Hello MHA members. It is my distinct pleasure to write my first newsletter to the association.

On the State level, Governor Baker has been very supportive of our industry, and continues to do so. We are seeing an increase in assistance and communication from the MA DOT, which is a reflection of the hard work by Governor Baker, Lieutenant Governor Polito, Highway Administrator Thomas Tinlin, and Chief Engineer Patricia Leavenworth. This level of cooperation with the administration is encouraging, and I fully expect it to continue. If you have questions or concerns involving the state, please reach out to your County Director for guidance.

We look back at the spring and summer of 2016 and recognize that each season of each year presents us with challenges and this season was no different. Those in the State and municipal Public Works field are a dedicated group of professionals that recognize those challenges and are prepared to meet them. The citizens of the Commonwealth reap the benefits of the commitment that these professionals make, and you should be proud of the continued progress in the industry, which you are a critical part.

The Massachusetts Highway Association sponsored the 37th Annual New England Public Works Expo at the Holiday Inn, Boxborough, on September 28 and 29 under mostly clear weather. More than 1600 attendees viewed equipment, products and services from over 170 vendors.

The seminars, organized by Jennifer Tetreault from HazCompliance, were well attended, unlike the past few years. Jennifer has agreed to organize the seminars again next year.

Mike Smith from Baystate Roads also held a hands-on Chain Saw Safety seminar that included cutting down some trees. Motivational speaker, Eric Giguere, recounted his experience of being buried alive in a trench collapse and living to tell about the experience, his injuries, recovery, family suffering and his decision to speak out to others. Over 100 attendees listened to his one-hour presentation.

There were attendees from all six New England states, as well as New York. All vendors seemed to be very pleased with the interest in their products that the attendees showed.

Thank you to Bartlett Consolidated for their donation of a flat-screen TV that was raffled off to benefit the MHA Scholarship Fund. This year, the raffle generated $1,000. A large portion of the net proceeds from the Expo are transferred to the MHA Trust Fund that supports our yearly scholarship donations. This year, the scholarships totaled $24,000 to 24 recipients.


Planning for the 38th Expo to be held next year on September 20 and 21 at the Holiday Inn, Boxborough is already underway and vendors are already signing up for the 2017 expo.
Driver Skills and Safety Training Event (aka Snowplow Roadeo)

by Chris Bouchard, Co-Chairman

MHA held its inaugural Driver Skills and Safety Training (Snowplow Roadeo) on July 12 at Wachusett Mountain Ski Area with great weather and at a great location. This year, besides the single axle truck event, we added a wheel loader event to the competition. This year was also different as we invited all of the County Highway Associations to participate in the one event instead of the Associations running their own separate events. This change made the event larger, more competitive and helped build comradery among the competitors. We also set the courses up to the same standards as the national finals. We have changed the written test and will be working to change it every year.

MHA and the County Associations have some of the best vehicle pre-trip inspectors, winter road knowledge and snowplow drivers. The cities and towns should be proud of their well-trained drivers.

I would like to thank all the teams, as well as the cities and towns that they represent for their participation. Secondly, I want to thank the judges and the cities and towns that they work for, along with the vendors that send judges. I would like to thank our vendor sponsors this year: CN Wood, HP Fairfield, Patriot Freightliner / Western Star, Schmidt Equipment and Woodco.

We traveled to the Western Snow and Ice Snowplow Roadeo National Finals in Loveland, Colorado on September 28 through September 30. The teams participated in the snowplow roadeo events and took some of the workshops offered at the three-day event. One difference this year at the National Finals was all brand new courses for all of the events. The teams finished very well and represented Massachusetts.

This event would not be possible without the help and support of the MHA Board of Directors and members. We will be working over the winter to take this event to an even higher level and we will need your help to accomplish that task. If you would like to help, send the committee, Chris, Dave or Tim an email, or give us a call and we’ll put you to work.

★ MHA ROADEO RESULTS:

• Three Single Axle Truck: Southbridge (Mike and Mike) 1st, Southbridge (John and John) 2nd.
• Wheel Loader: Leominster 1st, Andover 2nd.

