.

Provisions to omit or revise:

- **Housing-tied grant preferences.** Environmental grants should be judged on environmental merit, not on a town's housing or zoning policies.
- **Exemptions from local wetlands and wastewater protections for housing developments.** These put local water supplies at risk.
- **State preemption of local drought restrictions.** This bypasses the Local Mandate Law and saddles local staff with irrelevant requirements.
- **Unfunded administrative mandates.** Conferees should reconsider the redundant combined sewer and waterway testing and planning requirements and remove the rigid mandates and purchasing bans on municipal lighting fixtures.

Transportation Funding

Governor Healey signed the transportation bond bill on June 11. It includes:

- $300 million for Chapter 90
- $200 million for transportation improvements that enable new housing development
- $500 million for MassDOT's lifecycle asset management program
- $200 million for MBTA rail and vehicles

FY27 Budget and Supplemental Budget

Revenues are strong for the first quarter of the fiscal year, so the state is off to a good start! Still, considerable uncertainty remains around national and global policy decisions that could have downstream effects on the Massachusetts economy and state revenues.

The governor's $2.24 billion fiscal 2026 closeout supplemental budget includes an outside section that would suspend the state's 24-cent-per-gallon tax on gas and diesel for two months, starting seven days after signing. She estimates the cost at about $120 million in revenue, which she would cover with surplus millionaires-tax revenue, and says the bill includes a mechanism to ensure the savings reach customers. Nearly all gas tax revenue is dedicated to the Commonwealth Transportation Fund, which supports transportation operations and infrastructure.

Economic Development Bill

The Senate added speed cameras to its $575 million economic

development bill, covering school zones, safety zones, and construction zones, limited to one camera per 5,000 residents. Other items in the bill include a permanent working group on double poles, a single transfer pilot program, and micromobility provisions that largely mirror the governor's Ride Safe Act.

Truck safety equipment: At the end of July, the Senate added language to its economic development bill (S. 3228) creating a presumption of negligence for owners of motor vehicles over 10,001 lbs GVWR that are involved in an accident with a vulnerable user and are not equipped with lateral protective devices, convex and concave mirrors, and rear cameras meeting MassDOT standards for state contract holders. This would affect every truck owner, whether or not they hold a state contract.

Housing Preemption in the Economic Development Bill

The economic development bill carries two zoning preemption provisions that matter to municipalities, and both are before the conference committee.

- **Yes In God's Backyard (House only).** This would let faith-based organizations build multifamily housing on up to four acres they already own without local approval. Developments could have up to 30 units per acre, with 20% income-restricted, and reach 45 feet in height, or taller if local zoning allows. Land zoned for or used as a school, including higher education, is excluded.
- **By-right duplexes (Senate only).** This would allow duplexes on any residentially zoned land where single-family homes are allowed, regardless of local zoning.

Both provisions undermine local process and bypass community input, and we urge the conference committee to reject them. This is not a question of whether cities and towns want housing. They do. The question is who decides, and whether local review can still account for the infrastructure that housing depends on.

November Ballot Questions

Three statewide questions have implications for municipalities:

Question 7: Limit on required lot size for single-family homes. The measure would bar municipalities from requiring more than 5,000 square feet of lot area and 50 feet of frontage for a single-family home on land served by public water and sewer. Cities and towns would keep authority over setbacks, height, lot coverage, parking, and short-term rentals. The MMA opposes it as a top-down mandate that strips local control over land use. While promoted as a "starter homes" measure, it does not cap house size or control prices, leaving developers free to build expensive market-rate homes that strain local water, sewer, and school infrastructure.

Question 5: Change to the state tax revenue limit. The measure would revise the tax revenue limit under Chapter 62F, tying annual collection limits to prior-year net collections adjusted for three-year average wage and salary growth, counting revenue from the 4% surtax on high earners within the cap, and returning excess collections to taxpayers through rebates. The MMA is concerned about the ripple effects on municipal budgets. Limiting state revenue growth reduces the state's long-term capacity to fund local aid, which supports schools, police and fire departments, road maintenance, and local infrastructure.

Question 4: Same-day voter registration. The measure would let eligible residents register or update their address at the polls on Election Day. Municipal clerks and election officials have raised logistical concerns. Poll staff already manage early voting, mail-in and provisional ballots, and equipment. Existing tools like automatic voter registration and pre-election registration windows provide broad access while giving clerks time to verify eligibility without overwhelming poll workers on Election Day.

