

American Public Works Association  
Professional Manager of the Year Award  
Public Works Emergency Management  
2021



Minnesota Chapter Nominee: Mark Ray

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# **APWA Public Works Emergency Management Nomination - Mark Ray**

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## **Introduction**

The Minnesota Chapter of the American Public Works Association (APWA) proudly nominates Mark Ray for the APWA Professional Manager of the Year: Public Works Emergency Management Award for 2021. Mark has been an active member of APWA for over 10 years and is extensively involved at both the Minnesota Chapter and APWA National levels. On the professional experience side, Mark has been employed and involved in public works profession for nearly 15 years, working in both the private and public sectors. Mark's accomplishments and contributions to emergency management, not only within public works but the emergency management profession as well - at both the local and national level, are unparalleled for public works professionals.

## **Profession**

### **Department of Homeland Security Emergency Services Sector Strategic Planning Initiative**

Through Mark's involvement on APWA's Emergency Management Committee he was initially connected with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)'s Emergency Services Sector (ESS). In 2020, ESS started a Strategic Planning Initiative in which Mark was selected to represent APWA (along with APWA Staff Member Marty Williams). Even after his term on the Emergency Management Committee ended, Mark has continued to be a regular participant and contributor to the ESS Strategic Planning initiative as the work continues into 2021.

### **Minnesota Chapter Educational Activities**

Mark's passion for emergency management is obvious and the Minnesota Chapter has leveraged Mark's passion to lead educational opportunities for Chapter Members. Mark has helped coordinate emergency management presenters at chapter conferences, workshops, and as part of the Public Works Institute.

*"Mark served as a member of the APWA-MN Chapter's Education and Training Committee in 2014 and 2015 helping to coordinate the Chapter's Fall Conference Workshop in 2015: Public Works as First Responders. Mark took the lead in coordinating speakers from across the state and country to speak on emergency preparedness in Public Works. This was the first time the APWA-MN Chapter has focused a Fall Conference Workshop offering on this very important topic." - Monica Heil, Secretary/Treasurer, APWA Minnesota Chapter*

Since 2018, Mark has facilitated bringing in speakers as part of one class session of the Minnesota Chapter's APWA Public Works Institute that focuses solely on emergency management. Class participants are introduced to the emergency management profession, traffic incident management basics, free resources from the local National Weather Service office, and a quick overview of the importance of See Something/Say Something campaign.

*"I have worked closely with Mr. Ray as a colleague in the public works profession and his leadership of emergency management is unmatched in our profession. He has become a sole leader of this topic and expert of these operations, second to none in making certain cities are prepared in the event of a disaster, or other event in need of this deployment."* - Will Manchester, PE, Director of Public Works, Minnetonka, MN; Instructor for APWA-MN Public Works Institute

In 2018 because of his professional network, Mark was able to bring the FEMA Region 5 Administrator, James Joseph, to speak to the entire group at the Chapter's fall conference.

### **National Homeland Security Consortium**

Since 2016, Mark has been the APWA liaison to the National Homeland Security Consortium (NHSC). The group is comprised of 22 national groups that are involved in various aspects of emergency management. Out of the 22 organizations involved, APWA is the only group that represents public works. In 2016, the NHSC released a white paper titled *2016 National Issues Brief* that focused on the challenges of the future and potential future national actions to respond to the challenges.

### **Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency – State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Government Coordinating Council**

In 2019, Mark was appointed to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's (CISA) State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Government Coordinating Council. *Formed in 2007 and reaffirmed by the Department of Homeland Security in the National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) 2013: Partnering for Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience, the State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Government Coordinating Council (SLTTGCC) serves as a flagship Council leveraging the expertise of these officials to bring the state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) governments' perspective into the national critical infrastructure planning process* (<https://www.cisa.gov/sltt-gcc>). In 2020, Mark was elected to serve as the Chair of the SLTTGCC. In his role as Chair, Mark is not only involved in the leadership and oversight of the SLTTGCC, but also represents SLTTGCC on other groups within DHS.

*"I applaud the council's commitment to promote more frequent communication and collaboration between SLTTGCC members and personally appreciate your contributions to the cross-sector councils leadership discussions lending the SLTT perspective on a variety of current issues. Your service to the council and partnership with CISA is greatly appreciated and I look forward to working with you in the coming year."* - Alaina Clark, Assistant Director, Stakeholder Engagement Division, CISA

One of Mark's roles as Chair of the SLTTGCC is Co-Chairing the "refresh" of the National Infrastructure Protection Plan. *The National Infrastructure Protection Plan outlines how government and private sector participants in the critical infrastructure community work together to manage risks and achieve security and resilience outcomes* (<https://www.cisa.gov/national-infrastructure-protection-plan>).

## Leadership

### APWA National

Mark is involved with APWA at the national level in multiple ways. Mark is committed to taking what he has learned and experienced at the local level and sharing that information with others at the national level, both within APWA and with external partners.

#### Emergency Management Committee

Mark was first appointed to the Emergency Management Committee in 2015. While the committee is involved in various projects, Mark's areas of interest and focus are primarily on providing comments for proposed legislation at the national level and educating public works professionals about their role and responsibility related to emergency management. In 2018 Mark was elected Chair of the Committee and served in that role until August 2020 when he termed out.

*"I worked closely with Mark Ray for three years in his capacity as a member of the APWA National Emergency Management Committee. He demonstrated a deep passion for EM and freely shared his extensive EM knowledge by volunteering to write position papers and Reporter articles, coordinate and moderate CLL sessions and develop and present PWX sessions. Mark consistently displayed professionalism, managerial skills, creativity and dedication in every project. His many contributions to APWA continue to benefit the organization on several levels."*

- Cora Jackson-Fossett, APWA Director-At-Large, Public Works Leadership and Management (2010-16)

On the education side, since weather is a critical factor to public works operations, Mark actively worked with the National Weather Service staff to develop presentations for both PWX and Snow Conferences.