★ NATIONAL ROADEO RESULTS:

• Single Axle Truck: Southbridge 18th, West Stockbridge 17th and Andover / Becket 29th out of 49 teams. Less than 500 points separated the top 29 spots and only 11 points separated 17th and 18th.
• Wheel Loader: Andover 35th, Becket 16th and CN Wood (Tim) 65th out of 66 teams. Less than 800 points separated the top 35 spots.
• Skid Steer: Southbridge 28th out of 41 teams. Less than 600 points separated the top 28 spots.
• Motor Grader: Becket 9th out of 35 teams. Less than 230 points separated the top 9 spots.

These teams competed against the nation’s best snow and ice operators . . . great job and congratulations on your accomplishments!
We held a very successful New England Public Works Expo at the Holiday Inn in Boxborough, MA. If you haven’t attended this event, I strongly encourage you to do so next year. The event includes exhibitors, demonstrations and seminars, and is a well worthwhile day with your colleagues.

The Massachusetts’ contingent performed well at the National Roadeo competition in Denver, Colorado. In the truck division, West Stockbridge placed 17th, Southbridge 18th, and Andover/Becket 29th out of 49 teams. In the Wheel Loader division, Andover placed 35th, and Becket 16th out of 65 teams. In the Skid steer division, Southbridge 28th out of 41 teams, and in the motor grader division, Becket 9th out of 35 teams. A great showing. There are competitions held in every Massachusetts Highway Association county, as well as a state competition.

I want to thank all our friends and members for your continued effort and involvement in the Association, as well as your county and local associations.

Sincerely,

Christopher Cronin
President, MHA

**Executive Order Outlines Climate Change Strategy**

Reprinted from the October 2016 Issue of The Beacon, with permission from the Massachusetts Municipal Association

Governor Charlie Baker signed an executive order on Sept. 16 that lays out the administration’s plan for mitigating and adapting to climate change, which includes coordination with — and direct support for — cities and towns. The order directs the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security to lead the development and implementation of a statewide climate adaptation plan. The plan will provide a blueprint for protecting the built and natural environment based on existing and projected climate change impacts.

The two state offices are also tasked with coordinating assistance to cities and towns as they prepare for the impacts of climate change, providing resources and boosting local capacity to assess local climate risks and create municipal adaptation plans.

The administration noted that communities are dealing with the impacts of a historic drought and extreme weather events, and the executive order will enhance state and local collaboration, helping communities to more quickly recover from violent storms and extreme weather. In a statement, Salem Mayor Kim Driscoll said her city “is already preparing for the effects of climate change with a variety of planning efforts and capital investments.”

“This executive order will enable municipalities to work toward long-term solutions to protect the safety and well-being of residents, as well as our infrastructure and economy,” she said. The executive order requires each state executive office to designate a climate change coordinator, who will work to complete a vulnerability assessment for each office and to assist with the implementation and coordination of adaptation and mitigation efforts across state government.

The executive order also sets forth a schedule for the Department of Environmental Protection to promulgate regulations to ensure that Massachusetts meets its carbon and greenhouse gas reduction targets under the Global Warming Solutions Act by 2020.

MassDEP will engage stakeholders, examine emission limits from a range of sectors, and outline a timeline to develop the regulations. Administration officials will work with state and regional transportation leaders and environmental and energy agencies to outline additional steps necessary to develop regional policies to reduce transportation-sector emissions.

The state will also complete a comprehensive energy plan that will enable forward-looking analysis of energy demand and provide strategies for meeting that demand, including conservation, energy efficiency and other demand-reduction strategies. Complementing the energy plan will be continued work on regional electric energy market reform so that power generators can all compete to meet state mandates for clean energy.

The executive order will be reviewed in 2019 and every five years thereafter.
**County Association News**

- **Berkshire — Chris Bouchard**

  The First Meeting / Workshop was held on April 28 at the Skyline Country Club, in Lanesborough. Mark DeVylder from the MassDOT District One bridge section in Lenox gave a presentation on small bridge inspections for the BRI program. Baystate Roads Program, and Mr. Randy Prostak, who is a Weed Specialist from the University to Massachusetts Extension, discussed the three most dangerous, toxic and invasive roadside plants found in the Berkshires.

