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### **OUR OFFICES**



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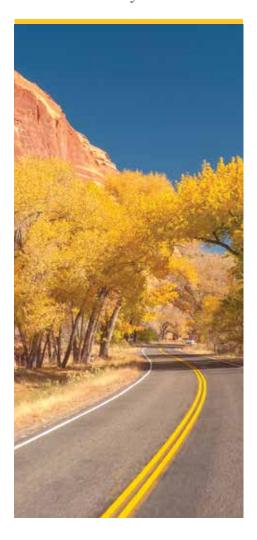


#### **Reed Ryan**

**Executive Director** 

The Utah Asphalt Pavement Association

Thank you for joining us along for the ride as we wrap up another great construction season here in Utah. There is still much to do. Stay safe.



## **ON PURPOSE**

t's hard to believe we are already publishing the third issue of On the Road for this year! While everyone is busy wrapping up the end of the season, I hope you will take a moment through these pages to look back with us on the last couple of months, while taking note of all the good things to come before the year's end. Truly, October, November, and December will be some of the busiest months of the association — ever!

And that's a good thing. We are all busy. But to be busy with a purpose is even better. I think that is what you will ultimately find in this issue of On the Road — purpose.

In the following pages, you will see highlights and great pictures from our 11th Annual UAPA Golf Classic. But you will also see purpose in gathering together — not only for a great day of golf, but purpose in giving something back to our great members through prizes second-to-none; something back to our industry through the raising of scholarship funds for future awardees; and something back to our community, to kids who have been called on to fight a fight that most of us will never have to face in battling childhood cancer.

You will note our purpose in highlighting new asphalt plants and significant road projects in the state because we all know our state is rising in both population and workforce. So it's great to take a moment to highlight how our industry is purposefully addressing these challenges — from within and without — as UAPA members work hard to build the needed roads

and infrastructure to meet those growing needs.

And last but certainly not least, you will find an interview with Chelsea Hunt from West Jordan City's Street Department. I first got to know Chelsea about two years ago. I could tell from the onset of our meeting that she was a leader. We are honored that she accepted an opportunity to help lead our Women of Asphalt Utah Branch. Chelsea brings purpose to her job each day. It's only fitting to assume she will help do the same for our Women of Asphalt Branch as it continues to grow and thrive here in the state. I hope you will enjoy getting to know her as much as I have.

Above the great content, the wonderful pictures, and some really good information on how you can join UAPA's retirement plan, you will also see the dates for many things happening for UAPA in the near future. I hope you will purposefully choose to come and join us at one or all of these events.

A key element of our association is education. This was a choice made long ago on purpose (have I said that word enough?). Thank you for joining us along for the ride as we wrap up another great construction season here in Utah. There is still much to do. Stay safe.

As always, I am so grateful for the opportunity to work in this industry. We stand ready to assist you with any needs you may have and look forward to seeing you soon!

Best regards,

Reed



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## Congratulations! UAPA 2022 COMMUNICATOR AWARD WINNER!

We are very pleased to announce that the On The Road magazine earned the Award of Distinction for an association magazine.

This past year marked the 28th year of The Communicator Awards. This distinguished award is dedicated to recognizing excellence, effectiveness, and innovation across all areas of communication; they are the leading international awards program honoring talent in this highly acclaimed field.

The Communicator Awards receives almost 5,000 entries from companies, agencies, studios, and boutique shops of all sizes, making it, globally, one of the largest award shows of its kind. They honor work that transcends craft; work that makes a lasting impact and provides an equal chance of winning to all entrants regardless of company or agency size and project budget. The goal is to reward excellence.

The Awards provide winners and their clients the recognition they deserve and give communications and creative professionals proof and validation that their work is highly regarded by their peers within the industry.

The Award of Distinction is presented for projects that exceed industry standards in quality and achievement and represents the best in marketing and communication.



To browse the winning issue, please scan QR code.



https://on-the-road.thenewslinkgroup.org/pub-4-2022-issue-1/

To see the list of winners on The Communicator Awards website, please scan QR code.