*"I worked with Mark Ray on APWA's Emergency Management Committee at the national level. In our meetings, Mark regularly demonstrates his leadership qualities. He does so by volunteering to lead subcommittees, serve and represent APWA on external committees and providing support and technical expertise on a variety of emergency management related topics. Mark also worked on one of the Committees for the Minneapolis PWX and led the charge to get a couple of EM related sessions on the agenda. Mark is a take charge and get things done type of person which is a valuable asset in both the public works profession and the EM committee." - Philip R. Mann, P.E., Public Works Director, City of Gainesville, Past-Chair, Emergency Management Committee*

#### Emergency Management Sub-committees

While on the Emergency Management Committee Mark serves as the liaison to the Advocacy Subcommittee. The primary mission of the subcommittee is to review and provide comments on proposed national-level public works and emergency management issues. Most recently, this has included comments on the proposed FEMA deductible concept.

Prior to serving on the Emergency Management Committee, Mark was a member of the Mitigation Subcommittee. At one point in time, he served as the chair for the subcommittee. As part of the APWA Congress in Chicago, Mark presented alongside committee members during one of the committee's joint presentations.

## Innovation

### **Minnesota Statewide Public Works Mutual Aid Pact**

In 2018, Mark championed the development of a state-wide public works mutual aid pact (agreement). In 2020 with the onset of COVID-19, many agencies looked to this agreement as a mechanism to request mutual aid should staffing levels be severely depleted with people being out sick. Mark's foresight to the importance of pre-established agreements and his proactive efforts in getting this agreement in place before disaster struck is a clear testament to his innovation and commitment to proactive public works emergency management.

*"I could not submit this letter without mentioning Mark's tireless efforts to build a statewide mutual aid system for public works... Mark's forward thinking on this issue is sure to provide immeasurable benefit to agencies around the entire state."* - Douglas Berglund, Director of Emergency Management, Washington County

*"Mark Ray has been an instrumental partner in providing support and gaining stakeholders to Hennepin County Emergency Management in more than one area. One area specifically Mark has had a huge impact is through the acquirement of frost depth sensors in the City of Crystal in conjunction with the Hennepin West Mesonet. By Mark creating this partnership, he is not only gaining valuable information for his jurisdiction, but he is allowing additional partners and users of the Hennepin West Mesonet access to this critical and innovative information as well. Mark was also able to connect Hennepin County Emergency Management with the American Public Works Association to write an article on the Hennepin West Mesonet. This has put the Hennepin West Mesonet in a spotlight which would have otherwise not been possible."* - Sarah Karel, former Community Engagement & Meteorology Coordinator, Hennepin County Emergency Management

## Employment Achievement

### **City of Crystal (2015-Present):**

In the role as Director of Public Works/City Engineer, Mark has embraced the need to actively promote public works within the city while overseeing the self-improvement of the department consistent with professional best practices. Another major effort he championed is the creation of short YouTube videos to help explain public works operations to the public. This has helped not only raise awareness of public works, but made significant gains in improving the city council's trust and support of the Public Works Department.

Mark has also actively worked to build strong professional connections with other agencies and departments. These connections provide for improved information and resource sharing, with the intent to better serve the City of Crystal and surrounding communities.

*"Mark has been instrumental in growing a city-wide understanding of the value of public works for the City of Crystal. As part of an overall communications strategy, Mark produces and shares timely material for informative videos and social media posts regarding the wide array of public works services including plowing, street sweeping, storm cleanup, park and street maintenance, signage and more. Mark also closely monitors and shares weather alerts and warnings that advance the safety of residents and staff. Mark's hard work and appreciation of communications has made my job as communications coordinator much more productive."* - Mike Peterson, Communications Coordinator, City of Crystal, MN

### Emergency Management Related Events

- August 2020 Tornado

On August 14, 2020 the City of Crystal experienced its first recorded tornado in history. Based on pre-established procedures, over an hour before the tornado public works staff contacted police staff working in the City via 800mhz radios to notify the police staff that public works was monitoring as the storms came in if police needed anything. As the Director of Public Works, also Mark started a group text chain with the City Manager, Police Chief, and Fire Chief before the storms hit so that that text group would be at the top of everyone's list in the event of an emergency. As the storm intensified as it was approaching Crystal, Mark contacted his supervisors and directed them to put staff on alert they may be called in. The tornado warning for Crystal was issued at the same time as radio traffic from the police indicated significant damage in the City. Due to the direct communication via radio between police and public works, within seconds of it being realized that there was widespread damage, Mark notified police that public works was bringing all their staff and immediately started a list of tree-down and other problem locations. Based on the training and experience of the public works staff, the Incident Command Structure was utilized to clearly define roles and responsibilities of the staff responding to the storm. Within a few hours after the tornado hit, all trees were cleared from roads. Any trees on roads that had wires in them had been coned off and the local utility

contacted. And utility staff had checked all critical infrastructure locations and had deployed generators where needed. The following morning, a plan was pushed out onto social media informing residents of the debris clean-up plan that would start the following week.

#### EF-0 Tornado near Crystal MN, August 14 2020

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE  
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

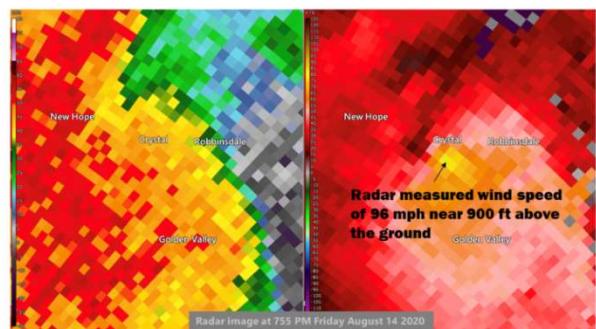
##### SUMMARY

A severe thunderstorm produced a brief EF-0 tornado and downburst winds in Hennepin County on Friday August 14, 2020.

Preliminary results indicate winds near 75 mph.

This led to significant tree damage in a concentrated area near Crystal, New Hope, and Robbinsdale MN, which continued downstream into Anoka county.

The image shows the radar reflectivity (left) and velocity (right) with the strongest winds indicated by the black arrow.



