

ON THE ROAD



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UTAH OUTLOOK

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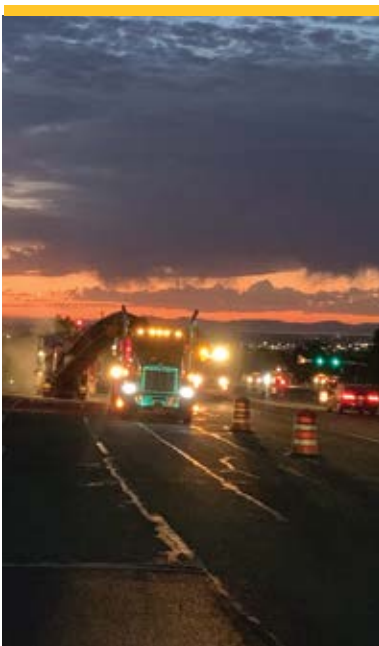


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Reed Ryan
Executive Director
The Utah Asphalt Pavement
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I believe we owe as much to the legacy upon which we all draw from each and every day. We certainly have the ability. The same grit, determination, and innovation that gave us all that we have still runs deep in each of our individual and collective veins as an industry.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE



As we look to 2022 and beyond, I am excited to know that the future is bright in our shared industry. I am humbled by the good people and ideas that build this country and give us our infrastructure. Simply put, we are all a part of an incredible legacy.

Indeed, it is a legacy built on grit, determination, innovation, and dedication that gave us all that we have today. So, the question I keep asking myself is this: Is it enough? Is it enough to keep doing things as we have always done? Is it enough to simply pass along the torch of this legacy? Is it enough to simply keep the flame of the torch lit, ensuring that those who follow will indeed have a light to go on, but not much more?

Or should we dare to think differently? Should we dare to change what has been done or what has worked so well? We've literally moved mountains in the past, and I think it is past time we do it again. Maybe not in the literal sense (although we are still doing that exact thing today), but more so in the sense of moving the mountains, which preclude us from thinking differently about designs, about construction practices, about how we test pavements, about what is and what is not possible and about what it is that our legacy will be?

I believe we can do it. The past proves we've done it before, so let's do it again. Not because we want to, but because we have to — I believe we owe as much to the legacy upon which we all draw from each and every day. We certainly have the ability. The same grit, determination, and innovation that gave us all that we have still runs deep in each of our individual and collective veins as an industry.

The future is indeed bright in our industry — let's make it just a bit brighter. Here's to a great year in 2022! ◀

- Reed



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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE U.S. INFRASTRUCTURE BILL



It's no secret that the U.S. infrastructure is old. Rebuilding it will take money, but federal, state and local governments have not allocated enough money for several decades. Even though roads are vital, people take them for granted, paying for maintenance isn't flashy, and other budget items seem more important. However, the situation has finally changed. The U.S. Senate passed the infrastructure bill in August, 69-30, with 19 Republicans joining Democrats and one Republican not voting. Then the bill had to go back to Congress as H.R. 3684, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The House of Representatives passed it Nov. 5, 2021.

President Biden signed IIJA into law Nov. 15, 2021, on the south lawn at the White House; about 800 people were there to watch. Those attending included Democrat and Republican lawmakers, governors and mayors from throughout the country, and also Utah's Mitt Romney.

Now that the bill has passed, the goal is to put money into America's infrastructure so the U.S. can become globally more competitive. About \$650 billion of the money being allocated is being directed away from existing projects and funds.

What does the law contain, and what will happen next?

The bill authorizes \$1.2 trillion in spending, an amount that is \$550 billion higher than baseline levels. Of that \$550 billion, \$283.8 billion will be for transportation. According to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment

Now is when the important work begins: spending the money and, finally, working on long-postponed projects to improve the U.S. infrastructure.

and Jobs Act Summary, the bill has money for the following categories, ranked by size:

- Roads, bridges and major projects
- Passenger and freight rail
- Public transit
- Airports
- Ports and waterways
- Safety and research
- Low-carbon and zero-emission school buses and ferries
- Electric vehicle charging
- Reconnecting communities.

