

The American Public Works Association (APWA) is dedicated to advancing the Public Works profession through education, training, and certification. This is accomplished by workshops, seminars, webinars, meetings, conferences, and individual sharing. Certification usually involves rigorous testing designed to substantiate the specialized knowledge and expertise. The Virginia, Maryland, D.C. Chapter of APWA (now renamed the MidAtlantic Chapter) has promoted this philosophy, and towards that end sponsored the creation of the Hampton Roads Public Works Academy.

In the year 2000, Ted Henifin, Public Works Director of Hampton, Art Shaw, Public Works Director of Virginia Beach, and Lamont "Bud" Curtis, a Senior Vice President of URS, met to discuss the concept of creating a regional education program to provide specialized training in the public works field. They had recognized the need for stimulating more interest in the work force and broadening the available labor base for the local cities and agencies to draw employees from. They also saw the need to increase the interest of younger potential employees entering the work force and to introduce them to the opportunity of being involved in the public works sector. All three of them were members of the American Public Works Association, and they decided to bring the concept to the local Chapter Board of Directors. Art Shaw was on the Board at the time.

The concept was outlined and presented to the Board of Directors of the Virginia, Maryland, D.C. Chapter of APWA. The concept closely mirrored a very successful program underway in Florida and sponsored by the Florida Chapter of APWA. Their program started in the late 1980's and by 1990 the program expanded from the original program in Pinellas County to another in Sarasota.

The APWA Chapter board assigned the development of the concept to the Regional Education Committee and an Ad Hoc subcommittee was formed. Three members of the Regional Education committee, Ted Henifin, Linda Smith, and Art Shaw became members of the Ad Hoc Committee along with Don Lint, and Bud Curtis. One of the first tasks was to visit the Florida Chapter. The Ad Hoc Committee and another representative from Norfolk visited the two academies in Florida to gather more information in the fall of 2000.



Art Shaw and Bud Curtis in Florida visiting the Florida Academy

Art Shaw reported on the visit to the remainder of the AdHoc Committee at the February 12, 2001 Meeting which was held at the offices of the TAF Group. Later they presented their recommendations to the APWA Chapter Board of Directors that an Academy be formed in Hampton Roads. The Chapter President, Sharyn Fox, supported the concept, and the Board provided a \$10,000 grant for the formation of the Academy. Art Shaw accepted the position of Chairman of the Ad Hoc board. Other members volunteered representing other Cities and Agencies. Using the grant money, Elizabeth Garrett was hired on a contract basis to be the executive secretary. The Committee further defined the concept to provide two different tracks. One track was training which would be available to local municipal governments and other agencies to provide a wide range of specialized courses for current employees to increase their effectiveness and to give them tools for advancement. This track was focused on career development through continued education.

The other track was training offered through local high schools to prepare students for positions in the public works field. This track was focused on the basics of public works activities and would include both classroom and on-the-job training. The intent is to broaden the base of available employees to the local public works departments and would ultimately be known as the Cadet program.

The Pruden Center in Suffolk and Tidewater Community College were contacted about collaborating with the program to provide class rooms, special equipment, and instructors. Corey McCray, Director of the Pruden Center had developed a program for teaching construction equipment operations which was an excellent fit into the Academy's concept. The Pruden Center had a campus and several pieces of equipment as well as trainers. Tidewater Community College had several campuses which provided readily available classrooms. Both organizations expressed an interest and representatives of those organizations were added to the AdHoc Committee.

The draft curriculum and syllabuses were prepared by the Core Curriculum Subcommittee, and the information was distributed to the full committee at the April 20, 2001 meeting. The Committee began the search for the Subject Area Experts for the first session. At the same time, the ByLaws Subcommittee consisting of Ted Henifin and Don Lint along with Liz Christoff meet with a lawyer to review the By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation. The Finance Committee and Web Site Committee were formed and started work on their part of the program in early 2001

The original program developed was an ambitious undertaking which would lead to a BS in Public Works Management as a four year degree or an Associates 2 year degree. The concept developed is shown graphically.