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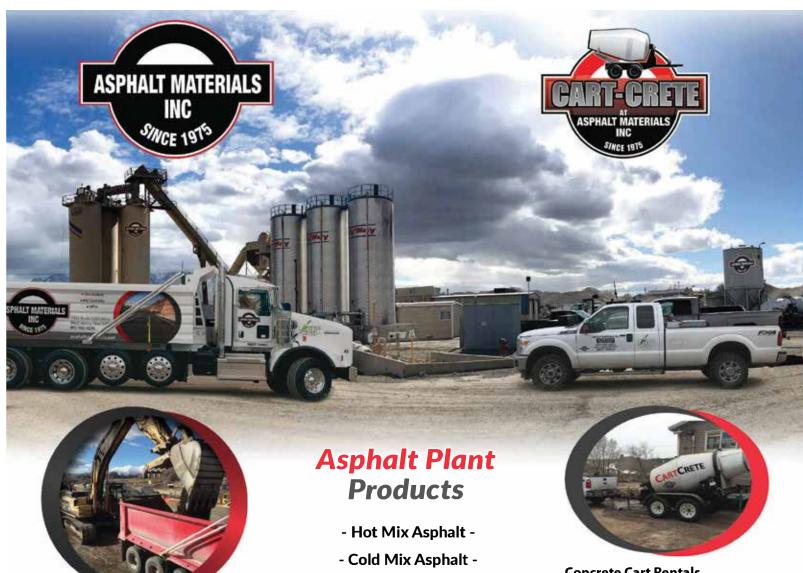




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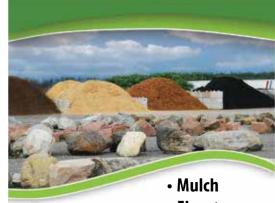
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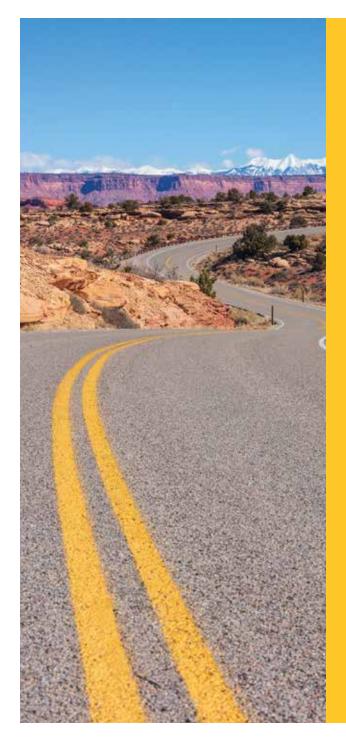
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For slightly more than a year, the Transamerica Retirement Plan Exchange has been available to employers who are UAPA members.

UAPA recently interviewed Wayne Ericson, Transamerica's Regional Vice President, Retirement Plans, about the Transamerica program. Wayne, a 14-year Transamerica employee who lives in Utah, works closely with UAPA and can be a resource for potential members who have questions. The following article summarizes the information Wayne gave to UAPA during his interview.

he current job market is unusually challenging for most companies. There are too few people qualified for too many jobs. As a result, being able to compete with other companies for employees has never been more important.

Potential new hires at any company are interested in two important questions before accepting a job offer: how much will they earn, and what benefits are available? A retirement plan is one of the most important benefits, but putting one together and managing it is not a once-and-done process. Retirement plan investment menus have to be revisited continually. Companies change, and sometimes they change what their plan's investment choices are. Also, an investment class needs to be represented appropriately, but that also changes over time. Shifts and slippages can take place, such as when an investment might not be performing well. All of this requires specialized research and analysis.

Under the 1974 Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), a plan sponsor has fiduciary duties and responsibilities. The sponsor can be sued for negligence if those duties and responsibilities are not met. Outsourcing a company's retirement plan is no different than outsourcing tax preparation, especially since handling a retirement plan on a company level exposes the company to legal liabilities. Hiring a company to handle the retirement plan is like hiring a tax planner, but the focus is on investment instead of taxes. It is a service that mitigates liability.

Any company that prefers to focus on company growth instead of implementing and maintaining a retirement plan in-house may want to transfer the responsibility and the requirements to an investment adviser. The adviser collects and monitors data and informs the plan sponsor before making any changes. The advantage of having a retirement exchange is that it is simple, easy to join, and has a proven 401(k) process.

There are several reasons why UAPA members may want to consider using Transamerica's Retirement Plan Exchange:

- It can give them economies of scale. For example, smaller companies can provide employees with better options than they could otherwise. Grouping people together is a great way to lower costs.
- The Retirement Plan Exchange can make administration significantly easier. It can help with notices, approval and tracking administration duties.
- 3. It delegates fiduciary liability. On the administrative side, the Retirement Plan Exchange helps companies comply with ERISA section 3(16), which outlines the administrator's duties. On the investment side, it helps them with ERISA section 3(38), which contains the rules for outsourcing the fiduciary investment position of the plan sponsor.

Transamerica and its partners lift the burden of plan sponsorship. They work with companies that don't have the time or knowledge to run a plan. They also work with companies that don't want the responsibility.