Every category has billions set aside for it. At \$110 billion, the largest category in the bill is roads, bridges and other projects. The smallest amounts are \$7.5 billion for EV charging stations and the same amount for buses and ferries. Also, the bill includes funding for existing programs and policy reforms.

President Biden chose Mitch Landrieu, former mayor of New

Orleans (2010-2018) and former Louisiana lieutenant governor as the infrastructure coordinator. Since he was a key player in helping New Orleans recover after the 2005 devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, his experience gave him the background to supervise the federal implementation of IJA through agencies like the Departments of Transportation and Energy. Officials will set up new programs to distribute the money to state and local departments.

One part of the bill is of particular interest to anyone who builds roads. The Department of Transportation has been asked to keep the Highway Trust Fund solvent by coming up with a national motor vehicle per-mile fee whose purpose will be repairing and maintaining the country's roads.

Now is when the important work begins: spending the money and, finally, working on long-postponed projects to improve the U.S. infrastructure. Getting the money allocated has taken a long time, and funding levels are lower than President Biden had hoped for, but some beats none. Utah will do its best to get the utmost out of every dollar spent. ◀

The U.S. is not the only country to struggle with paying for its roads. Many of Europe's problems are the same ones faced by the U.S.: inadequate fuel tax revenues, high transport emissions and heavy traffic congestion. Also, like America, Europe is wary of China.

U.S. roads get heavy use. In 2019, the U.S. Department of Transportation estimated there were more than 272 million registered vehicles. That puts the U.S. in the top five countries for people owning motor vehicles.

Unfortunately, road maintenance hasn't been a high priority here. In 2009, 14% of U.S. roads were in poor condition. In 2017, the percentage had risen to 20%. That affects business revenue; a CarParts blog estimated the loss at \$240 billion. More importantly, poor road conditions cause a third of all fatal road accidents annually. Also concerning? Bad roads are responsible for vehicle damage that costs \$380 per driver annually to repair.

The Federal Highway Administration analyzes pavement conditions functionally and structurally, then categorizes their condition as good, fair or poor. "Good" means the road's expected life is 8+ years, and it only needs preservation work. "Fair" means road deterioration is expected in 4-8 years, and the road needs rehabilitation and preservation work. "Poor" means deterioration is expected in less than 4 years, and the road needs reconstruction and heavy road rehabilitation.

How do Utah's road conditions compare with the rest of the country?

- Good: 38%
- Fair: 39%
- Poor: 22%

Land sale revenue originally allowed the federal government to build U.S. roads, but the federal government currently manages only 3% of roads. States own 19.6% of public roads, most of which are interstate highway systems. City and county governments own the balance, 77.4%.

Rethinking how to pay for road repairs and maintenance is long overdue, and money directed toward Utah by the new infrastructure bill will certainly help. Since the U.S. has plenty of roads, repairing and maintaining what we currently have is what will give taxpayers the best return on investment.



A NEW INITIATIVE: APPRENTICESHIP UTAH

Utah is recognized as business-friendly for many reasons, such as the economic outlook and an educated workforce. But as the U.S. ages, older workers retire and graduating high school seniors continue to opt for something other than learning a trade. Old solutions and strategies have become ineffective, and too many job openings for skilled work go unfilled. The Rural Water Association (RWAU), which consists of public and private water and wastewater systems in cities and municipalities, noticed a big gap in the number of workers retiring as opposed to the number of new employees it was able to hire. To help fill this gap, RWAU worked with the

Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship and Workforce Services to set up two apprenticeship programs and now serves as an intermediary between potential apprentices and its membership base by providing classroom instruction and support throughout the process.

Business needs are fluid, and learning new skills is a prerequisite to being employable. Utah's business owners were reminded of how fast shifts can occur when the pandemic recession hit and some of Utah's major industries found their revenue sources disappearing.

In October 2021, Utah's unemployment rate was 2.2%, the lowest rate ever recorded. That means about 37,400 Utahns are unemployed. The job growth rate has been 3.7% over the last 24 months, but companies have cumulatively added 58,500 jobs since October 2019. These numbers tell us Utah jobs are growing more than before the pandemic, but participation levels are less than pre-pandemic. Many people have shifted career paths, or some are reluctant to enter the job market again. This shortage of potential skilled workers does not help businesses deal with the current skilled labor shortages.