  On June 17, the 8th Annual Charity Golf Tournament was held at the Skyline Country Club in Lanesborough under great weather. The event raised money for the VFW’s of Berkshire County to help local veterans.

  The Second Meeting / Workshop was held on June 23 at the Skyline Country Club in Lanesborough. Connor Collier, Business Development Manager, and Steve Henning, Technical Director for Vortex Infrastructure, presented interesting new information on culvert repairs. Michael Flanagan, Manager of Safety and Health Programs at OSHA also gave a presentation.

  On August 25 we held our Third Meeting / Workshop at the Italian American Club in Pittsfield. Street Scan gave a presentation on pavement management methods and software.

  The 33rd Annual Equipment Show and Picnic was held on September 16 under a clear sunny sky at the Hinsdale Fire Association grounds. There was a good turnout and we thank all the vendors for their support.

  The 37th Annual Meeting was held on October 27 at the Italian American Club in Pittsfield. This was the wrap-up meeting before winter sets in, as well as the election of new officers and the presentation of the annual scholarships.

- **Essex County — Lisa DeMeo**

  Essex County Highway Association has announced its 2017 meeting schedule:

  - Trade Show — April 4
  - Spring Tech — May 9
  - Summer Tech — June 1
  - Golf — August 1
  - Fall Tech — November 30

- **Plymouth — John Haines**

  The Plymouth County Highway Association had an active summer, beginning in July with the annual Ralph Hayward Equipment Show at the Upland Club in Plympton. Over 30 municipal and commercial vendors participated, with over 300 attendees.

  That was followed up with 17 teams from throughout Plymouth County competing in the Snow & Ice Driver Training & Competition Day held at the Plymouth Municipal Airport.

  The summer was capped off hosting the joint Plymouth and Barnstable County Highway Association meeting where we were honored to have Lt. Governor Karen Polito as our key note speaker.
MassDOT Accepting Applications for Municipal Small Bridge Program

October 3, 2016.

Reprinted from the Massachusetts Municipal Association’s website, with permission from the Massachusetts Municipal Association.

On Sept. 12, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation posted the application for funding under a new municipal small bridge program.

The program addresses bridges with spans of 10 ft. to 20 ft. for which cities and towns are responsible. The objective is to assist communities with the costs for design, construction and preservation of these bridges. The program targets bridges that are not eligible for federal funding. The program allows for a maximum reimbursement of $500,000 per year per municipality.

There are approximately 1,300 municipal bridges across the state with spans between 10 ft. and 20 ft.

Applications for the first round of the program are due on Oct. 31. Applications will be accepted three times a year, with deadlines of Oct. 31, Feb. 28 and June 30.

Approved projects will be funded through reimbursement agreements between MassDOT and the municipality. Applications may also be submitted for emergency review at any time, if the municipality includes an explanation of the emergency circumstances.

On Aug. 10, Governor Charlie Baker signed an $800 million transportation bond bill that includes the five-year, $50 million authorization for the new municipal small bridge program.

For more information and to view the application, please visit http://tinyurl.com/munibridges.

Written by MMA Legislative Analyst Victoria Sclafani.

MassDOT Contracts and Agreements Reminder

MassDOT Chief Engineer Patricia Leavenworth, P.E. has issued a notice to all cities and towns regarding the administration of Highway Division contracts and agreements. She states that all contracts include language stipulating that the Commonwealth will not provide compensation for any work that occurs prior to the execution of a contract. This is a statewide requirement applicable to all contracts with the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth is now in the process of implementing the Complete Streets Program and the Municipal Small Bridge Program. Both of these programs rely upon agreements between the Highway Division and the municipality to provide a mechanism for reimbursing a city or town for costs that have been incurred. These programs are important to the communities, and MassDOT is committed to making the programs a success. That includes ensuring that agreements are processed in a timely manner.

Leavenworth stated that she understands that communities are interested in advancing work as quickly as possible. However, the Highway Division cannot process a payment and cannot reimburse the municipality if the date that services were provided is prior to the date of the execution of the contract.