Organizations offering retirement strategies to companies generally involve three parties: a record keeper, an administrator and a financial adviser. They can be part of the same company, but separate companies can also choose to work together as part of a Retirement Plan Exchange. That's the model for the plans Transamerica offers UAPA. Transamerica has the record-keeping role, DWC handles third-party administration, and financial advice comes from Taylor Dance, a managing director and consultant at GBS Retire. DWC is responsible for complying with section 3(16). GBS Retire acts as the plan's registered investment adviser and is responsible for compliance with section 3(38).



Potential new hires at any company are interested in two important questions before accepting a job offer: How much will they earn, and what benefits are available?

Record keeping involves handling participant account paperwork. The paperwork includes statements (or anything else) related to an employee's participation or servicing needs, including investment education. The administration involves maintaining the plan's legal documents and ensuring the plan complies with regulations. For example, DWC sends out notices and approves loans or hardship payments based on the plan sponsor's direction. Finally, the financial investor has 401(k) experts who determine which investments are allowed on the menu of investment choices, provide counseling and ensure funds are invested for clients based on their risk tolerance and goals.

A third-party administrator — such as DWC — provides a significant advantage for two reasons. First, qualifying to become a 3(16) fiduciary administrator involves additional testing and regulatory compliance, which means fiduciaries can give clients a higher level of service. Second, the separation between companies makes acting as fiduciaries easier. The company is responsible for acting in all its clients' best interests and ensuring the Retirement Plan Exchange performs its duties. To ensure accessibility to plan sponsors, however, DWC has an office in Utah.

Because of how Transamerica's retirement programs are organized, companies that sign up with Transamerica for their

employees can feel confident that a professional is reviewing and monitoring everyone's choices.

Employers who sign up to use Transamerica pay a \$750 installation fee to cover the cost of Transamerica's services. Later, employers also pay an annual administrative fee of \$1,000. The fee for employees who participate is \$22 annually.

"Transamerica and its partners are a great place to start for association members who don't have a retirement plan," said Wayne Ericson. "Professionals in the investment retirement space sometimes use many acronyms and discuss concepts that are not simple or intuitive. It can be hard to understand. But if business owners have questions or want to review their plans, I would love to talk to them. I will discuss what we offer with anyone who is interested, and I am more than happy to help them."



If you are interested in obtaining more information about the Transamerica Retirement Plan Exchange, please contact Wayne Ericson at wayne.ericson@transamerica.com or 801-230-9981.







## PREPARING FOR GROWTH GENEVA ROCK PRODUCTS

ur team at Geneva Rock Products is pleased to announce that we have opened a new asphalt plant this year in Mona, Utah. In keeping with the Clyde Companies motto, "Building a Better Community," the Mona plant's proximity to customers and projects will reduce the time and energy required to deliver materials and minimize the impact that delivery trucks have on congestion, roads and the environment.

In the 1990s, in anticipation of future growth in the area, the company acquired the Mona property. Significant growth in surrounding communities created demand for the high-quality asphalt and aggregate products for which Geneva Rock Products is known and allows the company to capitalize on the strategic purchase in Juab County. Construction continues to take place on the property, in operation since June.

In recent years, the asphalt division completed several large projects in remote and rural locations such as Hiawatha, Delta, and Sheep Creek. The asphalt materials for these projects came from plants in Draper and Orem. As the management and operation teams worked together to identify locations for sustainable growth, it quickly became apparent that there were opportunities to make positive impacts.

"We went out looking at numerous pits to find out which location had the best aggregates and market reach," said Jacob Kerksiek, Senior Asphalt Production Manager. "We worked together with our accounting, construction management, and business development teams, in conjunction with our

environmental compliance group, to find the best possible location to add an asphalt plant, which turns out to be Mona."

As a member of the Clyde Companies, Geneva Rock Products always strives to follow the "Building a Better Community" motto. Whether it's commuting to work, riding our bikes around the neighborhood or exercising on the local jogging path, asphalt is at the heart of every community.

The company is committed to using its resources wisely and making reasonable efforts to always impact communities in a positive way. For the asphalt division, this has meant investing in production facilities in growing communities. By adding a plant in Mona closer to customers and projects, Geneva Rock Products will reduce the time and energy required to deliver materials, reducing the impact delivery trucks have on congestion, roads, and the environment.

Building communities requires commitment to three key strategies: (1) sustainable and responsible growth for the company, (2) establishing partnerships with the customers you serve, and (3) providing opportunities for success to the members of your team. The establishment of the Mona plant typifies all three of these objectives.