How can the state help businesses meet the current shortfall of skilled workers? Apprenticeships can be a good tool business owners can add to their repertoire of recruitment and retention strategies. Apprentices benefit by being trained for work, getting paid, and ending with nationally recognized credentials.

The state launched Apprenticeship Utah, an initiative through the Department of Workforce Services designed to increase awareness and participation in apprenticeship programs by employers and future apprentices. Utah's first comprehensive website, apprenticeship.utah.gov, connects employers who offer apprenticeships with potential employees. Melisa Stark, Commissioner of Apprenticeship Programs in Utah, participated in a seminar about the program held Nov. 16, 2021, during the seventh annual National Apprenticeship Week (NAW). The information in this article is from her presentation and the program's website.

Apprenticeships are a tried-and-true training system combining paid on-the-job learning with formal classroom instruction. On-the-job learning is done at the same time as post-secondary education. Hiring an apprentice allows apprentices to prepare themselves for highly-skilled careers more quickly than would be possible otherwise. Everyone wins.

Thanks partially to the pandemic, apprenticeship programs have increased throughout the country because they allow employers to find and train employees for highly skilled work. The number of programs nationally has increased 70% over the last 10 years. There are now almost 26,000 programs with more than 636,000 apprentices training throughout the country. Additionally, the retention rate for employees who complete their program is 92%.

After program completion, the average wage for employees is \$60,000 per year. Apprentices earn \$300,000 or more during their careers than those who don't participate in an apprenticeship program. The U.S. Department of Labor recognizes approximately 1,200 occupations as suitable for an apprenticeship. And Utah has seen a 25% growth rate in the last year for youth apprenticeships (for people ages 18-24).

Utah already offers apprenticeships in many industries. Although most people think of construction apprenticeships, they also work for other industries, including IT and health care. Common elements are found in high-quality programs, such as the apprentice is paid to learn in a structured, on-the-job

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setting. A skilled employee teaches the apprentice, and the program includes related information presented in class. The apprentice's developing abilities are assessed against established skills and competency standards, and as the apprentice gains experience and skill, wages are increased to match. And finally, the program ends with an industry-recognized credential, certificate or degree.

If you have an apprenticeship program, you put yourself in a position where you can control the training for new employees. That makes these programs a valuable resource.

Most Utah apprentices are in the 25-34 age group, but the state hopes to attract more people who are just graduating from high school and are ready to enter the workforce. They want high school graduates to know enough about the program to make informed decisions about their direction after high school instead of defaulting to postgraduate schoolwork or low-wage jobs. Pre-apprenticeships and youth apprenticeships can give a foundation as early as junior high school. Pre-apprenticeships might also be a good choice for people changing industries or returning to the workforce after a long absence.

There is a marked difference between an internship and an apprenticeship. Think of internships as "try before you buy" and apprenticeships as "train to retain." Internships are short and don't usually carry the possibility of long-term employment. And, internships may or may not involve credentials and mentors.

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However, with an apprentice program, you are investing in the apprentices. They are taught in a formal setting that leads to gaining the appropriate credentials, and they are under the direction of a mentor. They are employed officially and continue to be employees after completing their training. And, the national retention rate for apprentices is 92%.

With an apprenticeship program, there are several benefits and returns on investment you can expect. An apprenticeship program is a way to create a skilled workforce where the skills are flexible, and training can be customized to your specific work environment. Apprentices learn best practices and your culture from the very beginning. Employers report that apprentices often outperform market-recruited employees.

With an apprenticeship, you often build company loyalty. Participants know they are valued and are making a contribution. They are more likely to stick around, so turnover is reduced. Also, it is an effective way to build diversity. Low-wage, high-turnover jobs are often the first to disappear in a downturn and the last ones to return to jobs, too. Companies that recruit certain populations can diversify their workforce through apprenticeship programs.