ISSUED: 2:00 PM - Saturday, August 15, 2020

- Officer Involved Shooting Protest

On May 24, 2017 there was an officer involved shooting in Crystal. About a week later there was a planned protest that was going to be at City Hall. Mark worked with his counterparts in public safety to develop and implement a plan for the traffic control and road closure planning for this event. Additionally, Mark oversaw the preparations at City Hall to reduce risk to the building including emptying of the trash dumpsters the day of so that they could not be set on fire and pushed down the street, removal of all fixtures (trash cans, large rocks, picnic tables) on the City Hall campus that could potentially be used to break windows or be set on fire, clear labeling of the shut offs for the building air handler units so that if tear gas had to be deployed it would not be brought into the building via the HVAC system, and helping to secure a portable light tower for scene lighting if needed. Finally, Mark had crews procure supplies needed to secure buildings if they were compromised as a result of civil unrest and had it pre-staged in a vehicle ready to respond if needed. During the actual protest, Mark was in the Emergency Operations Center alongside police and fire staff monitoring the protest and adjusting as needed based on events.

- Various Smaller Incidents

Mark has worked closely with his supervisors and set the expectation that Crystal Public Works is part of the City's emergency response capabilities. Examples of this include public works staff routinely responding to vehicle accidents in the City, helping to secure doors where police had to do a forced entry to check on the welfare of the occupant, supporting fire operations including bringing an excavator to tear down a garage that was on fire but full of stuff and unsafe for firefighters to enter to fully extinguish the fire.



### **City of Golden Valley, MN (2010-2015):**

Mark worked both within the Engineering Division and Street Maintenance Division while at the City of Golden Valley. While in Engineering, Mark was primarily involved with the city's street reconstruction project, various smaller street/traffic-related projects, and the city's primary point person on traffic-related needs and issues. In early 2017, Mark became the Street Maintenance Supervisor responsible for all transportation-related areas in the City, the point person for public works staff in coordinating for special events with other departments, and a lead role emergency response/management role for the City response.

*"Mark Ray is a dedicated, highly driven and well-rounded employee that I have the joy of working with over time. We have worked on three Presidential FEMA disaster declarations in our community. These disasters included a tornado, flooding and wind damage. Each of these events impacted people and infrastructure. Mark and his staff have made huge positive impacts"*

*during these emergency events. Once the emergency was over, Mark and his staff spent many days working on the recovery efforts.*

*True to Mark's character, with each of these events he drew upon his training and experience to gain the upper hand in each of these significant events in our community. Learning from each of these events, he applied lessons learned to daily City activities AND to each of the succeeding FEMA disasters. FEMA disaster events can be a paperwork nightmare, but Mark was able to master the art of collecting the right information in the right format." - John Creelly, Fire Chief, Golden Valley Fire Department*

*"As a police commander and as a police chief I have worked with Mark Ray on a number of different issues in multiple jurisdictions. He has always proven dependable and knowledgeable and he routinely goes above and beyond what most would consider the duties of a public works official.*

*In 2013, while working an active residential fire in the City of Golden Valley, I phoned Mark at his residence at around 3:00 a.m. I needed help with controlling traffic through the neighborhood so the fire department could do their job. Mark responded within minutes with barricades and signs. He quickly established and implemented a traffic control plan allowing police resources to be used where they were needed more.*

*Mark has also proved to be an invaluable resource in responding to residential traffic complaints. His expertise in collecting and analyzing traffic volume and speed data has assisted law enforcement in efficiently directing resources when and where they are needed." - Mike Meehan, Police Chief, South Lake Minnetonka PD*

*"Mark has been a great partner with MNDOT's traffic incident management program. He is dedicated to bridging the gap between public works and public safety for incident response. This resulted in highway safety training for all Golden Valley police at their in-service and for St Louis Park police reserves in their regular training. And he strongly advocated to get public safety side (including emergency traffic incident response and 911 operator prospective) included at the MN APWA 2015 Fall Workshop. He continues the goal of 'improving the 3 C's' (communication, coordination, cooperation) in his work as a director in the Metropolitan Emergency Managers Association by bringing the group to our facility for a tour in March. I look forward to working with him then and in the future!" - John McClellan, RTMC Freeway Operations Supervisor, Minnesota Department of Transportation*

## Emergency Management Related Events

- Three Federally-Declared Disasters

Mark's first presidentially-declared disaster (DR-1990) occurred in 2011 when a tornado traveled through a portion of Golden Valley. Mark was involved at the city level in both the initial response and the recovery (primarily completing the FEMA paperwork). As a result, Mark championed a number of internal operating changes within Golden Valley Public Works so that if the city experienced another disaster event, systems would be in place to make response management and recovery more efficient, as well as track information for any required FEMA paperwork.

The training and lessons learned from the tornado were put into action when Golden Valley had a summer storm come through the city on June 21-22, 2013. The city had widespread tree damage, localized flooding, and power outages lasting for days impacting properties and traffic control signals. Based on the previous storm experience, under Mark's initiative, the city had pre-determined brush debris collection sites and a program model for brush debris collection city-wide. Mark had a lead role in incident command (during recovery), tracked staff for who was on what team, what equipment was being used, where staff was working, and what they did. Mark quickly implemented equipment tracking that not only logged the hours on the machine, but also who was operating it. The recovery effort was well-coordinated not only among supervisors, but also field staff who were kept in the loop about the bigger recovery effort. When the presidential disaster declaration was received (DR-4131), Mark's second round of preparing FEMA paperwork went much smoother due to the systems in place. Not only was FEMA staff's time efficiently used because the city knew what FEMA needed to see and what information needed to be collected, city staff time involved was significantly reduced compared to the 2011 event.

The third presidentially-declared disaster Mark was a part of occurred when Golden Valley experienced flooding in the summer of 2014 (DR-4182). The lessons the city had learned and operational changes Mark had championed from the first two disaster events were evident. From the start of the storm response, Mark had a lead role in the incident management representing public works (primarily utility and transportation-related issues). The public works activities were well-coordinated and communicated among staff. The familiar use of incident management software was integral for tracking events, staff response, and outstanding recovery components. Staff was comfortable with the 800 MHz radios and effectively used them for communication among public works staff and with other fire and law enforcement counterparts. Tracking systems were in place so at the end of each day all the labor and equipment hours were logged in a manner that easily presented the information for FEMA documentation later.