Should you have any additional questions regarding this matter, please feel free to contact Leavenworth or Michael Schwartz, Contracts and Agreements Engineer at 857-368-9464.

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By Jennifer Tetreault, HazCompliance, Chairman of MHA Expo Education Committee

**Education, updates, recertification, safety, new laws, new technology . . .** We could continue with the list of subject information necessary for all DPWs to be up to date on. It is not easy to keep up with the ever-changing needs and requirements to keep the towns and cities running, and the employees happy and healthy.

But we can try! This year at the 2016 New England Public Works Expo a renewed effort was made to bring educational sessions for all job titles within Public Works. There were safety classes for chainsaw and chipper machines with live demonstrations, regulatory update sessions were held in regards to safety and hoisting, discussions about MS4 Stormwater compliance, and many more, for a total of 21 sessions over the two-day event. It is also noteworthy to mention that there was record attendance at these sessions with over 180 total participants.

In addition, our emotionally-moving keynote speaker, Eric Giguere, with his presentation, The Buried Truth Uncovered, was well-attended and very well received with over 120 people hearing Eric’s heartfelt and heart-stopping (literally) story of how he was buried alive in a trench and had officially died. Though Eric is lucky to have been revived and is now travelling to share his story — a story that makes us all stop and think twice about working safely — he did not make it through without his physical, emotional, and life battle scars. This was a presentation to have been part of, especially if you are overseeing people in trenches or if you are the one going in to trenches. You were hard-pressed to find someone with whom this story did not resonate.

We were able to bring these great sessions and programs through collaboration, not only with the Educational Committee, but also with feedback from our members about what they would like to see and hear at the Expo. It is our intention to continue to build the value of these sessions for our attendees and to attain greater involvement next year. Our goal is to generate a high reputation for the New England Public Works Expo, not only for the amazing showcases and exhibits of the vendors, but also for the valuable information that is provided in the sessions at the show. Until then, stay safe and see you next year!

If you would like to see a particular session at the Expo, please feel free to contact Jennifer at info@hazcompliance.com

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**Congratualtions, Master Roads Scholars**

Baystate Roads recently announced that **David Desrosiers, P.E.** and **Tim French** have received Master Roads Scholar Certification.

David Desrosiers, P.E. has been employed as the Town of Granby Highway Superintendent for more than 16 years. David holds a BS degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. David is also a MHA Director representing Tri-Cty Highway Superintendents’ Association.

Tim French has been employed with the Town of Bedford as a Highway Foreman for 15 years, working his way up from Light Equipment Operator in the Grounds Division.

Congratulations to David and Tim on becoming the newest Baystate Roads Scholars.

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**2016 MHA Scholarship Winners**

At the Annual Meeting in May, the Massachusetts Highway Association Trust awarded a total of $24,000 in scholarships to 24 recipients. Each recipient was awarded a $1,000 scholarship.

The scholarships were awarded to Krystal Kilhart, Monica Kashi, Anna Russell, McKenna Russell, Abby Lane, Luke McDonald, Lexi Elovirta, Molly O’Brien, Rachel McGown, Alexas Fairbanks, Alan Barrett, Cameron Dickson, Rebecca Tartaglia, Jessica Dwelly, Erin Burbridge, Shealyn Connell, Mallory Ledogar, Brandon Hooper, Mathew McCarthy, Hanna Andres, Zachary Ledogar, Benjamin Cronin, Katherine Gaucher and Peter Scapicchio.
The Department of Public Utilities is in the process of amending regulations governing natural gas leak classification and repairs.

The DPU has released draft regulations based on a law passed in 2014. The proposed regulations would make several changes to the classification of gas leaks, reporting requirements for companies, and the procedures for gas leak repairs on public ways. The proposed regulations establish a uniform natural gas leaks classification system for identifying Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3 leaks. The regulations lay out steps to repair and monitor leaks and contain specific provisions for repairs on public ways and in school zones.

The provisions related to repairs on a public way require that a municipality submit written notification to the gas company when conducting a significant project that requires the restoration of pavement in a public way over or above natural gas infrastructure. The gas company would then survey the project area for Grade 1 and Grade 2 leaks and set a repair and replacement schedule.