Having apprenticeships often makes companies more productive, profitable and innovative. Mentors appreciate the opportunity to share the skills they've learned, morale improves throughout the company and employers can identify people who may be well-suited for growth within the company, whether as a manager or someone with

valuable skills. According to Nicholas Wyman, CEO of the Institute for Workplace Skills and Innovation (IWSI) America, employers can earn a 36% return on investment because of apprenticeship training. For context, S&P 500 companies usually see an ROI of 10%. Companies with apprenticeship programs have said that every dollar spent returns \$1.50 because of increased productivity, innovation and reduced waste. And companies with apprenticeship programs have access to federal and state funding.

If you consider starting an apprenticeship program, an obvious starting point is filling current needs. But building a pipeline of potential employees is important so you won't have the same shortages five years from now. Apprenticeships can help with future staffing needs, especially if you allow current employees to participate. A few technical or leadership skills can make all the difference for them. When you are allowed to do so, take part of your reimbursement funds and put them back into apprenticeship programs for new employees so they won't have to wait before starting a program.

Everyone benefits when businesses have apprenticeship programs to train potential employees and existing employees. From the Department of Workforce Services' viewpoint, the goal is to expand the employee pool, a strategy that helps employers and potential employees.

Apprenticeships can help disadvantaged and marginalized workers reengage with the job market after the pandemic and gain the necessary skills for a successful career path. During the



pandemic, employers saw an unusually high number of skilled employees who retired and had problems replacing them. Enlarging the pool of potential employees helps with that.

Enlarging the pool means increasing diversity, and Utah's businesses have plenty of room for that. Over 4,400 people are currently active in Utah's apprenticeship programs. More than 1,668 started their apprenticeship in 2021, and 29 new programs started the same year. As stated previously, most apprentices (1,894) are in the 25-34 age group. (For 18-24, the number is 1,187, and for those older than 35, the number is 1,140.) Some 8% are veterans. By gender, about 3.2% are female, and 96.8% are male. Most are white, but a larger percentage of minorities are generally participating than in the state's population.

Apprenticeship programs can cause a cultural shift in companies, especially in their diversity, equity, inclusion and

accessibility (DEI&A) efforts. Instead of viewing apprenticeship programs that support DEI&A efforts as a form of charity, they discover the programs are a business investment. And by cultivating talent, employers move from a transactional approach that consumes talent to an ongoing collaboration that co-produces talent. Employees gain general skills and company-specific skills.

Apprenticeship Utah actively provides how-to information to the business community. The program's leaders understand that new programs can require businesses to form partnerships with local schools, including high schools. They also know businesses may need guidance about how to create a program.

If you have additional questions, contact Apprenticeship Utah at apprenticeship.utah.gov, by email at apprenticeship@utah.gov or call 801-707-3549. ◀



UTAH OUTLOOK



The U.S. has had a difficult couple of years because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the pandemic recession and a larger-than-expected cohort of retirees. Compared to other states, though, Utah has done remarkably well during this challenging time, outperforms other states, and is a model for getting things done.

- When it comes to recent growth, Utah and Idaho are battling for the No. 1 spot in the country.
- States like California are financially in the red; Utah is not.
- Between September 2019 and September 2021, Utah's job growth was at 3.4%. The worst state for job loss was Hawaii (-12.6%), and the nation as a whole was -2.5%.
- As a direct result of California's current problems, many people have left it for other destinations, especially in the Intermountain West. Utah and Idaho are two of those popular destinations, as is Texas in the southern part of the country.
- Utah's median age is the youngest in the country.

That 3.4% increase in jobs is great news, but it doesn't tell the whole story, either. Different industries within the state have had very different situations over the last two years.

- Natural resources and mining dropped -12.6%.
- Leisure and hospitality dropped -2.3%.
- Government employment dropped -2.2%.

In contrast, other industries increased, sometimes dramatically. Five industries had the biggest employment gains:

- Construction increased the number of employees by 10.8%.
- Financial activities employment increased by 8.7%.
- Professional and business services increased by 6.8%.

- Manufacturing increased by 6.4%.
- Trades, transportation and utilities increased by 6.1%.

Another interesting way to look at Utah employment is by looking at the unemployment rate, adjusted seasonally. Utah has an unemployment rate of 2.4%, compared with the national rate of 4.8%. On a county-by-county basis, Cache County has the lowest unemployment rate (1.5%), and Garfield has the highest (6.2%). The eastern and southern counties in the state generally have higher unemployment rates than the northern and western counties. If you look at the state's eastern border, the numbers from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics are as follows:

- Daggett (3.5%)
- Uintah (4.1%)
- Grand (4.2%)
- San Juan (4.9%)
- On the state's western side, nothing is higher than 2.3% (Tooele, Iron and Washington counties).