- Presidential Visit

In June 2012, President Obama visited Honeywell in Golden Valley, MN. Mark worked closely with the police and other security personnel involved in the presidential visit to develop and oversee the traffic control plan associated with portion of the visit in Golden Valley. The presidential route involved some major roads through the City and plans had to be in place of where the best closure location was based both on security requirements, but also the routes that all the detoured traffic would be pushed onto.

- Record Cold Winter

The winter of 2013-2014 set records for cold temperatures which caused major problems for the city's infrastructure. Mark was again involved in the planning, response, and recovery from the various challenges that arose from the extreme, extended-cold temperatures.

## **Customer Service**

Mark has received numerous awards and recognitions over the years for his efforts, primarily related to promoting emergency management themes as it relates to public works.

### **National Weather Service People of Weather Ready Nation (February 2020)**

*NOAA's Weather-Ready Nation initiative is about building community resilience in the face of increasing vulnerability to extreme weather and water events. In People of Weather-Ready Nation, we sit down with some of the people responsible for building a Weather-Ready Nation. (<https://www.weather.gov/people/mark-ray> ).*

### **Homeland Security Today – Innovative Campaign to Forward the Mission (November 2019)**

*Mark Ray is driven by the credo that a public works department is a critical cog in the homeland security apparatus, working in tandem with police and fire on multi-incident preparedness, mitigation and response (<https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/airport-aviation-security/keeping-america-safe-2019-homeland-security-today-awards-honorees/> ).*

### **2019 National Weather Service Ambassador of Excellence**

*"APWA has served as a force multiplier, sharing WRN safety content to their 30,000+ members. In addition to outreach, APWA has collaborated with NWS on training webinars for members to learn more about forecasts, warnings, and other relevant information to their operations, as well as encouraging public works organizations to become WRN Ambassadors. When a partner comes to you and says "I want to increase engagement between our communities for mutual benefit" saying "yes" is easy, especially when they are as engaged as Mark Ray and the American Public Works Association. Across the country, NWS offices are engaged with their local communities (often times through Local/Tribal Emergency Planning Committees), and public works are part of that value chain of information, planning, mitigation, response and recovery."*

<https://noaa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapTour/index.html?appid=d1eddd2604ef4999adaf7a60b020880b>

## **2018 National Weather Service Ambassador of Excellence**

*"The City of Crystal Public Works Department (Mark Ray) has gone way above and beyond what is typical of a WRN Ambassador and defines what it means to be a force multiplier. They've promoted the Ambassador initiative on multiple fronts...leading to new relationships and additional WRN Ambassadors. They also do a fantastic job of promoting weather preparedness information in their community through cross-agency meetings, and posting our preparedness info graphic in their office and on Social Media."*

<https://noaa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapTour/index.html?appid=38d9ed51a5e14a4b9c32342ea3da06dd>

## **APWA Myron Calkins Young Leader of the Year (August 2017)**

*Recognizes and encourages young APWA members who have demonstrated an initial commitment to the profession and the association and show potential for future growth within the association. The award promotes the concept that length of career does not necessarily indicate leadership abilities or potential for service*

[\(https://www.apwa.net/MYAPWA/Inside\\_APWA.aspx?articleId=6112\).](https://www.apwa.net/MYAPWA/Inside_APWA.aspx?articleId=6112)

## **Community Service**

### **Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service**

Mark has led the coordination and publicity of bringing Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) courses: *Disaster Management for Water and Wastewater Utilities* (<https://teex.org/class/mgt343/>) and *Disaster Management for Public Service* (<https://teex.org/class/mgt317/>) to Minnesota a total of three times since 2017. These programs have educated over 150 public works professionals from across Minnesota about emergency management fundamentals. Additionally, in response to COVID-19 a four class was transitioned from being in-person to virtual.

### **Hennepin County Public Works Emergency Management Group**

In the fall of 2017 Mark started an informal gathering of public works professionals from all the Cities within Hennepin County (32<sup>nd</sup> most populated County in the United States). The group gathers somewhat regularly, although gatherings have been on a hiatus since COVID-19, to bring in speakers and discuss a variety of topics. Past topics have included mutual aid, WebEOC emergency management software, coordinating training for public works professionals, and the potential development of mission ready packages. One of the most important efforts that came from this group was a Statewide Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement and Equipment Sharing Agreement. Mark shepherded these two documents through various City, attorney, and the League of Minnesota Cities (which is an insurance agent for Cities) and ultimately these documents have become the first state-wide public works mutual aid agreement that does not require an emergency to be declared to be put into effect. This means that public works professionals are able to work together and support each other during day to day operations and be covered under a mutual aid agreement.

## Hennepin County Emergency Management Strategy Group

In 2018 Mark was invited to represent the public works sector by the Director of Emergency Management for Hennepin County. In this role Mark provides input and guidance on Hennepin County Emergency Management initiatives.

*"As Hennepin County Emergency Management has continued to build its instance of WebEOC into a tool that serves county departments and municipalities alike, Mark's input and guidance has been vital. His passion and caring go beyond the discipline of Public Works. His insights and instincts are really those of an emergency manager in that he considers how WebEOC can be used in multi-disciplinary fashion throughout Hennepin County."* - Dan Anderson, Senior Coordinator, Hennepin County Emergency Management

## Metropolitan Emergency Managers Association (MEMA)

Public works staff is critically important for planning, response, and recovery from disasters that impact the communities they serve. Mark is involved with the Metropolitan Emergency Managers Association to actively represent public works in the emergency management arena and strengthen working relationships with other first responders.

- Member from 2014 – present
- Served as a Director June 2015 – May 2018
- Served as the Public Works liaison June 2014 – September 2016

*"Mark Ray understands the importance of a strong relationship between public works and emergency management. He has consistently supported Hennepin County Emergency Management in their efforts to expand situational awareness across disciplines, and he's been an influence in how emergency management has expanded their coordination to support public works."* - Daniel Bovitz, Deputy Director, Hennepin County Emergency Management

## St Louis Park Reserve Police Officer

In an effort to further develop his emergency management background, as well as serve his community, Mark became a Reserve Police officer in 2007 and served with the department until 2013. As a reserve police officer, Mark frequently assisted with crowd and traffic control at large community events, went on patrol in the community to assist with non-sworn officer tasks, and was available for emergency call outs. Mark's experience as a Reserve Police Officer has helped him in his proactive efforts to improve coordination and communication between public works and law enforcement counterparts.