Grants and Water Resources

The state has opened two opportunities to help communities prepare for drought and reduce water loss:

- **Free AWWA M36 water audit.** A private consulting firm will conduct a "top-down" audit at no cost to identify leaks and unbilled water loss. Public water suppliers with Water Management Act registrations or permits are eligible. The request for interest is due **October 21, 2026**.
- **EEA Drought Resiliency and Water Efficiency Grants.** Awards of up to $50,000 per project, in the program's third year, are available to municipalities, public water suppliers, regional planning agencies, public schools and universities, and nonprofits. Eligible projects include water loss control, indoor and outdoor efficiency improvements, and local drought management planning and conservation programs. Applications are due **November 12, 2026, by 11:59 p.m.**

Connect 351

Registration for the MMA's Annual Conference, Connect 351 has also opened. The Massachusetts Highway Association will be hosting a workshop with the MMA on Friday, January 22nd from 2-3:15pm. You can register for the conference here.

I look forward to seeing you all soon! Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or input - VGehr@mma.org





Safety Corner

compliments of Jenni Saxton of HazCommpliance, LLC

Storm Prep & Clear Cut: Verifying Chainsaw Competency Records Before Severe Weather Hits

As the Commonwealth shifts from late-fall maintenance into the unpredictable winter storm season, Massachusetts Department of Public Works (DPW) crews must prepare for one of their most hazardous annual duties: roadside tree work and storm debris cleanup. High winds, heavy snow, and nor'easters frequently bring down limbs and entire canopies across local municipal roads, placing public works employees on the front lines of emergency clearance operations.

While clearing a blocked arterial road is a matter of critical public safety, the urgency of the task never supersedes employee protection. Recent audit sweeps by the **Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards (DLS)** have placed a sharp focus on municipal chainsaw operations. Under the state's strictly enforced public sector safety framework, the DLS mandates that **only specifically trained, qualified, and designated employees are permitted to operate chainsaws on municipal jobsites.**

Municipalities can no longer afford an informal "all hands on deck" approach where untrained personnel grab a saw from a truck bed. If a DPW cannot immediately produce up-to-date, written chainsaw competency records during a DLS inspection or following a jobsite incident, the municipality faces severe enforcement actions and costly willful citations.

DLS CHAINSAW COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST	
MANDATORY TRAINING LOGS	JOBSTITE EQUIPMENT VERIFICATION
• Documented equipment competency • Logged hours on kickback safety • Signed "Competent Person" logs	• OSHA/ANSI-approved logging chaps • Fully operational chain brakes • Functioning high-decibel whistles
Result: Full DLS Compliance	Result: Zero Citation Exposure

1. The Core Hazard: Mastering the Kickback Zone

Chainsaw operation carries inherent risks, but none are more volatile than the kickback zone—the upper half of the bar nose. When the nose of the blade contacts a solid object like a hidden branch, log, or sudden knot, the chain can bind instantly, driving the bar upward and backward toward the operator's face and torso with unstoppable force.

DLS-compliant municipal training must explicitly focus on reactive forces. Operators must be trained to recognize the signs of a potential kickback, maintain a rigid straight-arm grip on the front handle, and ensure that the saw's mechanical chain brake is fully operational and cleared of packed sawdust before making a single cut.

2. Hardening Personal Defenses: The Chaps Mandate

When a chainsaw slips or kicks back, specialized Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is the final line of defense against catastrophic injury. The DLS requires full ballistic apparel compliance for any municipal employee running a saw:

- Chainsaw Chaps/Pants: Operators must wear wrap-around ballistic nylon or Kevlar chaps that extend from the waist down to the top of the boot. These layers are engineered to pull loose fibers into the drive sprocket, instantly binding and stopping the spinning chain before it penetrates flesh.
- Head, Face, and Hearing Protection: A logging helmet system incorporating an ANSI-approved hard hat, a steel-mesh face shield to deflect flying chips, and high-attenuation ear muffs is mandatory on all municipal clearing sites.

3. The Clear-Drop Zone and Dynamic Communication

Storm cleanup jobsites are chaotic, noisy environments where heavy machinery, rushing wind, and falling timber create a sensory overload. To eliminate struck-by hazards, DPW crews must implement a rigid **Clear-Drop Zone protocol:**

- **The 2x Rule:** The active drop zone must span a radius equal to at least twice the height of the tree or limb being felled. No personnel may enter this boundary while the saw is running.
- **Non-Visual Signaling:** Because chainsaw noise easily drowns out shouts, crews must utilize distinct high-decibel safety whistles or dedicated two-way radio headsets to establish positive contact before any tree or limb is dropped. If the ground crew loses visual or radio contact with the saw operator, all work must halt instantly.