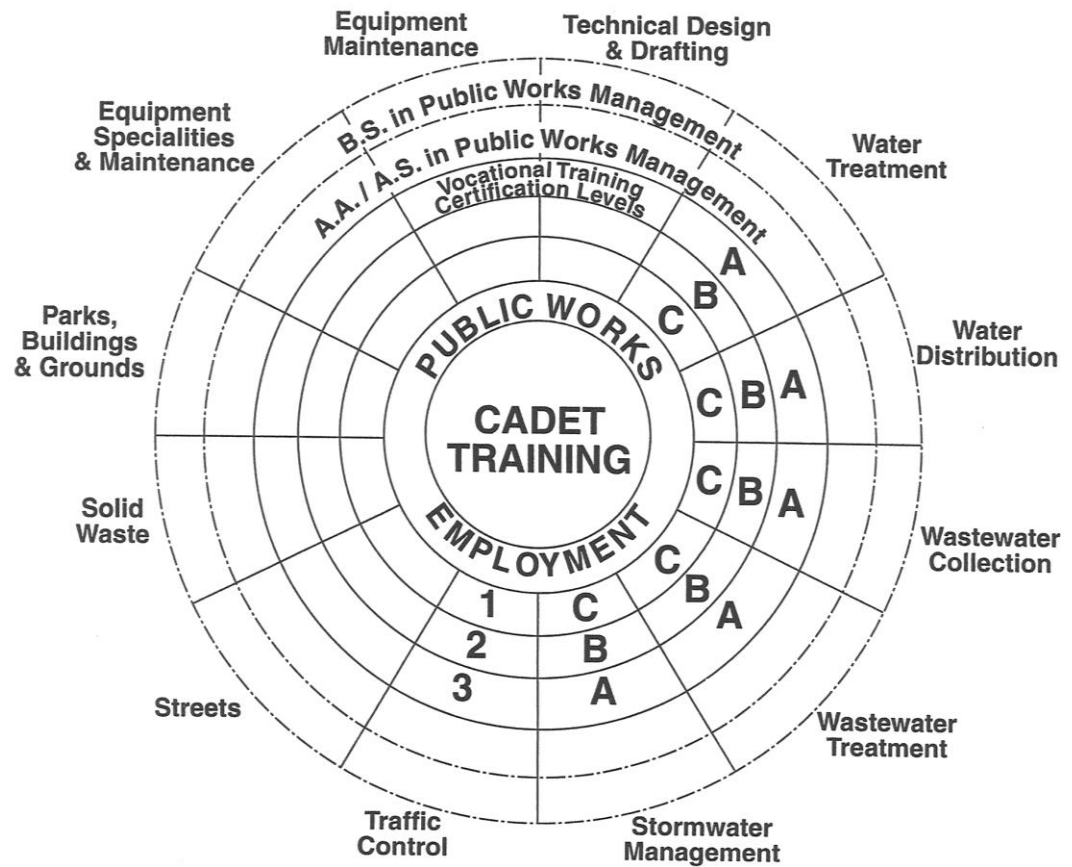


Chart of Original Training Concept

The Committees met regularly for several months to further develop the concept, determine the courses needed for the career development track, and develop the curriculum for the Cadet program. Subject Matter Experts were solicited and course outlines and notes were prepared. A sub committee was formed to develop the Constitution and By-Laws. The subject of dues was discussed and membership issues were resolved, and the Board of Directors for the Academy was established. In February of 2002, the By Laws were adopted. In April, 2002 our Law firm, Patton, Wornom, Hatten and Diamondstein prepared the forms for the IRS Form 1023 Application for Recognition of Exemption. By the February of 2003, the Academy was ready to hold its first classes of the Pilot Program for the Cadet Program and the Workforce Development Program.

Draft Oct 12, 2012, L. W. Curtis

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