*"Even in college, Mark always knew his calling was in public service. He had fair and strong ethics and the ability to collaborate with anyone. While most of us raced to build*

*skyscrapers, Mark truly believed that helping others was an honor and a privilege.*" -  
Nicole Cuellar, Senior Project Manager, CG Schmidt, Inc.

## Sustainability

### Federal Emergency Management Agency Public Works Typing Initiative

In 2020, Mark was the lead non-Federal employee or contractor in a FEMA-led initiative to update the public works resource types. Mark helped engage APWA members from across the United States to participate in working group calls to work through all the proposed changes and provide comments to FEMA. *"The 18 various positions and teams for public works includes engineers and debris and damage assessment specialists. These resource typing documents will facilitate the sharing of deployable public works positions and teams at all jurisdictional levels and will support the augmentation of the FEMA workforce during disaster operations"*

[https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDHSFEMA/bulletins/2a479f6#link\\_10](https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDHSFEMA/bulletins/2a479f6#link_10).

*"From the outset of the project through to final publication of the updated documents, Mr. Ray's assistance was invaluable. Mr. Ray assisted FEMA with identifying other stakeholders and SMEs to serve on the project, helped communicate the purpose and goals of the project to new members of the working group, and served as a bridge between public works and emergency management concepts and terminology."* - Chris Darlington, Project Officer, Federal Emergency Management Agency

## Published Articles

Mark has written over 20 articles that have been published in the APWA Reporter, Homeland Security Today (<https://www.hstoday.us/author/mray/>) and American Infrastructure Magazine (<https://americaninfrastructuremag.com/>). Many of Mark's articles are around the topics of sustainability, resiliency, mitigation and the important role that public works plays in these areas.

Some of Mark's articles include:

"Sustainability, it's about mitigating for and recovering from a disaster," May 2016, APWA Reporter.

"How One Public Works Department Puts Mitigation Investment into Action," September 2019, Homeland Security Today.

"How Police and Fire Team Up Well with Public Works to Prepare for Any Call," September 2019, Homeland Security Today.

"The Health of Communities Depends on Public Works," May 2020, American Infrastructure Magazine.

"Public Health Depends on Public Works: COVID-19 Resources," June 2020, APWA Reporter.

"Communities Must Focus on Infrastructure Resiliency to Weather Uncertainty," October 2020 *Homeland Security Today*.

## **Summary**

Mark's demonstrated passion and commitment to public service and emergency management is an example to everyone in the public works profession. Mark has clearly had a significant impact on public works and emergency management at all levels from the City of Crystal all the way up to his work with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) within the Department of Homeland Security.

## **Letters of Recommendation**

American Public Works Association: Minnesota Chapter - President Beth Engum

City of Crystal, MN - City Manager Anne Norris

City of Crystal, MN – Chief of Police Stephanie Revering

West Metro Fire Department – Fire Chief Sarah Larson

US Department of Homeland Security, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, Stakeholder Engagement Division - Assistant Director Alaina Clark

US Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, National Integration Center, Project Officer Chris Darlington

Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) - Training Manager David Spruiell, MS, LP

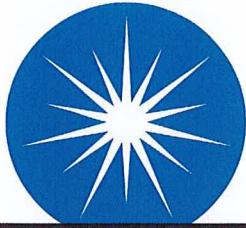
Washington County, MN - Emergency Management Director Doug Berglund

City of Minnetonka, MN - Director of Public Works and APWA-MN Chapter Public Works Institute Instructor Will Manchester, PE

City of Gainesville, FL – Acting Assistant City Manager Philip Mann

Los Angeles County Public Works - Disaster Services Specialist and APWA Emergency Management Committee Chair Loni Eazell

Metropolitan Council, Environmental Services Division - Assistant General Manager, Wastewater Planning & Capital Project Delivery Jeannine Clancy



4141 Douglas Drive North • Crystal, Minnesota 55422-1696

Tel: (763) 531-1000 • Fax: (763) 531-1188 • [www.crystalmn.gov](http://www.crystalmn.gov)

## CITY of CRYSTAL

February 3, 2021

APWA Emergency Manager Nomination Committee  
American Public Works Association  
1200 Main Street, #1400  
Kansas City MO 64105

RE: Mark Ray Recommendation – MN APWA Manager of the Year – Emergency Management

Dear Selection Committee:

It is my privilege to provide this letter of recommendation for Mark Ray's nomination as the MN APWA Chapter's Manager of the Year – Emergency Management.

Mark has been Crystal's Public Works Director/City Engineer since March 2015. In his role as Public Works Director, he is a critical member of our Emergency Preparedness/Management team and in responding to threats – either natural or human-caused. As Public Works Director, Mark is responsible for managing our water supply system, which we do cooperatively with our neighbors in Golden Valley and New Hope as the Joint Water Commission (JWC).

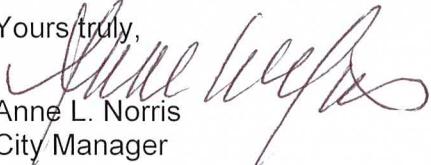
The JWC purchases our water from the city of Minneapolis and the JWC maintains the storage and distribution of water throughout the three cities. Communication and redundancy in the system are critical to ensure safe and adequate water supply to all users. Under Mark's leadership the JWC has completed a security assessment in partnership with the Department of Homeland Security's Protective Security Advisory program. In addition, the JWC, thanks to Mark's vision, is in the middle of a multi-year effort to extend fiber optic to all these structures to establish redundant communications.

In addition to taking a lead role in responding to the first-ever recorded tornado in Crystal history, over the course of 2020, Mark was the principal in completing the JWC's Community Water System Emergency Response Plan and Risk Assessment (the Plan). The Plan was approved by the JWC on December 2, 2020, for submission to the Environmental Protection Agency and State Health Department. Completing the Plan wouldn't happen without Mark's experience in emergency preparedness and management and leading and coordinating with the other members of the JWC.

