

KIRSTEN FOWLER, PE

Executive Director, Asphalt Pavement Association of Indiana (APAI)



Biography

Kirsten is a graduate of Purdue University with a B.S. in Civil Engineering, graduating in 2011. Kirsten began working at Reith-Riley Construction Co., Inc. as an intern during her time at Purdue University and was twice named an APAI Scholar. After graduation, she went on to work as an engineering consultant for both Shrewsberry & Associates, LLC and The Schneider Corporation as Project Engineer and Project Manager, respectively. Starting in 2016 Kirsten began working with the Asphalt Pavement Association of Indiana as Technical Director. There Kirsten began her career of technical service to public works professionals by providing training and production/construction support for asphalt pavements. Her experience, dedication and promotion of the industry has found her as Executive Director of APAI since 2019.

APAI's focus is to help provide resources to contractors, designers, cities and towns, and the industry the ability to provide quality, smooth, cost effective and sustainable asphalt pavements. The majority of all Public Works projects end with asphalt pavement and is what the public sees, which is why the work of APAI is so important.

APAI partners with many associations in Indiana including INDOT, AMI, IACC, LTAP and APWA. APAI believes in sharing solutions to problems, benchmarking best practices and continuous product improvement.

Contributions

Kirsten has been fundamental in growing many of APAI's relationships in the industry, including contractors, engineers and professional organizations. These relationships have helped in the success of their annual events educating and promoting the industry.

Since her time as Executive Director of APAI, the association has awarded \$198,000 in scholarships to Indiana college students who are studying civil engineering, construction management or construction engineering management which are public works related professions. A large part of the fundraising for these scholarships has been due to her efforts to grow APAI's annual Shooting for Scholarships clay shoot and participation in the Trine University Golf Outing.

Kirsten has transformed the face of the annual APAI Winter Conference and Expo, bringing together 600+ attendees from Indiana's transportation industry, INDOT and local municipal employees. Included with this is APAI's understanding of the importance for INDOT and local agencies being able to attend the conference, so Kirsten has assured that registration for public employees is free of charge. APAI has always offered APWA space as an industry partner at these events to help promote the advancement of Public Works professionals.



Additionally to the conference, Kirsten has helped grow the relationship with INDOT, creating task forces designed to make suggestions and recommendations to INDOT which helps define expectations for the industry as a whole.

As more and more communities are searching for ways to help fund projects, Kirsten recognized this and was key in the development of the association's Community Crossings Matching Grants (CCMG) resource guides. This provided an easy explanation and created documents specifically to make applying for CCMG grants an easy and understandable process for local communities.



In partnership with the APAI Winter Conference, APAI has been partnering with the Indiana Chapter at the annual golf outing, providing a "booth" on one of the par 3 holes. Kirsten and Jaymie have provided a successful partnership as their participation is now expected and appreciated by APWA golfers making their rounds, catching up with each other and enjoying a cold drink! Their efforts have helped raise donations towards the APWA Indiana Chapter college scholarship fund.

Leadership Roles

Former APAI Executive Director Bill Knopf, while looking for a new Technical Director for the association in 2016, reached out to Kirsten to inquire if she would be interested in pursuing a career with a professional association. Having never considered association work, Kirsten was intrigued. Within months of joining the association, Kirsten immediately began building a stronger relationship between APAI and INDOT, as well as transforming APAI into a resource for Indiana's local communities. It did not take long to recognize her leadership and it was an easy transition for her to become Executive Director upon Bill Knopf's retirement in 2018.

Since her time as Executive Director, APAI's financial position is better than ever. Over the past four years, she has worked diligently to create more transparency in the association's budget, making it clear where the association's resources and expenditures are being delegated. It was this transparency that helped create opportunity for the association to grow from its current staff of two to add a new position to the staff in 2023.



Awards

As part of APWA's ongoing effort to promote the engagement of young professionals who share the core values of leadership, education, sustainability and advancement of the profession, the APWA Indiana Chapter feels that this award for Young Leader of the Year is well deserving. Through all of her great work, the chapter is not aware of any awards that Kirsten has been given to celebrate the successes of her leadership. Therefore, this nomination is important to recognize that she, as a young leader in a public works related field, is so deserving.

Ongoing Commitment to Contributing to Education **in Public Works fields**

Kirsten is dedicated and extraordinarily interested in growing familiarity with and providing education to public works fields. She currently sits on the advisory board in for the Civil Engineering program at Trine University and the construction management program at Indiana State University. She is a regular guest lecturer (at least twice per semester) at Purdue University, in both the Civil Engineering and Construction Management programs. Additionally, she's more than willing and has, at several times, travelled to cities and towns across Indiana to work with and educated local public works departments and employees about the CCMG program and transportation fundamentals.



Commitment to Advancing Sustainability

Kirsten is a founding member of Women of Asphalt and still currently sits on its Board of Directors. She is directly responsible for the create of Women in Asphalt Indiana, Women of Asphalt's first state branch! She is very open in discussing the fact that she wishes an organization like Women of Asphalt existing when she first entered the asphalt industry, as it would have been a welcomed opportunity to learn and network with other women in the transportation industry. She remains proactive in mentoring women in the asphalt industry not only in Indiana, but nationwide.



Kirsten continues to travel statewide to provide free Lunch and Learn opportunities for local communities and engineering consultants, many of which are designed to help explain the CCMG process. The Lunch and Learn sessions also include education on asphalt industry trends or technologies to public works agencies across the state.