In the central northern counties, where so much of Utah's population lives, the numbers are relatively low, too:

- Davis (1.9%)
- Salt Lake (2.2%)
- Summit (2.2%)
- Utah (1.8%)

In November 2021, economist Ken Simonson talked about some specific concerns within the construction industry:

- The vaccination rate is 53% for construction workers and 81% for other occupations.
- The industry has relied on paying premium wages compared with the private sector, but the gap between them has gotten smaller.

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Why has the gap gotten smaller? The private sector has had to increase wages to attract and retain employees. How small is the gap? The premium used to be 10-23% higher for production and nonsupervisory employees within the construction industry. Currently, it is less than 18%. Taking a broader view of the gap, it used to be 9-12% for all employees, but now it is less than 12%.

According to Ken Simonson, uncertainty about the future may result in a slower economic rebound. Cost and supply shortages can lead to project deferrals, and even though the infrastructure bill will bring new funds to Utah, it will take time to award those funds to individual projects. He expects a permanent shift from retail distribution to e-commerce, increased focus on green energy accompanied by a reduction in drilling and pipeline construction, and more specialized building for health care. He thinks there will be fewer hospitals and nursing homes. Other long-term changes are not yet clear.

What are the reasons for Utah's success? Natalie Gochnour, the associate dean and director of the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, has said several factors are responsible:

- **Demographic cushion:** According to the 2020 census, Utah is growing. Between 2010 and 2020, the percent increase in Utah was 18.4%. The other fastest-growing states were Idaho (17.3%), Texas (15.9%), North Dakota (15.8%) and Nevada (15.0%). Although the state's population change was less in 2020 than in 2019, the 2020 increase of 40,508 was still good. The lowest year was 4,000 in 1964. (Numbers about population changes are from the Utah Population Estimates Committee and the Utah Population Committee.)
- **Youthful workforce:** According to the 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates collected by the U.S. Census Bureau, the median age in Utah is 30.8. That's good because young people tend to be healthy, inexpensive to insure and tech-savvy. The highest median in the nation belongs to Maine (44.7). Florida's median is 42. According to the 2010 census, looking at Utah's median age by county, the central-southern part of the state tended to have the highest medians.
- **Location:** The USDA Economic Research Service and Kem C. Gardner

Policy Institute have found that most people like sunny, warm winters, temperate summers and low summer humidity. They also want topographic variation and water areas. Like most of the western half of the U.S., Utah's score is above average or high on all these measures. Utah is the Crossroads of the West and has access to four interstate highways: I-15, I 70, I-80 and I-84. The state also offers substantial amenities: the Mighty Five national parks, 41 state parks, sports teams (the Utah Jazz, Real Salt Lake and the Utah Grizzlies), cultural events such as those presented by the symphony, many outdoor activities and a vibrant capital city.

- **Fiscal responsibility:** Utah has a balanced budget, a line-item veto, a rainy-day fund, a two-year fiscal note process and a triple-A credit rating. The state also limits appropriations.
- **Business climate:** The number of state administrative code regulations is comparatively small. California has 399,556. Utah ranks 15th in the nation with 91,517, and Idaho ranks first with 39,077.
- **Social capital:** The Joint Economic Committee, whose ranking member is Senator Mike Lee, has 32 measures for social capital. The committee defines social capital as a web of social relationships that help people pursue joint ventures. Utah's score, 2.08, is the highest in the country.

States in the U.S. are divided into three categories: large (the first 16 states), medium (17-33) and small (34-50). Utah used to be listed with the small states because it was number 34. Now, ranked 30th, the U.S. Census Bureau currently considers Utah to be a midsized state.

Despite Utah's successes, though, Utah has not escaped the challenges facing the entire country. Natalie lists the following growing pains and challenges:

- **Economic performance is uneven and will continue to be for some time.** Economists are talking about inflation for the first time in a long time, and

According to the 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates collected by the U.S. Census Bureau, the median age in Utah is 30.8. That's good because young people tend to be healthy, inexpensive to insure and tech-savvy.

the consumer price index has risen. Fortunately, the percent change from the previous year is a little more than 5%, which is far less than the 1980 peak of almost 15%.