Crystal is fortunate to have Mark Ray as our Public Works Director, with such an interest in and passion for emergency preparedness. I have no hesitation in recommending Mark Ray for the APWA Manager of the Year – Emergency Management.

Please feel free to call or email me at 763-531-1140 or [anne.norris@crystalmn.gov](mailto:anne.norris@crystalmn.gov) with any questions. Thanks for your consideration of this recommendation.

Yours truly,

  
Anne L. Norris  
City Manager



## CRYSTAL POLICE DEPARTMENT

4141 Douglas Drive North  
Crystal, MN 55422-1696

Phone: 763-531-1014  
Fax: 763-537-3279

February 2, 2021

APWA Emergency Manager Nomination Committee  
American Public Works Association  
Kansas City, MO

### **RE: Letter of Recommendation**

Dear Selection Committee:

The City of Crystal is fortunate to have Mark Ray serve as our Public Works Director. Mark is deeply committed to providing excellent and innovative services to its residents. Furthermore, Mark is a crucial piece in assisting our police department with effective emergency management services.

In 2017, our city experienced an officer involved shooting which led to protests. Mark immediately was proactive in coordinating shutting down roads, working with the County, providing advanced road closure signage, posting no parking on the informal detour route, bringing in the light tower for the lower level of our police parking lot.

In addition, in May, 2020, Mark assisted our police department with the civil unrest and looting that occurred in our community. He coordinated using bollards to block driveways, and he made sure that a truck was ready with supplies if needed to secure buildings.

In his position as the Director of Public Works, Mark's excels in his ability to connect and communicate with others. He brings a positive energy to leadership meetings and takes the time to build teamwork throughout the different city departments.

Mark is continually building strong relationships with members of our police department through his helpful approach and willingness to listen. I appreciate his eagerness, professionalism, and dedication to the citizens and employees of the city of Crystal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephanie K. Revering".

Stephanie K. Revering  
Chief of Police

*"Service with Compassion, Integrity, and Professionalism."*



4251 Xylon Avenue North • New Hope, Minnesota 55428

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Telephone: 763.230.7000 • Fax: 763.230.7029 • [www.wmfrd.org](http://www.wmfrd.org)

February 1, 2021

Dear APWA Nomination Selection Committee:

It is my honor to recommend Mark Ray for the Professional Manager of the Year Award in Public Works Emergency Management. Since coming to work for the City of Crystal, Mark Ray has been instrumental in opening up the lines of communication between public works and the fire department. He has implemented strategies for communication and coordination of resources that have been crucial to the delivery of services, including tactical deployment updates prior to snow events.

Mr. Ray has a strong knowledge base in emergency management that was integral to the execution of emergency response during a tornado touchdown in our response area on August 14, 2020. He was a key player in opening the EOC and worked as part of a unified command with police and fire during this storm. He effectively coordinated the public works response for flooding, trees down and road closures. He was also instrumental in multi-disciplinary communications with our county EOC through WebEOC.

Mark Ray's willingness and ability for response has strengthened Crystal Public Works' relationship with the fire department. His expertise and communication style have built a rapport and created a sense of trust with the command staff and firefighters. Because of this trust, the fire department was able to utilize public work's manpower and equipment to mitigate the overhaul of structure that was unsafe for firefighters to work in.

These are just a few illustrations of what makes Mark Ray an organizational leader and why I am pleased to recommend him for the Professional Manager of the Year Award in Public Works Emergency Management.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Larson". Above the signature, the name "Sarah Larson" is printed in a smaller, sans-serif font.

Sarah Larson  
Fire Chief, West Metro Fire-Rescue District



**U.S. Department of Homeland Security**  
Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency  
*Stakeholder Engagement Division*  
Washington, DC 20528

January 26, 2021

Mark Ray  
Chair  
State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Government Coordinating Council

Dear Mark,

I want to take this opportunity as we enter a new year and thank you for your leadership, commitment and dedication as Chair of the State, Local, Tribal and Territorial Government Coordinating council (SLTTGCC) and valued partner to CISA. It is a privilege to work with highly motivated, committed and dedicated leaders like yourself in building a safer and more resilient nation – particularly during a period of uncertainty.

I admire your strong leadership and organizational management in completing a successful redesign of the SLTTGCC working group structure with a value add focus to the SLTT community, CISA and its stakeholders. I'm looking forward to seeing the results of the council's regional overview initiative with a comprehensive analysis of how SLTT governments are managing the most salient problems they face today. I applaud the council's commitment to promote more frequent communication and collaboration between SLTTGCC members and personally appreciate your contributions to the cross-sector councils leadership discussions lending the SLTT perspective on a variety of current issues. Your service to the council and partnership with CISA is greatly appreciated and I look forward to working with you in the coming year.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alaina R. Clark".

Alaina R. Clark  
Assistant Director



# FEMA

January 21, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

Beginning in late 2019 through all of 2020, I had the pleasure of working with Mr. Mark Ray, the Director of Public Works for the City of Crystal in Minnesota. As a subject matter expert in the field of public works, I had invited Mr. Ray to assist Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) with a project to update approximately 20 outdated public works resource documents utilized in disaster response. Known as “resource typing”, these documents outline minimum requirements for individual positions and teams that might be called upon to respond to a disaster.

As the Project Officer for this effort, I was tasked with assembling a group of stakeholders and subject matter experts (SME) to review and update FEMA’s existing public works resource types, which were obsolete. From the outset of the project through to final publication of the updated documents, Mr. Ray’s assistance was invaluable. Mr. Ray assisted FEMA with identifying other stakeholders and SMEs to serve on the project, helped communicate the purpose and goals of the project to new members of the working group, and served as a bridge between public works and emergency management concepts and terminology.

I was glad to have found such an able and enthusiastic partner to assist us with this project.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Darlington".

Chris Darlington  
Project Officer  
National Integration Center  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Washington, DC

APWA Emergency Manager Nomination Committee  
American Public Works Association  
Kansas City, MO

January 27, 2021

Dear Selection Committee,

It is with pleasure that both David Spruiell with Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) and Christine Walsh, 2016 APWA Presidential Leadership Award Recipient, support the nomination of Mr. Mark Ray for APWA's Emergency Manager of the Year. This is a very prestigious award, given to a public works professional across the United States and Canada, which recognizes the contributions that have been achieved in Emergency Management.