FROM THE FIELD: THE MUNICIPAL ACTION PLAN

To ensure your department is fully prepared for the upcoming winter weather cycle, DPW directors and safety supervisors should execute the following protocol immediately:

- **Audit Your Logs Today:** Review your department's safety database. Pull any employee from chainsaw operations who does not possess a current, documented training log validating their equipment competency.
- **Inspect the Fleet:** Inspect every municipal chainsaw. Verify that chain catches, hand guards, and anti-vibration systems are fully intact. Any saw with a faulty chain brake must be tagged out of service immediately.
- **Enforce Stop Work Authority:** Remind your field crews that if a down tree is tangled in live utility wires, DPW personnel must stand by. Work must be halted until the local utility company (such as Eversource or National Grid) arrives to cut the power and ground the lines.

By establishing absolute training verification, maintaining pristine equipment, and respecting the raw power of clearing operations, Massachusetts DPW departments can keep local roads open while ensuring every member of the crew returns home safely when the storm clears.



BAYSTATE ROADS

Baystate Roads In Person Trainings

by Kathryn Donnelly, Business Development & Marketing Specialist

Snow and Ice Operations for Front Line Employees
11/9/2026 - Chicopee

Snow and Ice Operations for Supervisors
12/22/2026 – East Brookfield

All About Liquids
11/12/2026 – Chicopee

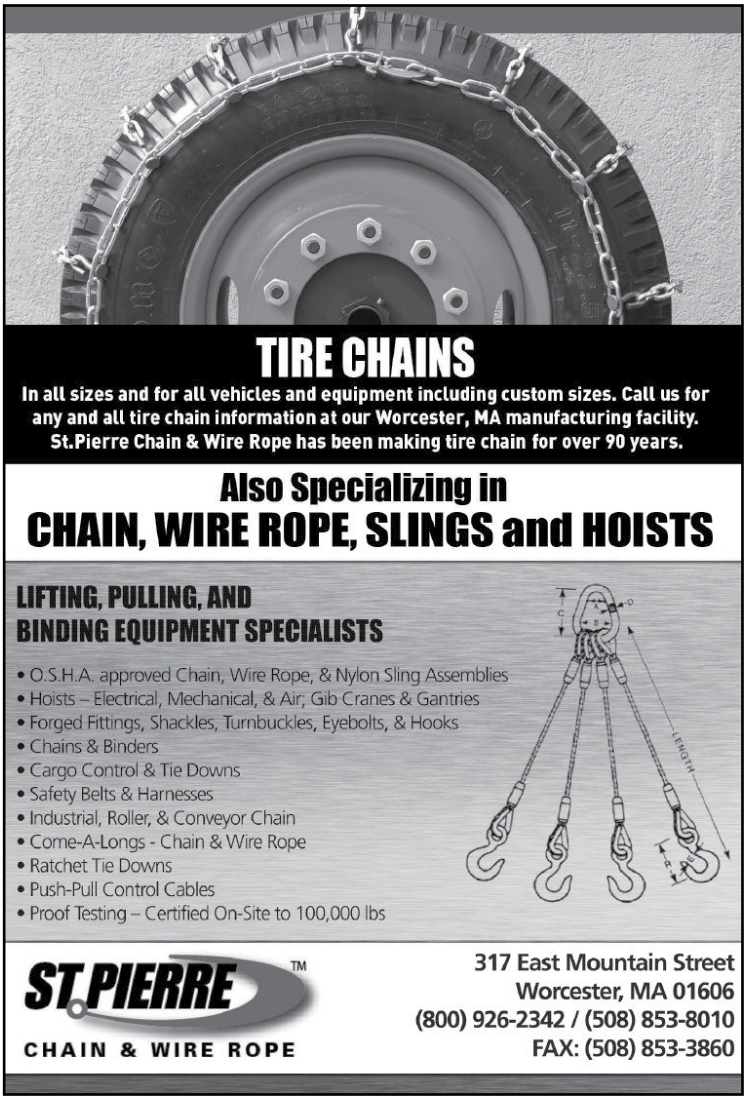
FHWA-NHI-133149 Advanced Work Zone Management and Design (2 day)
11/17/2026 – Newton

Chainsaw Skills and Safety (2 day)
11/17/2026 – Tolland

Chainsaw Storm Debris Cleanup
11/19/2026 – Tolland

Class 2 and 4G Hoisting CEU
11/30/2026 – Scituate

Go on-line to *www.BaystateRoads.org* to register for all classes.