First, sustainable and responsible growth includes being an exemplary corporate citizen of the community. When it comes to value, there is no better surface than asphalt. And Geneva Rock Products has a long history of providing quality asphalt in Utah. In the beginning, Geneva Rock Products







As a member of the Clyde Companies, Geneva Rock Products always strives to follow the "Building a Better Community" motto.

produced asphalt at a single location in Draper and delivered it throughout the Wasatch Front. Asphalt is a perishable product and must be placed within about two hours of being produced. As communities and populations have grown along the Wasatch Front, product deliveries times have increased and rising fuel prices have increased the costs of delivery, which has decreased the effective delivery range of an asphalt plant. Expanding operations to be closer to construction is key to Geneva Rock Products delivering on the sustainable and responsible growth objectives.

Secondly, establishing partnerships with the customers we serve is critical to Geneva Rock Product's strategic plan. The new plant in Mona is the first permanent asphalt plant in Juab County. With the exponential growth seen along the Wasatch Front in recent years, the timing is perfect for the communities the plant will serve. The new plant is designed to lower costs and increase choices for customers, municipalities, and contractors.

"In addition to producing hot asphalt mix, the Mona facility will also recycle old asphalt," says Clint Wells, Asphalt Production Manager of the Mona plant. "Which means that customers will now have a place that they can recycle asphalt, knowing that it will be reused as a measurable percentage in the new asphalt in their community and not end up in a landfill."

The Mona plant services Juab, Millard, Sanpete, and Utah counties, but it will also be able to provide asphalt mix for state and federal projects as far as Beaver in the south, the Great



Basin region in the west, and the Uinta's in the east. Bringing material closer to prospective clients will reduce transportation costs. Asphalt recycling ensures that Geneva Rock Products customers are receiving some of the best price points on the market. Each will help communities successfully address their growing infrastructure costs.

The third key is providing opportunities for the members of our team. Geneva Rock Products is committed to creating opportunities for current team members — and future team members — by investing in new production facilities.

Three team members currently run the Mona plant, but plans are underway to add ready-mix concrete and expand the aggregate production, further increasing the employee count. The plant, situated on 527 acres of land, is expected to be running on all cylinders within the next 12 months.

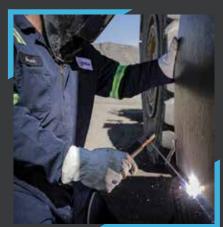
Geneva Rock Products is working with the county to ensure the new plant won't negatively affect surrounding areas. A new access road has been added across the west edge of the pit, and existing public roads are being actively improved to continue access to lands owned by the Bureau of Land Management.

"We have customers that love our product," Jacob said. "You hear it often from all divisions within Geneva Rock Products. They're going to be thrilled to have a new plant in Mona."



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## **UAPA'S 11th ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC**

UAPA's 11th Annual Golf Classic was held on August 17th at the Mountain Dell Golf Course. Attendees were able to network and enjoyed a great day of golf – \$4,800 was raised for scholarships and \$5,725 for The Big Dig Construction vs Cancer. A big thanks to our sponsors. We hope to see you at our next event. To learn more, please visit utahasphalt.org/uapa-events.















































To view more pictures, please scan the







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## ONE OF UDOT'S LARGEST CURRENT PROJECTS

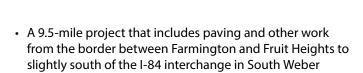


S 89 is a north-south highway that extends through the state's center. Measuring 502 miles in length, it is Utah's longest road. Traffic models showed the need for making changes. The area used to be mainly rural and agricultural, but the land is now used for suburban and commercial development. Planners expect traffic to increase 43% by 2040. Instead of 37,700 vehicles per day, they expect 54,000 vehicles per day. Higher volume means congestion, delays and an increased number of crashes involving cars and wildlife. Instead of relying on traffic signals at intersections, the new design separates US 89 from cross traffic by routing it underneath the cross streets. Removing traffic signals and creating grade-separated interchanges have been shown to reduce traffic accidents and improve safety. Intersections with traffic signals have accident rates 4.5 times higher than intersections with interchanges, and the rate of severe crashes is 3.5 times higher.