Mark Ray met Christine when they both worked on the APWA Emergency Management Committee and the Homeland Security Consortium Council. Mark's leadership as chairperson of the APWA Emergency Management Committee contributed to the advancement of emergency Management within APWA and instrumental in building relationships with partner first responders, FEMA and Homeland Security. He has demonstrated his passion and keen interest in emergency management and all things related to public works in his tireless volunteerism. Mark has led the way in taking the initiative to prepare articles, presentations, training materials and other work. He has also worked on various task forces and forums representing Public Works.

In Mark's service to APWA, he has aligned with Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX), and the National Emergency Response and Recovery Training Center (NERRTC) to provide relevant and timely training that better prepares the public work agencies across the state and nation to make them more resilient following an emergency or devastating event. Mark has taken it upon himself to encourage the APWA Committee to learn about the opportunities of training for public works across the country. He also has published an article about this training, encouraging public work professionals to train their staff in Emergency Management. Commencing in 2017 through today, Mark has coordinated the training to over 160 public works personnel in MN which have received their certificates of completion in *Disaster Preparedness for Public Services* and *Disaster Management for Water and Wastewater Utilities*.

Prior to the pandemic Mark helped coordinate with TEEX to deliver classes throughout the state of MN. Then 2020 happened. Mark recognized there was a need for training to continue and coordinated a "Click, Listen and Learn" webinar on July 30<sup>th</sup> with David from TEEX who presented the opportunities of Federal Training along with other Federal

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[www.teex.org](http://www.teex.org)

Partners on virtual delivery options. Even during a pandemic Mark continues to play a vital role in helping ensure Public Work agencies across MN and the country continue to be resilient.

It is with great honor that David Spruiell and Christine Walsh strongly endorse the nomination of Mark Ray for recognition as one of the Emergency Managers of the Year for 2021.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Spruiell".

David Spruiell, MS, LP | Training Manager  
Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX)  
P.O. Box 40006 | College Station, TX [77842-4006](tel:77842-4006)  
Cell [979.739.5808](tel:979.739.5808) | Office [979.845.4510](tel:979.845.4510) | Fax [979.458.1374](tel:979.458.1374)  
TEEX | Infrastructure Training and Safety Institute (ITSI)



# Office of the Sheriff

*Commitment to Excellence*



Dan Starry  
County Sheriff

Douglas H. Anschutz  
Chief Deputy

January 29, 2021

Beth A. Engum  
President  
APWA, Minnesota Chapter

SUBJECT: Recommendation for APWA Manager of the Year – Emergency Manager

This letter is respectfully submitted on behalf of Mr. Mark Ray, for consideration of the APWA Manager of the Year Award.

I have had the privilege to work with Mark for years, in several different capacities. First, serving together on the Metropolitan Emergency Managers Association (MEMA) Board of Directors. It was in this role where I witnessed Mark's leadership in bringing creativity to needed solutions for challenges the board faced in areas of membership retention, emerging training topics, and responsible fiduciary recommendations for annual budget allocations. Mark's skill in bringing forward ideas considered to be outside the box was refreshing to board members and widely appreciated by the members at large. His leadership style allowed him to articulate complex ideas in a manner which members from all disciplines and backgrounds could easily understand. This is a key component to an association with a wide breadth of interests such as MEMA. Mark's background as a Public Works Engineer was an asset to our membership as his discipline is largely under-represented in the MEMA membership. Again, an example of Mark's willingness to go outside the lines.

Finally, I could not submit this letter without mentioning Mark's tireless efforts to build a statewide mutual aid system for public works. Mark originally brought the idea of a state-wide agreement to me several years ago. At his request, I submitted his proposal to relevant stake holders within my professional circles. At that time I was unable to generate interest. Recently, due to the threat of COVID-19, I revisited the idea in my local jurisdiction. Within weeks, and with the support of Mark's expertise, a Board Resolution proposed to Washington County Commissioners to join the mutual aid agreement Mark initiated years ago is set to be approved very soon.

Mark's forward thinking on this issue is sure to provide immeasurable benefit to agencies around the entire state. I believe these items identified are only a few testaments to Mark's contributions to the Public Works discipline. I hope he receives consideration for this award that I believe he richly deserves.

Respectfully,  
A handwritten signature in cursive script that appears to read "Douglas Berglund".

Douglas Berglund, MA  
Director of Emergency Management  
Washington County Sheriff's Office



14600 Minnetonka Blvd. | Minnetonka, MN 55345 | 952-939-8200 | [minnetonkamn.gov](http://minnetonkamn.gov)

Feb. 2, 2021

APWA Emergency Manager Nomination Committee  
American Public Works Association  
Kansas City, MO

**RE: Mark Ray, PE - APWA Professional Leader in Public Works  
Emergency Management**

APWA Awards Committee,

As the Public Works Director for the City of Minnetonka, Minnesota, I am pleased to serve as a reference supporting Mr. Mark Ray's consideration for the American Public Works Association's (APWA) Professional Leader in Public Works Emergency Management award. I have worked closely with Mr. Ray as a colleague in the public works profession and his leadership of emergency management is unmatched in our profession. He has become a sole leader of this topic and an expert of these operations, second to none in making certain cities are prepared in the event of a disaster or other event in need of this deployment.

Further, I am an instructor for the APWA accredited Public Works Certificate program hosted through the University of Minnesota. In this course, Public Works Organization and Administration, Emergency Management is a key session. Mr. Ray has led this session on behalf of the state-wide certificate program, educating and engaging these students to make certain the importance of emergency management preparedness is conveyed. He has raised the level of education on this topic by bringing in non-public works professionals in emergency management to help broaden the perspective and understanding of the students when it comes to emergency management roles, responsibilities and available resources. In addition, he teaches a wide range of emergency management scenarios big and small, from civil unrest to natural disasters, to routine weather events. Mr. Ray's expansion of knowledge pertaining to emergency management unquestionably illustrates his true leadership in the public works profession.