Barnstable County –Richard Waldo

As we look back on a busy and productive summer, the Barnstable County Public Works Association is pleased to share updates on our recent events, scholarship program, professional development opportunities, and important public works initiatives taking place throughout Cape Cod.

Our association continues to bring together public works professionals, industry partners, and municipal representatives to promote safety, share knowledge, recognize outstanding contributions, and support the next generation of skilled tradespeople. Thank you to everyone who participated in our summer events and continues to support the association's mission.

Annual Golf Tournament — June 1
The Barnstable County Public Works Association held its Annual Golf Tournament on June 1 at New Seabury Golf Club in Mashpee. This popular event remains our primary annual fundraiser, providing essential support for the association's scholarship program.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all participating golfers, sponsors, volunteers, and supporters who helped make this event possible. Their generosity directly contributes to educational opportunities for local students pursuing careers in public works, construction, and the skilled trades.

Scholarship Luncheon — August 6
The association's annual Scholarship Luncheon and Clam Bake was held on August 6 and was well attended. This event is one of the highlights of our year, celebrating students who are preparing to enter the workforce and recognizing the importance of technical education and career training.

This year, the Barnstable County Public Works Association awarded:

- **$15,250 in scholarships to eight qualified applicants.**
- **$1,500 to Cape Cod Regional Technical High School.**
- **$1,500 to Upper Cape Cod Regional Technical High School.**

The two technical school awards help support educational opportunities, including the schools' toolship programs. These programs help qualifying students acquire the specialized tools they need to begin their careers in their chosen trades.

Investing in these students is an investment in the future of our communities. Skilled workers are essential to maintaining roads, water and wastewater systems, municipal facilities, and other critical infrastructure. We congratulate this year's scholarship recipients and thank everyone whose contributions make this program possible.

Joint Meeting with Plymouth County Highway Association — September 10
On September 10, the Barnstable County Public Works Association joined the Plymouth County Highway Association for a joint meeting at Mezza Luna restaurant.

Members heard from Adam Hartnett, a representative of the Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards, who provided an informative update on workplace safety requirements.

Safety remains a priority for every public works department, highway crew, and construction project. Keeping up with applicable requirements and reinforcing safe work practices helps protect employees, contractors, and the public. The joint meeting also provided an excellent opportunity for members from both associations to exchange ideas, strengthen professional relationships, and discuss issues affecting municipal operations. We thank Mr. Hartnett for sharing his expertise and appreciate the continued collaboration between the two associations.

Upcoming Association Events

November 5 — DPW Appreciation Event
Join us at Ryan Family Amusement for an opportunity to recognize the dedicated employees who keep our communities operating safely and efficiently. Public works personnel perform essential work throughout the year, often under challenging conditions, and this event is an opportunity to celebrate their contributions and enjoy time with fellow members.

December 10 — Holiday Luncheon
We will close out the year with our Holiday Luncheon at Margaritaville. We look forward to bringing members and colleagues together to celebrate another year of accomplishments, strengthen professional relationships, and recognize the continued support of our association.

Members are encouraged to watch for event details and registration information.

Barnstable County Public Works Association
Promoting professional excellence, supporting education, and building stronger communities across Cape Cod.

Berkshire County/District #1 Hwy. Supt. Assoc. – Robert Navin

On October 22nd we held our annual meeting and elected and appointed the following officers for the 2026-2027 year:

President; Kate Donovan - Tolland

Vice President; Craig Cough - Williamstown

Board of Directors: Justin Russell, Peru; Chuck Loring, New Marlborough; Dan Bannister, Williamsburg; Derek Poirier, Otis.

The following officers were appointed:

Secretary: Gerald "Jerry" Coppola, Ret. - Richmond

Treasurer: William "Bill" Elovirta, Ret. – Becket

Assistant to Secretary and Treasurer: Robert "Bob" Navin – Stockbridge

Vendor representatives: Harold "Huck" House – AMG, and Jason Page - ATG

Scholarships were awarded to Derek Poirier's daughter Danica Poirier and Ed Lord's granddaughter Isabella Havens.

A check for $7100.00 was presented to Berkshire Coalition for Suicide Prevention which represented the proceeds from the charity golf outing earlier this year.

In memory of past member T J Horrigan, his wife Lyndsay was presented with TJ's plaque and jacket from Baystate Roads for becoming a "MASTER ROAD SCHOLAR" before his passing last year.

2026 in review:

April 23- The first meeting/workshop was held at the Dalton VFW. Speakers included Jody Trunfio, PE from TEC Engineering Group, and Bonnie Roy, Regional Manager MEMA West.