UDOT's upgrade to US 89 is in Davis County and involves the following changes:

- Removal of homes (many already owned by UDOT) in the expansion's path
- The addition of six lanes (three north and three south) begins at Main Street in Farmington and ends at State Route 193 in Layton
- Relocation of 150 miles of utilities across the corridor;
   Weber Basin Water Conservancy, Dominion Energy, Rocky
   Mountain Power, and Century Link were all involved.
- Creation of new drainage ponds
- A three-mile extension of Gordon Avenue in Layton so it connects to US 89





- Some new frontage road construction on the east side. The frontage road section has been aligned to improve access to existing local streets and frontage roads and allow local traffic to either access new interchanges or cross efficiently. A parallel bicycle route with signs has been added to shared shoulders on the frontage roads.
- The construction of bridges with on/off ramps over US 89 at 200/400 North, Oak Hills Drive, Gordon Avenue, Antelope Drive, Nicholls Road, and Crestwood Road. As requested by public input, US 89 crosses under the local streets instead of over them which so reduces the visual impact of the construction, takes advantage of existing topography, and removes the need for 85,000 truck trips during construction.
- Removal of one traffic signal that impeded traffic flow
- · Construction of noise walls where necessary.
- Reconstruction of one mile of US 89 at a lower depth to reduce noise
- Installation of deer fencing along portions of the east side of US 89 where needed
- Dark sky compliant lighting designed to minimize light pollution — to be installed at medians and intersections of off-ramps and side streets.



• Installation of sidewalks and pedestrian crossings over the frontage roads as part of the new bridges and interchanges

UDOT hired Oak Hills Construction to design and build the project with a budget of \$527 million. Workers will move more than 1.5 million cubic yards of earth and use 300,000 tons of asphalt by completion in 2023. Approximately 48,000 vehicles use this portion of US 89 daily. The goal is to improve local traffic access and crossing efficiency.

Davis County residents have been affected by construction projects. However, many Fruit Heights residents are excited about the project's completion because it will improve traffic flow.

Dan Davidson, a Fruit Heights resident near the 200 North/400 North intersection, found out about the UDOT expansion after he bought his home. He was notified that the state owned some of what he thought was part of his property. However, he also found UDOT was "great to work with." They communicated well and listened to those living in the area, including him.

Rebecca Bates also spoke about the project. She has lived in Fruit Heights for three years and commutes to Salt Lake County on US 89. Traffic on Nicholls Road has increased as more housing has been built in Fruit Heights. She sees the US 89 upgrade project as a way to improve traffic flow and thinks it will make her commute easier.

## **CHELSEA HUNT:**



## WOMEN OF ASPHALT OFFERS SISTERHOOD AND NETWORKING



Pictured above: Nicole Maxwell, Nicole Shields, Keri Dumont, Stacy Kelley and Chelsea Hunt

The best part is meeting other people. You learn a lot from them, get great advice and feel connected. The networking is unreal.

Chelsea Hunt, Street Maintenance, works for the Public Works Department at the City of West Jordan. She has been employed there for about two years. Originally from Blanding, Utah, Chelsea recently joined Women of Asphalt's leadership team.

UAPA recently interviewed Chelsea about her background, UAPA, Women of Asphalt and her new responsibilities.

### What is your educational background?

Just high school.

I was always somebody who liked to build. When I was 10 years old, I helped my uncle haul things up the ladder. I felt drawn to working with heavy equipment, and I always knew I wanted to do work that used it, but I didn't know how far I wanted to take it.

#### How did you get into the asphalt industry?

I got involved with asphalt when I began working at the city. Before that, I did concrete for a long time. Working with both materials is hard, but they are equally necessary. You see what they are used for when you work with them.

How long have you been part of the industry? Probably since I was 21, so about 13 years.

#### Please tell us about your job. What are your main responsibilities?

The city and street maintenance department takes care of any part of the street. On an asphalt crew, you maintain the streets. The work can be anything from filling potholes to ripping up a part and putting in more asphalt. We ensure good-quality road driving conditions for residents.



## What is the most rewarding part of your career so far?

I enjoy the people I work with and the new things I get to do. I also experience different parts of the city and different parts of making the community better.

### Who are your most important mentors?

In addition to the city's leaders, my coworkers have mentored me and spent the most time with me. I have learned from them. We all work together to create a nice road.

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

I would tell them to keep going. You don't have to prove anything; just be your authentic best self. Most men are willing to help you and carry you through until you can figure it out on your own.

## What are the three most important work-related lessons you've learned that you would share with someone you mentor?

- 1. Work ethic speaks for itself.
- Good communication skills can take you a long way.
- Your attitude will always show. If you have a good attitude, people are always willing to be there for you.

#### Are you a member of UAPA?

Yes. I joined UAPA and Women of Asphalt about two years ago.

## How did you become involved with Women of Asphalt?

The public works admin got an email, showed it to me and suggested I could be a part of it and show support for other women in asphalt. I asked my crew leader if I could go; I've been a part of it ever since. I was at the very first meeting. We met in a small room, but now it has grown so much, it's awesome.

#### Why did you join?

I wanted sisterhood; other women's support is a good thing to have. I worked and felt alone for so long, and I just



#### How does membership in UAPA and Women of Asphalt benefit those who join these organizations?

The best part is meeting other people. You learn a lot from them, get great advice and feel connected. The networking is unreal.

