

Mayor Marolyn Morrison ? Many exciting innovations discussed at APWA Congress



For more than 100 years, the American Public Works Association (APWA) International Public Works Congress and Exposition has drawn thousands of public works professionals from all over the world.

It is known as the "Best Show in Public Works" and I, and many of my colleagues from across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), consider this to be one of the most important conferences of the year.

Public Works in the Town of Caledon will cost approximately \$18 million in 2013 on both operating and capital works. This is a substantial amount of money and represents more than 20 per cent of our overall annual budget expenditure. I can assure you, the Town is continually looking for ways to spend your tax dollars more effectively and there were many exciting innovations to be found at this year's APWA Congress.

I attended a number of very informative sessions this year. One particularly outstanding keynote discussed traffic calming and how we can make our communities more pedestrian/cycling friendly. Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Transportation Gabe Klein led this session and he made a compelling case for the argument that avoiding gridlock requires leadership skilled at engineering change on an ambitious scale. He suggested that public works would continue to be challenged to redefine transportation beyond the traditional car-centric view, particularly in urban areas. Instead of community design focusing on the car, it should center on pedestrians and cyclists, both for recreation and getting to work. It was inspiring to learn that some communities are bucking the old trends and daring to think into the future and what people really want.

Cy Wakeman, an entrepreneur and best-selling author, was a highly motivating keynote speaker and talked to us about how leadership that is just "good enough" will just not cut it in the future. She suggests that the leaders of the future will be exceptional; they will be "hungry," forward-focused and entrepreneurial. Wakeman was a passionate speaker and I believe she is absolutely on the right track "this "leadership revolution" will affect our children and our grandchildren, so we better start setting an outstanding example for them.

There was a particularly interesting and inspiring session on climate change, weather patterns and how the development industry must transform the way they develop if we are going to achieve any degree of sustainable growth "this was right up my alley! As usual, the APWA Congress provided countless thought-provoking concepts and innovations; I can hardly wait to discuss them with our Town Engineer and members of council in order to ensure Caledon remains a successful municipality.