June 5- The 17th Annual Scholarship-Charity golf outing was held at Waubeeka Golf Links in Williamstown. Berkshire Coalition for Suicide Prevention was this year's charity.

June 25- The 2nd Meeting/workshop was held at the Dalton VFW and focused on "Mental Health for DPW Workers." Speakers included Brian Berkel and Shawn Mille from Berkshire Coalition for Suicide Prevention, Patricia Leavenworth, MassDOT District 2 Highway Director and Bryan Levangie from All One Health.

August 27- The 41st Annual Equipment Show and Picnic at Hinsdale Fire Dept Pavilion was well attended by both vendors and attendees.

A huge shout out to all our members and vendors for continued support to make Berkshire County Highway Superintendents' Association such a success.

Essex County – John Borgese

The Essex County Highway Association (ECHA) has successfully hosted various scheduled events that include the Annual Public Works Expo/Trade Show in May, Annual Summer Meeting in June, Annual Scholarship Fund raising Golf Tournament in August, the Annual Administrative Training in September, and the Annual Emerging Leaders/Young Professionals Meeting that was also held in September. All events recognized increased attendance in recent years, encouraging the Board to continue with strong programing and encouraging interaction with all members. Moving forward, the ECHA will be conducting its annual scholarship and hosting the Annual Meeting in early December. Registration details will follow for both the scholarship and Annual Meeting. For information on the schedule and additional information, please refer to the ECHA website at https://www.essexcountyhighway.com/

Gloucester Breaks Ground on Historic $200 Million Wastewater Upgrade

On August 5, 2026, the City of Gloucester officially broke ground on a landmark $200 million upgrade to its Water Pollution Control Facility. The milestone event marked the start of critical secondary treatment additions designed to modernize the city's environmental infrastructure, safeguard coastal waters, and ensure compliance with strict clean water regulations.

The ceremony was led by Gloucester Public Works Director Michael Hale, who recognized the teamwork and dedication required to advance the largest public works investment in Gloucester's history.

Mayor Paul Lundberg and State Senator Bruce Tarr were on hand to deliver remarks, praising the collaborative planning and long-term vision behind the overhaul. Both leaders emphasized the vital role modern wastewater infrastructure plays in protecting public health, the local marine ecosystem, and Gloucester's working waterfront. The event also drew broad state and federal representation, with staff members attending on behalf of U.S. Senator Edward Markey, U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, U.S. Congressman Seth Moulton, and State Representative Dru Tarr's office to show their support.

Procured under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 149A via the Construction Management at Risk (CMAR) delivery method, the project selected MWH Constructors to build the modernized facility. Engineering and design efforts are being led by Tetra Tech, with Apex Companies serving as the Owner's Project Manager (OPM) to represent the City's interests and oversee project delivery. Construction will occur in phases to allow the existing facility to remain fully operational throughout the upgrade.

Work will proceed in phases to keep the plant fully operational throughout construction. The major upgrade is scheduled for completion in 2031, securing resilient wastewater service for Gloucester for decades to come.

Mill Fire in Haverhill Highlights Exceptional Interagency Cooperation

Overnight on April 28, 2026, the Stevens Street Mill in Haverhill caught fire shortly after midnight. City crews arrived within minutes, and the response quickly became a coordinated effort involving agencies from across the region. Haverhill Police, Fire, Public Works, and Inspectional Services worked together throughout the three-alarm fire and remained on scene for several days to monitor the site and address any flare-ups. Mutual-aid support brought personnel and equipment from Georgetown, Groveland, Lawrence, Methuen, North Andover, and other communities. The seamless coordination among local, regional, and state partners was essential to managing the emergency safely and effectively. Following the fire, the City worked closely with public partners such as NorthStar Demo, LLC of Everett, who handled the demolition and proved to be a valuable partner throughout the operation. National Grid also responded promptly and worked closely with city officials and demolition crews to support the project. As with many historic New England mill buildings, the site contained asbestos deposits and other hazardous materials accumulated over decades of industrial use. The Department of Environmental Protection and the Environmental Protection Agency approved the work plans, while city departments and contractors worked together to meet all environmental and safety requirements. The mill has now been removed, and the site has been cleaned up. This successful outcome reflects the strong cooperation among municipal departments, mutual-aid communities, state and federal agencies, utility partners, and private contractors. The City's next step is to determine the future use of the property.

Norfolk-Bristol-Middlesex – James McGonagle

A Successful Year of Education, Networking, and Professional Development.

As we move into the fall season, the NBM Highway Association is proud to reflect on another successful year of supporting Massachusetts Departments of Public Works through education, professional development, and networking opportunities. The continued participation and enthusiasm of our members, vendors, and industry partners have made 2026 a rewarding year for the Association.