## You've just joined the leadership team for Women of Asphalt. What will you be doing?

We will be in charge of organizing events, welcoming and recruiting new members, leading by example and being supportive of other women.

## How long is your term on the leadership team? Is it a set time, like a year or two, or is it more flexible?

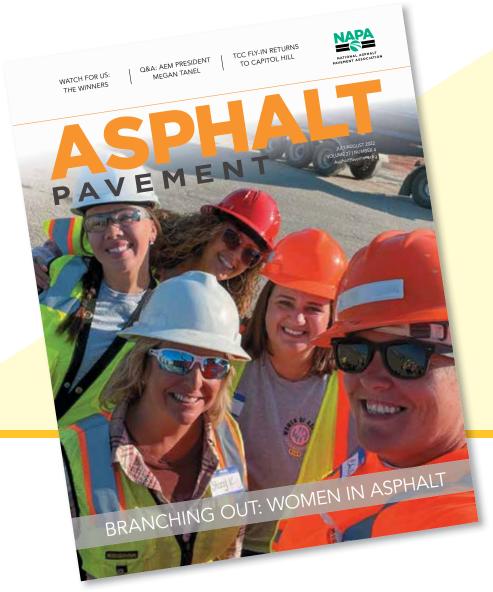
When the organization becomes larger, we might have terms, but it is more flexible right now. You can continue as long as you are willing to do the work and support the organization, and you can step down if you want a break.

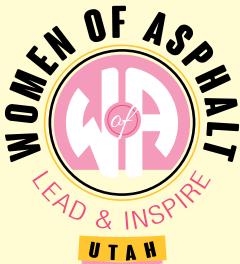
#### Any last words?

I am grateful for the opportunity and the power of moments and groups like UAPA and Women of Asphalt that keep everyone going.

## Congratulations

## ON BEING NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED!





There is **NO COST** to join and invaluable benefits to be had including connecting with women around the country working in various positions within the asphalt community, mentoring programs, networking events within your state and at World of Asphalt, and employment leads.







# UAPA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## Tuesday Nov 1

#### **Central-Eastern Utah Asphalt Summit**

Uintah Conference Center Vernal, UT To register, please scan the QR code.



https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/ eventReg?oeidk=a07ejauqw9h2557715f&oseq=&c=&ch=

## Tuesday Nov 8

#### **Women of Asphalt Asphalt Lab Tour**

Terracon Consultants Lab Ogden, UT



http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07eje4fbkxd20df270&llr=vq5zhinab

## Thursday Nov 10

#### 2022 UAPA Fall Conference

Dixie Convention Center St. George, UT To register, please scan the QR code.



https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/ eventReg?oeidk=a07ejauqwh4176e67b8&oseq=&c=&ch=

#### Nov 28-Dec 1

#### **UAPA Visit to NCAT**

National Center for Asphalt Technology Auburn, AL

To register, please scan the QR code.



http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/ event?oeidk=a07eja75gr677591936&llr=vq5zhinab

### **Mar 28-29**

#### 2023 Utah Asphalt Conference

Mountain America Expo Center Sandy, UT





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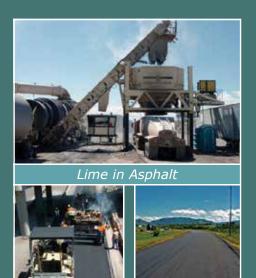
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## A CONVERSATION WITH LINDA COHEN, THE KINDNESS CATALYST

Linda Cohen, the founder of Linda Cohen Consulting, is a professional keynote speaker known as The Kindness Catalyst. A consultant since 2012, Linda has a blog on her website (https://lindacohenconsulting.com). She has written two books; 1,000 Mitzvahs in 2011 and The Economy of Kindness in 2021.



## It seems clear that you've made kindness your life's work. What is the story behind that?

My father called me in April 2006 after his terminal lung cancer diagnosis. He was a family therapist, and he had just turned 70. I was 38, with two young school-aged children. We had a difficult relationship, but I flew to Burlington, Vermont, and we started working to heal our relationship. He lived eight months after that call. Those months and the healing process were a gift. We both found peace; he died Dec. 1, 2006, on my son's sixth birthday.

Five weeks later, I woke up in the middle of the night with the idea that I would do 1,000 mitzvahs (good deeds)

in his honor. Completing them was transformative. When I was more than a year into the project, my rabbi suggested that I write a book about it.

I thought the project was just a personal experience to help me process my grief, but it changed my life. In 2011, I did a TED talk to share the idea of kindness with other people. My first audiences were nonprofit groups like Girl Scouts, houses of worship and schools. Eventually, I realized how important kindness is in the workplace and why kindness is so important to business leaders.