- The state has supply constraints and price instability. Labor and housing (especially affordable housing) are both in short supply. The supply chain stress index is higher than before the pandemic and is worse than during the Great Recession. Economists see cost-push and demand-pull inflation. The year-over quarterly housing price appreciation in Utah and Idaho is bigger than anywhere else in the country. Utah is at 28.3%, and Idaho is at 37.1%.

In the past, Utah's supply outpaced demand. The Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute breaks the numbers down as follows:

- From 1971-1980, Utah had 174,272 housing units and 150,669 households.
- From 1981-1990, the numbers were 108,382 versus 88,670.
- From 1991-2000, the need was 170,206 units for 164,008 households.

- From 2001-2010, it was 211,115 for 176,411.

From 2010 to 2017, the trend reversed, and there were more households than dwelling units. That trend reversed again in 2018, but Utah is still short on affordable housing, and the combination of high prices and rents is delaying first-time buyer home purchases.

A Deseret News article by Katie McKellar appeared Oct. 14, 2021. It said Florida Atlantic University and Florida International University recently ranked housing in Ogden, Salt Lake City and Provo as among the most overpriced markets in the U.S. UtahRealEstate.com said residential units in 2011 took an average of 87 days to sell after being listed. By the end of July 2021, the number was down to six days. The Federal Housing Finance Agency found that the annual percentage change in Utah housing prices for 2020 was 22.7%.

Although Natalie is optimistic about Utah's economic outlook, she also sees upcoming risks. She recommends continuing to watch consumer confidence and the effect of COVID-19 on the country.

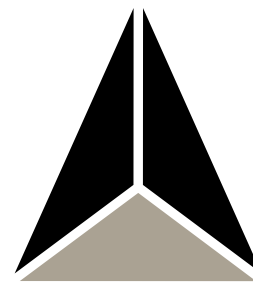
With that recommendation in mind, it makes sense to look at the Black Friday weekend. In The New York Times, Nov. 29, 2021, Sapna Maheshwari reported that

foot traffic increased 48% from 2020 but was still 28% less than in 2019. She also reported that, according to Sensormatic Solutions, in-store shopping peaked Friday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Online customers spent \$8.9 billion on Black Friday and \$5.1 billion on Thanksgiving Day. Cyber Monday was 1.4% less than last year, but Adobe Analytics still reported a sales total of \$10.7 billion for 2021. Amazon reported record-breaking sales starting Black Friday and ending Cyber Monday, but the company didn't list specifics.

Experts think that lower overall sales can be attributed partially to heavier than normal spending before the holiday. Most people are aware of the supply chain problems and have chosen to get shopping done earlier rather than risk being unable to buy their specific picks.

Consumer confidence over the last year has risen and then dropped. The Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute has a monthly index to measure consumer confidence. In October 2020, the index was at 87.2. It rose to a high of 96.4 in March 2021, but in October 2021, it fell again to 81.5.

Utah's economy presents successes and challenges. But if any state is likely to meet the current challenges successfully, Utah is that state. ◀



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Nicole Shields, Chair
Barricade Services & Sales, Inc.
nicole@barricadeservices.net

Stacy Kelley
Construction Materials Recycling
stacyk@cmrinc.co

Nicole Maxwell
Maxwell Products, Inc.
nicole@maxwellproducts.com

Haley Isaacson
Staker Parson Materials
& Construction
haley.isaacson@stakerparson.com

By becoming a member of Women of Asphalt (WofA) you are joining an organization which strives to mentor, educate, and advocate for women in the asphalt industry.

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MEET ALICIA WINTERSTEIN

Terracon and Women of Asphalt Member

We recently sat down with Terracon's Alicia Winterstein and got to know more about her career, her life, and the benefits of her membership in the Women of Asphalt. We enjoyed getting to know more about her and want to thank her for time.

You are from Chicago! What brought you to Utah?