Our spring season began with the Spring Technical Session on April 8, followed by the Tom Collins Memorial Spring Mechanics Workshop on April 15. Both events provided valuable opportunities for public works professionals to expand their knowledge, exchange ideas, and stay informed about the latest developments and best practices in our industry.

On May 6, our annual Equipment Show again brought together DPW professionals, equipment manufacturers, and vendors to showcase the latest equipment, technology, and innovations available to municipalities. This event continues to be an important opportunity for members to connect directly with industry representatives and explore products and services that help improve municipal operations, not to mention the awesome food trucks serving at the event!

The Scholarship Fund Annual Golf Tournament on July 8 was another highlight of the year with over 100 participants. In addition to providing a great day of camaraderie and networking, the tournament supports the Association's commitment to education through its scholarship program. We extend our sincere appreciation to the participants, sponsors, and volunteers whose generosity helps make this event possible.

Our fall programming continued with the Tom Collins Memorial Fall Mechanics Workshop on September 23 and the Fall Technical Session on October 7. These events reinforced the Association's commitment to providing relevant training and professional development opportunities for the hardworking individuals who maintain our communities' infrastructure.

We are especially excited about our upcoming Joint Membership Topgolf Event with the Massachusetts Highway Association (MHA) on October 22. This event offers a unique opportunity to bring together members of both organizations, strengthen existing relationships, and introduce new professionals and industry partners to the benefits of membership.

Everyone is encouraged to invite a colleague, municipal official, vendor, or industry professional who may benefit from becoming involved with our associations. This was a fun and engaging afternoon of networking, friendly competition, and relationship-building.

Looking ahead, we will close out the year with our Annual Gala on November 7 in Norwood to celebrate the accomplishments of the Association and recognize the members and supporters who contribute to its continued success.

As always, the strength of the NBM Highway Association lies in its membership. We sincerely thank our members, sponsors, vendors, and volunteers for their ongoing support and participation throughout 2026. Together we continue to advance our mission of providing meaningful educational opportunities, fostering professional relationships, and supporting the dedicated public works professionals who serve our Massachusetts communities.

Plymouth County – Kevin Cafferty

The Plymouth County Highway Association has had a year of both reflection and celebration, as we remember dedicated public works professionals, recognize years of service, and welcome new leadership within our communities.

In May, we sadly lost Anthony Antonello, Scituate DPW Director, who passed away after 32 years of service. Anthony dedicated more than three decades to serving his community and the public works profession. He will be remembered for his commitment and contributions to the Town of Scituate. Our thoughts and condolences go out to his family, friends, and colleagues.

In August, we also lost Robert O'Connor Jr., who served as Weymouth's DPW Director for 43 years. Although Weymouth is in Norfolk County, Bob was always willing to work with and support his colleagues in Plymouth County. His willingness to collaborate across county lines reflected the true spirit of public works and the importance of helping one another serve our communities. Bob's decades of service and dedication to the profession will be remembered by many. Our thoughts and condolences go out to his family, friends, and colleagues.

We also remember Scott Manning, DPW Foreman for the Town of Pembroke, who passed away after 30 years of service. Scott dedicated three decades to serving his community and made lasting contributions through his work in public works. His service and commitment will not be forgotten. Our thoughts and deepest condolences go out to his family, friends, and coworkers.

On a more uplifting note, the Plymouth County Highway Association held its first annual motorcycle ride, bringing members together for a scenic ride and an opportunity to enjoy some camaraderie outside of the day-to-day demands of public works. The event was a great addition to our association activities, and we look forward to continuing the tradition in the years ahead.

We would also like to congratulate JR Frey on his appointment as Cohasset DPW Director. We wish JR success in his new role and look forward to working with him as he takes on this important responsibility.

The Plymouth County Highway Association remains committed to bringing public works professionals together to share knowledge, strengthen relationships, and support one another in serving our communities. As we remember those we have lost and welcome new leadership, we are reminded of the lasting impact that public works professionals make in the communities they serve.

Tri-County Highway Association – Christopher Bouchard

The Tri-County Highway Association has had a successful year filled with informative meetings, valuable discussions, and opportunities to connect with colleagues and peers across the public works and highway communities.

We kicked off the year in March with our Winter Meeting at the Bluebonnet Diner in Northampton. The meeting featured a Public Works Roundtable, moderated by a facilitator and involving representatives from three public works departments. Topics included current challenges facing municipalities, staffing, funding, and the rising costs of goods and services. Attendees also had the opportunity to ask questions and share ideas about how their departments are addressing these challenges. In addition, District 2 provided a State Aid update, highlighting upcoming funding opportunities, application deadlines, and where to apply.