## Kindness is important everywhere. Why did you choose to focus on kindness in the workplace?

I could see that there were real challenges in the country and the world. Rhetoric was more challenging, and conversations were becoming more divided. Since people spend so much of their day in the workforce, I started looking for good business cultures and organizations that focus on kindness because I wanted to see their results. Also, I started working to bring kindness to the workplace. My first paid opportunities were with local government, health care and long-term health care, and then credit unions. I have continued working with many of these industries.

## Why does kindness improve the bottom line?

My three Rs are reputation, recruitment and retention. When an organization gets a reputation for being unkind, its customers and staff often leave. In contrast, organizations with good reputations have an easier time recruiting talent. The third R is retention. If you tell people that your culture is one way, you hire them, and they discover it's not true, they will usually leave.

## What is the easiest way to help business cultures turn toward kindness?

Start by listening. Some organizations listen to find out what is happening before they make changes. Schedule multiple sessions of active listening.

## What's the next step after the first one?

Implementing what you can. For example, a fairly small company had its employees working remotely in the spring of 2020. They couldn't do their jobs because the schools were closed and their children were home.

Childcare is a huge challenge for most women. It should be everyone's problem, but it falls mainly on women. The company solved the problem by temporarily making the headquarters into a school. Employees dropped off their children at the temporary school, then went home to work.

## What are your favorite stories about kindness in the workplace that have inspired you?

I met a volunteer manager during the first six months of the pandemic. She coordinated 75 working hospice volunteers. April was the usual time to honor volunteers, but she couldn't do a luncheon and provide recognition in the usual ways. Instead, she put together what she called a porch project. She got some cookies and mugs with the hospice logo, and then she and the other professionals in her organization drove over a large geographical area to thank the hospice volunteers by delivering the cookies and mugs to them. Everyone wore masks and stayed socially distanced, but they could see each other eye to eye.

I heard the second story when I spoke at a women's leaders event for a major retail chain. I addressed 250 women, with only three men in the audience: the CEO and two vice presidents. They were working in the grocery market, and I asked them to share a time they had received kindness from a manager.

A woman raised her hand. A decade earlier, when she was in her 20s, she worked in a different state than her family and missed them very much. The manager called her in at Christmas and instructed her to buy a ticket the company would pay for, take a week and visit her family. That was a huge gift; you never get that holiday week off when you are in the retail business.

One of the three men in the room was the boss who made that Christmas trip possible. I got choked up, witnessing that. It reaffirmed the rippled effect and how long somebody might hold on to a remembered kindness. Most people don't forget.

## What is the most important lesson about kindness that you've learned?

- 1. I have three lessons, not one.
- The size of the kindness doesn't necessarily matter.
- 3. Kindness has a ripple effect. Even one act can make a difference.

It is harder to receive kindness than it is to give kindness. Many people struggle with receiving, but when we receive kindness gracefully, we let them give us an important gift. Thank you is a complete sentence, and we should practice it regularly.



## Do you have a story to share that you heard after a presentation?

In my book, I wrote about one gentleman who was in the senior living world before the pandemic. He was the franchise owner of a home care business. He wanted to recognize people in their work because he knew they were working with elderly adults.

This business owner would meet on Mondays at the beginning of the pandemic with front-line home-care workers. It was still unclear how contagious COVID was, so he made sure he knew what they needed and gave them hand sanitizer, lunch and water. Later, when the staff returned to the office, he had them work Fridays at home that summer, beginning in June 2021. He knew they could work remotely and get their job done.

He made people feel valued and appreciated.

## Do you have other mentors who have helped you along the way?

When I began speaking professionally, I joined the National Speakers Association. Keynoters, trainers and consultants are all members who have helped me 100%. I wouldn't be at my current level without their encouragement, and I have encouraged others, too.

## What are some lessons you have learned from them?

A fellow speaker once said, "Curiosity didn't kill the cat; comparison did." Celebrate your wins before you start working on conquering the next mountain.

Also, build a bigger pie in your life. I try to live a life of abundance, not scarcity. Choose to live in a place of abundance. Tell yourself different work and a better client are coming when something doesn't work out.

## What do you want readers of this article to remember about you and your work when they finish reading it? What is the main takeaway?

I invite you to become a kindness catalyst, too.

Humanity wants more kindness, and we are disenfranchised without it. When people are surrounded by kindness in the workplace, they are healthier, happier, less stressed and less burned out. Real-life research in the last decade supports that conclusion, and more research is continuing to come out.