My parents moved out here for work when I was 14. I've been here more than half my life, so I consider myself a Utah native. Chicago is too cold and bitter in the winter because of the winds. It is to-the-bone cold, and I don't miss that at all.

What is your academic background?

I have high school and some general college courses here and there, but no degree. However, I hope to go back to school at some point and get a degree in safety.

When I started at Terracon, I had never worked in a materials lab, with asphalt or in construction. Now I am the Office Safety Coordinator and Radiation Safety Officer, too. It's been great, and I've learned a lot. Work here is all about the certifications you have. I have been able to get some laboratory certifications the last couple of years:

- Embankment
- Aggregate
- Lab 1 (which covers certifications the first two don't)
- Asphalt

How did you become a Terracon lab tech?

Previously, I had worked in the service industry and as a teaching assistant. However, I had never done anything like

this before. A friend who had worked at Terracon for several years knew I liked looking at pretty rocks on hikes and told me about the lab job opportunity. I applied, and they hired me even though I had no experience. It has been fun to learn everything.

Would you please tell us a little about your job?

I work in the Materials Testing lab at Terracon. We do compaction soil tests, check plastic limits, test concrete and brake cylinders. We also test a lot of asphalt, do extraction testing, calculate theoretical densities, and ensure the mix design matches the test.

In addition to my lab responsibilities, I am the Office Safety Coordinator and Radiation Safety Officer. As Terracon's Office Safety Coordinator, I help enforce safety policies, and I make sure people have adequate stocks of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and are wearing it. At a minimum, PPE includes safety glasses, work-appropriate gloves and hard hats.

As the Radiation Safety Officer, I ensure all the paperwork is in order and in compliance with DOT regulations for our nuclear gauges, which have a nuclear source and are used for conducting density and moisture tests in asphalt and soils.

Work is a lot of fun. We run some tests every day, but sometimes we get interesting tests we don't get to run that often.

How has the pandemic affected your work?

Terracon is a national company, and we have Corporate policies to keep employees safe. We have a Corporate-wide COVID response team



Terracon
Consulting Engineers & Scientists

and then another team in the office on the local level to stay safe despite the increased business. Everyone is taking precautions. When we work in the same building, we take care of each other and are safe for each other. For us, everyone in the lab is spread out. Each station in the lab has 6 feet of distance between workstations. We sanitize them and sanitize tools so other people can use them. Also, we wear running masks while running samples. The asphalt samples are 300 degrees Fahrenheit, and it is super hot.

Terracon has grown in Utah because there was a lot of time to look for projects after the pandemic shutdown started. We have gotten busier and busier since the pandemic started. Work should slow down in December for the construction industry, but it didn't slow down this year or last year. The company found more work, and the regular work did not disappear. We have more people working and more tests being run.

What is Terracon's link to UAPA?

Terracon has been involved with UAPA for many years because of its relevance to our work every day and

continued on page 24

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continued from page 23

the educational and networking opportunities UAPA provides. Members go to events such as golf tournaments and conferences to make connections and meet clients. Attending gets us more asphalt jobs.

How did you get involved with Women of Asphalt?

Darlene Batatian, our Client Development Manager, has many connections and told me about Women of Asphalt. She was really excited about it, and our Materials Manager, Sy Winkelman, was very supportive. I've been a member since January 2021. She also suggested that I get involved in another association, Women in Safety, in 2020. I went to a couple of their meetings before the pandemic shutdown. I've been able to get the newsletters and things from Women of Asphalt, but I haven't gone to many events because of COVID-19. I'm excited to go to those soon.

Why did you join the association?

I joined UAPA for the connections. Working with asphalt can be a lot of fun, and it is always changing. When industry practices change, UAPA helps us learn what's going on in the industry. That helps us to stay on top of changes with our testing.

I wanted to join Women of Asphalt when I found out about it after joining Women in Safety. The construction industry is not

tailored for women. These associations give women a chance to get together, learn and grow, and make things better as women in the industry.

How has Women of Asphalt benefited you?

The information in the newsletters has been really nice. When the pandemic eases up and I feel safe going to their events, Women of Asphalt will help me learn more about asphalt and help me make connections and network. I would have liked to go to the Staker Parsons tour.

Has anyone mentored you? If yes, please tell us about that.