In June, we held our Annual Meeting at the Shelburne Falls Pub Brew at the Sweetheart. The program included a presentation by EJP's Plastic Pipe Fabrication Division on no-dig culvert lining, offering attendees another tool to consider when evaluating culvert rehabilitation options. The presentation was well received, and the meeting also included our annual election of officers to the board.

August brought our Annual Golf Tournament, followed by lunch, our Summer Meeting, and the awarding of scholarships. With great weather and a strong turnout, the event was a success and provided another opportunity for members to gather, connect, and support the next generation through our scholarship program.

We are currently finalizing speakers and topics for the Joint MHA/Tri-County Highway Associations Meeting, scheduled for November 17th at the Castle of Knights in Chicopee. This will be our final event of the year, and we look forward to seeing many of you there. Please look for the meeting registration email soon.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this year's events successful through your participation and support. We wish all our members a safe and enjoyable winter and look forward to seeing you at our events next year.

Worcester County – Scott Crisafulli

As the leaves begin to fall and we prepare for the winter season, WCHA would like to thank Travis Brown for his hard work, dedication, and leadership over the past two years as President. We congratulate Ryan Mouradian, Superintendent of Public Works for the Town of Sterling, on his election as WCHA's 2026 President. We look forward to his leadership in the coming year.

We would also like to welcome Billy Palmer, Highway Supervisor for the Town of Milford, as our new Vice President, and Gene Holmes of ATG as our new Vendor Director. We appreciate their willingness to serve and look forward to another successful year for WCHA.

Our annual WCHA Golf Tournament was held on September 15 at Heritage Country Club in Charlton. The weather was beautiful, participation was strong, and everyone enjoyed a great day on the course, capped off with a delicious steak dinner. Thank you to everyone who participated and helped make the event a success!

On October 14, WCHA, with support from ATG, hosted a Mechanics Workshop at the Town of Holden Public Works facility. The workshop featured four informative training sessions:

- Welding 101 – Presented by the Town of Shrewsbury
- Vehicle Undercoating – Presented by SLMA Marketing
- Meritor Brake Training
- JPRO Diagnostic Software

The workshop was well attended and provided valuable hands-on learning opportunities and technical information for our members. Thank you to ATG, our presenters, and the Town of Holden for helping make this event a success.

Our next WCHA meeting is scheduled for November 18 at the College of the Holy Cross Hogan Campus Center in Worcester. Registration will be open from 8:30 to 9:00 a.m.

For additional information and registration details, please visit worcestercountyhighway.com.

As we head into another New England winter, WCHA wishes all our members, partners, and their families a safe, healthy, and enjoyable winter season!

2026 MHA Larry Bombara Memorial Charity Golf Tournament

by Jody Trunfio, Charity Golf Chair

The 2026 MHA Larry Bombara Memorial Golf Tournament was held at Brookmeadow Country Club in Canton on Tuesday, September 29th. Highlights of the event will appear in the Spring 2027 Newsletter.

2026 Honoree, Ed Miga



Ed Miga served the Town of Wilbraham for 36 years, most recently as Director of Public Works and Town Engineer. He oversaw Wastewater, Water (MWRA source), Solid Waste, Highway, Engineering Departments, and the Board of Health. Prior to joining the Town, he spent 10 years in drilling and blasting, and five years with Laborers' Union Local 596 working for various contractors.

Ed holds a BS in Civil Engineering from the University of Massachusetts and maintains a PE license along with multiple professional licenses and certifications. He is a past president of the Massachusetts Highway Association (2010–2011) and the Tri-County Highway Association and has served on the Western Massachusetts Homeland Security Advisory Board. He currently sits on the Massachusetts Highway Association Board of Trustees.

A proud father of three and grandfather of four, Ed enjoys fishing, carpentry, fast cars, and walking his German Shepherd.

Ed's selected charity, in honor of his late companion, is the Kidney Foundation.

Mutual Aid Update

by Christopher Bouchard, Co-chair of the committee

Happy fall everyone. We hope that you have had a safe and productive summer and are hopefully wrapping up this year's projects.

A mutual aid presentation was conducted at the Public Works Expo. Thank you to all who attended to learn more about Public Works mutual aid and the shared experiences of our panel that included a great discussion.

Stay tuned to the MHA website masshighway.org for news and updates. We will have a 24-hour phone number soon for cities and towns to call if assistance is needed. We are finalizing the details of this important milestone.