Linda lives in Portland, Oregon. She and her husband have two adult children and one Cavalier King Charles Spaniel. To learn more, please visit lindacohenconsulting.com.

# WHY BEING KIND AT WORK MATTERS



indness is a soft skill. Since kindness can be hard to teach, measure or master, many people dismiss it as a nonessential nicety that won't make or break your business. They value other capitalist-oriented skills more, such as ambition, grit and skill.

Consider a fictional example: Scrooge, the main character in A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens; people recognize he is a miserable, lonely man, and no one would want to be like him or be around him. Yet Scrooge also fits the idea of the selfish and ruthless business owner who makes money because he is willing to take advantage of others. As the story begins, he thinks any generous act detracting from profit is foolish.

No business leader is likely to make similar claims in public, but when they consider the business ideas separate from the man, some might secretly think Scrooge's ideas have some merit. But this is a big mistake. The soft skill of kindness is not just an important life skill; it's also an important business skill. Being considerate, friendly, helpful and generous is a strength. It does not mean being a pushover or finishing last. Kindness means

giving people the benefit of the doubt and remembering they may be dealing with difficult issues.

Kindness can strengthen business relationships within any culture, and many benefits involve employees. When the workplace culture is kind, communication is smoother and more effective, and employees are more likely to trust their leaders. Employees focus on their work and are less likely to compete negatively with other employees. Not only are relationships in and outside the company improved, but research also shows that employees with opportunities to be kind at work feel more loyal to their company.

Companies with a reputation for being kind find it easier to recruit and retain new employees. That's a huge plus, as there are currently more open jobs than people to fill them, and qualified applicants have their choice of jobs. Who wouldn't prefer working at a company where they can feel valued and respected?

Productivity also improves. Everybody makes mistakes, especially when trying out new business ideas. Employees

can safely share information and be more innovative if the work culture kindly embraces learning from failure instead of punishing it.

Kindness is most challenging when it requires taking the high road and being kind in response to negative behavior. If you are trying to figure out why someone behaves badly, rather than treating them harshly, kindness is more likely to open someone up, giving them a chance to explain their side.

Customers respond positively to companies they believe are kind. When customers interact with a kind employee, a bond forms, resulting in increased customer engagement and brand loyalty.

Kindness is also helpful during difficult conversations. When speaking candidly to someone about a problem, kindly delivering what you must say is essential if you want the conversation to be a success. Choosing to be kind doesn't mean avoiding any discussion of difficult things. Balance honesty with kindness. The goal is to be empathetic and curious instead of harsh.

All employees should be courteous to everyone, regardless of status. Smile often. Say thank you. Use a kind, pleasant tone when talking, be clear and positive when communicating, and accurately express your feelings and ideas. The cleaning crew deserves the same level of civility as the company owner. Managers might also encourage employees to help others when their tasks are complete and to be generous about sharing space and material resources when necessary.

Be a good, thoughtful and kind listener. Listening skills improve communication, reduce mistakes and encourage collaboration. Make time for others when they need it. If employees need substantial help, schedule a time to work with them.

Doing little things, like complimenting someone's work and recognizing others when they do well, shows kindness. Recognize each person's strengths and abilities. You can also communicate appreciation with food. If appropriate, a manager could bring breakfast or provide a snack tray during an important meeting. And team-building activities create a positive environment and show you want the workplace to be enjoyable.

Since some employees are gatekeepers, their opinions and influence may be larger than you think. Please treat them with respect. Start by introducing yourself and asking for their name if you can't see their name on a tag or desk when you meet them. If they are busy, keep the conversation to a minimum. If they seem open to small talk, keep the conversation pleasant and neutral. Notice photos and awards. The next time you see them, kindly acknowledge them in a way that lets them know you remember your last conversation.

Don't be overly familiar with people you've just met. Avoid terms that might be deemed insulting or condescending, such as "sweetie," "babe," "son," or "dude." When there is an

Be a good, thoughtful and kind listener. Listening skills improve communication, reduce mistakes and encourage collaboration.

opportunity to talk with anyone, engage in meaningful but not polarizing conversations, such as talking in a general way about weekend plans, previous work experiences and family.

Notice when someone is struggling with a door or carrying large packages, and offer your help. Also, help other people succeed. Recommend people, send them referrals, and be willing to provide expert advice if asked.

If appropriate, mentor new employees. Mentoring can involve introducing a new employee to others, training them in their job responsibilities and helping them feel comfortable.

Being kind at work — and everywhere else — matters because it contributes to creating and maintaining a more positive world. It makes sense from a business perspective, but it also makes sense from a human perspective. There are no regrets about being kind, which is something you can't say about everything.



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