Mr. Ray is extremely deserving of this award and his passion on the topic is contagious. He makes us all better in this field and I fully support him for the award of APWA Professional Leader in Public Works Emergency Management. If you'd like to discuss further Mr. Ray's strong leadership on this topic, please don't hesitate to contact me at 952-988-8403 or [wmanchester@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:wmanchester@minnetonkamn.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William D Manchester".

Will Manchester, PE  
Director of Public Works  
City of Minnetonka



# City of Gainesville

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## Office of the City Manager

February 1, 2021

APWA Emergency Manager Nomination Committee  
American Public Works Association  
1200 Main Street, Suite 1400  
Kansas City, MO 64105-2100

Dear Selection Committee:

I nominate Mark Ray for the APWA Professional Manager of the Year award for Public Works Emergency Management for 2021. I am a past chair of the American Public Works Association – Emergency Management Committee and recipient of 2020 Public Works Manager of the Year – Public Works Emergency Management. Mark served on the APWA EM Committee during my tenure and has been an active member of APWA for over 10 years. He is extensively involved at both the APWA National and local chapter (Minnesota) level. On the professional experience side, Mark has been employed and involved in public works for over 15 years, working in both the public and private sectors. Mark's professional achievements and contributions to the public works profession as it relates to emergency management, from the local level all the way up to the national level, have furthered the profession and represented APWA honorably.

I chaired the APWA Emergency Management Committee while Mark was a member. In our meetings, Mark regularly demonstrated his leadership qualities and I recommended him as the next chair of the committee upon my term limiting off. He volunteered to lead subcommittees, served and represented APWA on external committees and provided support and technical expertise on a variety of emergency management related topics. Mark also worked on one of the Committees for the Minneapolis PWX and led the charge to get a couple of EM related sessions on the agenda. Mark is a take charge and get-things-done type of person which is a valuable asset in both the public works profession and the EM committee. It has truly been an honor working with Mark and watching his contributions to public works as it relates to emergency management.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at [mannpr@cityofgainesville.org](mailto:mannpr@cityofgainesville.org) or (352) 334-5010.

Sincerely,



Philip R. Mann, P.E.  
Acting Assistant City Manager

February 7, 2021

APWA Emergency Manager Nomination Committee  
American Public Works Association  
Kansas City, MO

Dear Selection Committee,

I served on the APWA Emergency Management Technical Committee with Mark Ray up until he termed-out in 2020. I feel very fortunate to have been on the same Committee as Mark, both as a colleague and under his leadership when he was the Committee Chair. I value his leadership style and skills.

The purpose of the Emergency Management Committee is to provide APWA members with resources and a forum for exchanging and developing ideas, knowledge, and technologies for mitigating from, preparing for, responding to, and recovery from all hazards (manmade and natural disasters). The committee also intends to foster recognition of public works' important role(s) in emergency management.

As the Chair of the Committee, Mark was instrumental in forging strategic partnerships with associations and organizations that intersect with Public Works in emergency management. Mark's vision has built relationships that have included speaking engagements at respective conferences, articles written for APWA and their organizations' periodicals, and participation in research and collaboration on similar issues. Mark believes strongly in collaboration and to not work in silos. Emergency management does work effectively individually, and Mark understands that working together means that we can work and learn together. One of the best examples of Mark's leadership and non-silo approach is when he facilitated me going to the American Meteorological Society's (AMS) annual meeting in Phoenix to participate in a panel discussion and provide a presentation on the relationship between the meteorological profession and public works. The collaboration was very well received and we continue to look for ways to partner.

It was a pleasure to work with Mark on this Committee and I look forward to future opportunities to partner with Mark through our connections with APWA.

Sincerely,

*A. Leilani Eazell*  
Leilani Eazell

[leazell@dpw.lacounty.gov](mailto:leazell@dpw.lacounty.gov)

Chair, APWA Emergency Management Committee

February 14, 2021

Awards Committee  
American Public Works Association  
1200 Main Street, Suite 1400  
Kansas City, MO 64105-2100

**Letter of Recommendation: 2021 Public Works Emergency Manager of the Year – Mark Ray**

Dear Selection Committee:

It is with honor that I offer this letter as support for the nomination of **Mark Ray**, Public Works Director/City Engineer, City of Crystal, MN, for **2021 Public Works Emergency Manager of the Year**. I know firsthand of Mark's abilities in emergency management, as I was the Public Works Director for the City of Golden Valley, where Mark was a leader in responding to several significant events experienced by the community during my tenure.

Mark's first presidentially declared disaster (DR-1990) occurred in the summer of 2011, when a tornado traveled through a portion of Golden Valley and then into the City of Minneapolis. Mark was involved at the city level in both the initial response and the recovery. Mark championed several internal operating changes within Golden Valley Public Works which positioned the City for more efficient response for future events.

On June 21-22, 2013, the City experienced a summer storm that resulted in widespread tree damage, localized flooding, and power outages lasting for days, impacting private properties and infrastructure (presidentially declared disaster DR-4131). Based on the previous storm experience, Mark had identified brush debris collection sites, developed a program model for brush debris collection citywide, and had put systems in place to ensure that documentation needed for FEMA could be quickly assembled, reviewed by FEMA, and submitted. Mark's natural skills and training gave city leadership confidence to lead the recovery effort associated with the 2013 event.

In addition to the leadership that Mark demonstrated in responding to these significant weather events, Mark was identified by public safety personnel to assist with the security and safety of the public infrastructure (streets and utilities) during President Obama's visit to the Golden Valley Honeywell Facility in 2012. As his Director, I was extremely proud that Mark was selected to assist with this detail, as it demonstrated complete confidence and partnership with the Public Works Department, due in large part to Mark's performance in previous events.

Finally, I would like to note that Mark has worked tirelessly to support the recognition of public works as first responders at the national, state, and local levels. He has also worked to develop excellent training opportunities at the national and state levels.

Thank you for consideration of Mark's nomination. If you have questions, please contact me at [jeannine.clancy@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:jeannine.clancy@metc.state.mn.us).

Best Regards,

Jeannine Clancy  
Jeannine Clancy (Feb 16, 2021 09:55 CST)

Jeannine Clancy  
Assistant General Manager  
Wastewater Planning & Capital Project Delivery  
Metropolitan Council Environmental Services