Remember to keep your city or town's DPW emergency 24-hour contact information up to date on the yearly membership form or when there is a change in your organization, as this will be very important information for the CMAC's to have when reaching out to provide or request assistance for mutual aid. This is a crucial component to the program to have it work well.

If you have an emergency change, please send it to: MHAsecretary1893@gmail.com with emergency contact update in the subject line.

This has been a long journey to get to where we currently are, and it will always need updating as we continue to progress. This could not have been done without the help of many along the way; feel free to suggest changes or improvements as we are always open to ideas.

Thank you to all who have contributed and helped in this journey, for your vision, tenacity, strength, and goodwill to carry us forward on this mission for public works now and the future

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Good Works Across Massachusetts - DPWs & Engineers Making a Difference in Our Communities

Across Massachusetts, public works employees are finding creative solutions, restoring community spaces, and stepping forward when their neighbors need them most. From May through October 2026, these accomplishments remind us that the work of DPWs goes well beyond maintaining roads and infrastructure.

Answering the Call When Communities Need Help
At its May National Public Works Week luncheon, APWA New England recognized public works first responders from Easton, Yarmouth, and Worcester. Honorees included Ryan Conway and Mark Piantedosi of Easton; Peter Burch of Yarmouth; and Patrick Wilson, Daniel Cove, Ralph Caruso, Jackson Toussaint, and Luke Brothers of Worcester. Their recognition highlights the important role public works professionals play during emergencies.

Bringing a Neighborhood Field Back to Life
In September, Revere reopened McMackin Field after more than a decade of closure. Much of the restoration was completed in-house by DPW employees, including site preparation and drainage improvements. The project returned a valued recreation space to residents while demonstrating the skills and dedication of municipal crews.

Finding a Better Use for Unwanted Furniture
Bedford DPW launched a furniture-reuse pilot with ReSupply in July. The program reduced bulky waste by 35 percent and diverted 2.2 tons of furniture from disposal, with reusable items benefiting charitable organizations. Its success led the town to expand the program, showing how practical ideas can reduce waste and help neighbors at the same time.

Turning an Overgrown Parcel into a Community Treasure
Dedham DPW helped transform a littered, invasive-plant-covered parcel along Mother Brook into the Sawmill Lane Pollinator Pathway. Opened in August, the site now includes a walking path, native plantings, public art, and a community seed library. The project creates a welcoming public space while supporting local wildlife.

Recognizing Leadership in Public Works
In June, Yarmouth DPW Director Jeff Colby received APWA New England's Outstanding Achievement in Public Works Award. The recognition acknowledged his current work and long-term planning to advance the town's infrastructure. It is a reminder of the value of thoughtful leadership and planning behind essential community services.

Celebrating the People behind the Work
Cambridge honored three DPW employees with its 2026 Ruth and Carl F. Barron Family Achievement Award: Andrew Bock of Streets and Sewer, Stephen Brajak of Fleet Maintenance, and Edwin Ramos of Solid Waste. The awards recognize distinguished performance and service, bringing well-deserved attention to employees whose work keeps city operations moving.

Did You Know?

- Public works crews are often among the first responders during local emergencies.
- Revere's McMackin Field had been closed since 2014 before its 2026 reopening.
- Bedford's furniture-reuse pilot diverted more than two tons of material from disposal.
- Dedham's new pollinator pathway includes a community seed library.

Have a Good Works story to share? Send MHA news about your department's projects, employees, innovations, and community accomplishments for consideration in a future issue.







The record-breaking 46th Annual New England Public Works Expo was held on September 16 & 17 in Marlborough

The 2026 New England Public Works Expo, sponsored by MHA, was held at the Royal Plaza Trade Center in Marlborough, on Wednesday and Thursday, September 16th and 17th, with a public works first responder theme. An enthusiastic 2,096 attendees and approximately 225 vendors were at the two-day show. Each year, under the chairmanship of David Capelle, the Expo continues to grow. The 2027 Expo is scheduled for September 15 and 16 and is well along in the planning stages.

Visit the website nepublicworksexpo.org for pictures of the 2026 Expo and updates on the 2027 Expo.









Newsletter Update

This ***Fall 2026 Newsletter*** is being distributed digitally only, plus it will be on the MHA website at masshighway.org. If you are a member of MHA and not receiving the Newsletter please contact the editor, Bill Elovirta, at bille@msn.com and give him your email address. All advertisers have a link to their websites. Please support our advertisers. All news items should be sent to your MHA County Director or direct to the editor. The next issue will be distributed in the Spring of 2027.

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