The draft regulations only address Grade 1 and Grade 2 leaks for projects in a public way, but the energy bill signed last month by the governor would incorporate Grade 3 leaks with a significant environmental impact.

The MMA submitted comments on the proposed regulations asking the DPU to clarify that a gas company shall provide the repair and replacement schedule of leaks to a municipality, and to specify that the schedule should be subject to agreement between the municipality and the gas company. The MMA supports provisions stating that, when feasible, leaks shall be repaired before or within the timeframe of a municipal road construction project, a requirement that would prevent recently paved roads from being damaged by utility repairs.

The MMA also supports a provision that would require a gas company to provide a road pavement patch when repairs are not timed concurrently with a road project.

The draft regulations would establish requirements for Annual Service Quality Reports to be filed by gas companies with the DPU. The reports would include information on the locations of Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3 gas leaks, as well as the dates the leaks were classified and repaired. This information would be made available to local officials upon request to the DPU.

The DPU has also put out draft regulations regarding gas and electric service during emergencies. The draft would revise regulations for standards of performance for emergency preparation and restoration of service for electric distribution and gas companies. The amendments to the regulations include additional requirements for gas and electric companies related to emergency response plans.

The proposed regulations would require companies to file a copy of their emergency management plans with the emergency management director of each municipality in its service territory. Companies would also be required to designate company employees as municipal liaisons for each municipality. During emergency events, municipal liaisons would have information and maps on service outages and would receive frequent updates, in order to respond to inquiries from local officials.

The MMA supports provisions stating that, when feasible, leaks shall be repaired before or within the timeframe of a municipal road construction project, a requirement that would prevent recently paved roads from being damaged by utility repairs.

The MMA has been working over the past few months with the Special Utility Commission in order to understand and address issues of utility coordination.

The DPU has also formed another working group on interconnection issues, to bring municipal officials, developers and utilities together on that topic.

Written by MMA Legislative Analyst Victoria Sclafani

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**EPG Receives Recognition**

Environmental Partners Group, Inc. was recently named to the 2016 Zweig Group Hot Firm List.

The Hot Firm List recognizes “The 100 fastest-growing architecture, engineering, planning, and environmental consulting firms in the United States and Canada. These firms have outperformed the economy and competitors to become leaders in their chosen fields.”

Environmental Partners has continued its rapid growth and diversification with total staff in excess of 50 and exceeding 100% growth over the past two years. They recently opened an office in Middletown, CT, and are completing their third expansion of the Woburn, MA office. They will also be expanding the Quincy, MA headquarters.

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Jim Noe from the Town of Egremont has taken over from Tim Hoiser who has left to go back to the private sector.

Ron Bassett from the Town of Sheffield has been appointed highway superintendent to replace Ed Lord who retired.

Richard Gould from the Town of Hawley has retired and been replaced by Brendon Dekoschak.

Joseph Sokul from the Town of Great Barrington has retired after eight years as DPW Director. Joe had previously been facilities supervisor for Nissan proving grounds responsible for 150 miles of road. Prior to Nissan, Joe was DPW Director for Bennington, VT.

Steve Gagnon, Engineer for Methuen, graduated from the Donald C. Stone Center with a credential as Public Works Manager (PWM). This program is for mid-level and emerging leaders. The Level 2 Public Works Manager (PWM) focuses on the planning and operations of public works and how all of the public works areas work together as a system.

Andrew Lafferty has been hired as DPW Director in North Reading.

In Memoriam

Stanley “Stan” Ziomek, retired Amherst Highway Superintendent, died at the age of 92 on July 6. Stan was a past president and trustee of MHA. Stan was known as “Father of Amherst Baseball,” or simply “Mr. Baseball,” to many in the community from his six decades as president of Amherst Baseball.

NEWSLETTER UPDATE

As announced in the Spring issue, this Fall Newsletter is being distributed digitally only and will be on the MHA website at masshwy.org. If you know an MHA member who is not receiving the Newsletter please contact the editor, Bill Elovirta, at bille@msn.com and give him the email address. Also, starting with this issue, all advertisers will have a link to their websites. All news items should be sent to your MHA County Director or directly to the editor.