Darlene Batatian has been awesome. She reaches out with suggestions to help me grow within the company. Another person I have appreciated is our Lab Manager, Cory Schwendiman. He hired me even though I had no experience, and he has been great about teaching me everything I needed to know. Over the last 1.5 years, he has helped me get my lab certs by helping me enroll in the classes. He is always helping me improve. If I don't know how to run a test, he teaches me, and I get certified in it. He has helped me grow quite a bit.

What advantage is there for women members of UAPA and Women of Asphalt?

I think it's valuable because the networking opportunities and the

connections you make put your name out there in the industry. You get to know other companies and individuals, and sometimes there are opportunities to help the people you've met. Once you have shown you are a good resource, you can become a mentor to other people.

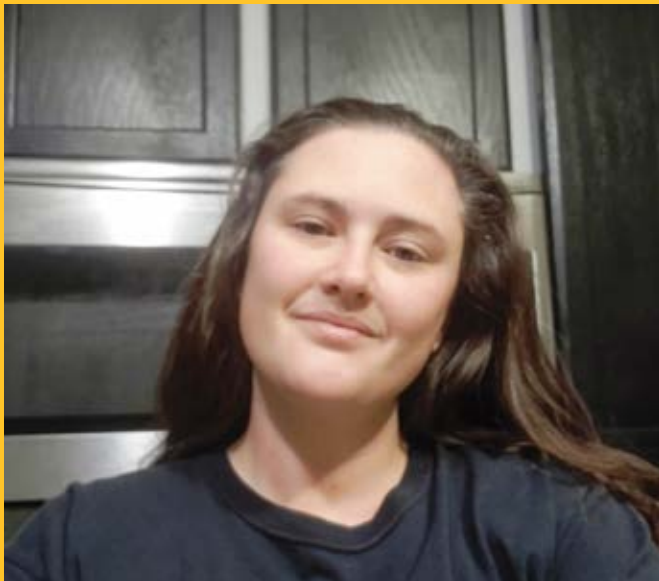
If you could talk to other women about a career in your industry, what would you tell them?

It's empowering. My work was a struggle for me at first because my job involves a lot of heavy lifting. I have to lift asphalt chunks that weigh 30-50 pounds over and over and move them around every day. It was tough to do that initially, but looking back, I can do a lot more than I used to.

Also, I had never used power tools. Now I am totally comfortable with them. I recently used a power drill and put together a playhouse for my children.

Would you please tell us about your family?

I have two children. My son is four years old, and my daughter is eight years old. My son loves taking me to the park. He has a really cool toolset that is better than mine because he has to have real tools. He takes apart everything he can. What's fun is that I know when he plans to do something because he asks for his safety glasses. He is definitely going to be building things or taking them apart to figure out how they work when



he gets older. My daughter is a little more the brains. She hints about what he can take apart, and she directs the destruction. She is super smart, really good at math and super social. She comes home and tells me about all of her friends and what they all did that day. She loves to talk all the time.

What do you enjoy doing when you aren't working?

I enjoy cooking difficult, challenging things. For example, I taught myself how to make chilaquiles. It's a brothy, tomato-based breakfast dish with crunchy, fried tortilla chips. You make the sauce, add crumbly cheese and put eggs on it. I also taught myself how to make Pork Wellington, a pastry around a pork loin. I like to bring that out when I want to impress somebody.

When I hang out with my children, one of my favorite things is showing them good movies. I love watching movies with them, and I make sure they know which old movies are good, like Smoky and the Bandit. Right now, our

favorite movies are Spirited Away, Soul and Luka. Those are great new movies.

Any last words?

We could use more women in this industry. The work is rewarding, and the pay is good.

Money used to be a huge problem for me when I was working in the service industry or at a school. Working in the construction industry is a lot better. The money has made my life easier, and I can take care of myself and my children.

Some days are tough. Your body is exhausted, but you make a difference. After projects are finished, we drive by them, and I think, "I did tests on that. I know that building is built on good ground." Or, "I did 20 tests on the soil under that building. Problems have been fixed, and when the building goes up, it's going to be safe." That kind of reward happens more often than you would think because you see your projects all the time. It's really cool to notice a project when you drive by one of them. ◀

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