



APWA NORTH AMERICAN SNOW CONFERENCE

GUIDE TO HOST CHAPTERS

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Hosting the annual APWA North American Snow Conference is a rewarding experience and helps to promote chapter involvement and membership. The Snow Conference attracts 1,500+ attendees who work in street, road and highway operations and maintenance positions in the Snow Belt across the United States and Canada, plus more than 500 exhibit representatives (representing 150+ companies).

On average, 50% of attendees live and work within a day's drive of the city where the conference is held. The host chapter can offer its members a great opportunity to attend at a reasonable cost, allowing agencies to budget for and send personnel who may not normally be approved to attend national conferences. In addition to the many professional and technical education sessions presented, the Snow Conference exhibit floor offers a unique learning experience. With about 200 companies participating each year, the exhibit program includes heavy equipment, new technologies and more; and exhibitor solutions theater and new product showcase presentations are held on the exhibit floor.

The Snow Conference is an APWA National event that is planned and executed by National staff with support from the host chapter. National provides complete meeting management of the conference. This includes coordination of site selection; negotiating and signing contracts with hotels, convention centers, other facilities and contractors; management of registration and exhibits; education program planning and communications with speakers; and all logistical arrangements including exhibit hall and meeting room setups, food and beverage, audio visual, signage, transportation, etc. The host chapter provides a vital support role, but is not responsible for the overall meeting management or for funding most activities associated with the conference.

Although there are chapter financial obligations involved with hosting the Snow Conference, every effort is made to keep these costs at a minimum. The most important responsibility of the host chapter is to provide adequate volunteer support, both in the planning stages and for on-site activities during the conference. The chapter's commitment and support is an important consideration in site selection.

SITE SELECTION

Site selection for APWA's North American Snow Conference is generally conducted three to four years in advance.

Chapters and cities under consideration to host the Snow Conference must be located in the Snow Belt of the US and Canada. Chapters and cities that have already been selected to host an upcoming Snow Conference or PWX will not be considered again until that event has been completed. To help maximize the success of both the Snow Conference and PWX, cities may be eliminated from site selection for a particular year based on their geographic proximity to the same year's PWX or the previous year's Snow Conference. Chapters will not be considered if there are no cities located within their geographic area that meet the minimum logistical requirements of the conference. Cities that do meet the minimum requirements but do not have availability in the year we're conducting site selection for will be eliminated for that year but may be considered again in the future.

APWA staff checks availability in cities that meet the minimum logistical requirements. If acceptable dates are available, APWA staff then contacts chapter leadership in each chapter where the cities are located, explaining that a city within their geographic area is under consideration as the site of a future Snow Conference and asking if the chapter is interested in hosting the conference. Chapters do not submit proposals; the chapter president simply informs National staff whether or not the chapter would be willing to host the future Snow Conference.

Once the list of cities under consideration is determined, APWA staff sends a detailed RFP (request for proposal) to the convention bureau. The convention bureau works with the convention center, hotels and other facilities to complete the RFP documents and submit one full proposal to APWA. Chapters are also asked to complete a questionnaire.

APWA staff evaluates and scores each city using specific board-approved site selection criteria. Typically, the two cities with the highest scores are "short-listed" and the other cities are eliminated at this time. Staff conducts personal site inspections of the top-scoring cities, including tours of all the proposed facilities and meets with chapter members. After the site inspections, staff re-evaluates the cities and makes a recommendation on site selection to APWA's Executive Director who presents it to the Board of Directors for ratification. Once the Board has confirmed the site, staff begins working with the host chapter, city and facilities in the planning of the conference.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

To ensure that the planning and implementation of the Snow Conference is smooth and productive, APWA National and the host chapter will execute an MOU that clearly defines and documents the roles of the chapter and APWA National. Details of the MOU are unique to each conference and chapter, but will include items specific to management, marketing, fundraising, budget and priorities. The MOU may be updated as necessary.

FINANCIAL GUIDELINES – Fundraising and Expenses

Host chapters' expenses can vary widely since many items are at the chapter's discretion, but in recent years most chapters have budgeted \$30,000 to \$40,000 USD for the items described in this document.

Snow Trek Event

The \$30,000 to \$40,000 USD estimate does not include the Snow Trek. This is an optional event hosted by the chapter. It is very popular and has become a tradition at the conference. The Snow Trek is essentially a pub crawl with two to four brew pubs included. It has traditionally been funded and managed entirely by the host chapter, but National staff is available to provide guidance and as much support as needed, both in securing sponsors and in managing the event. Past host chapters have spent approximately \$30,000 on the Snow Trek, with all of this expense covered by sponsorships for each pub location, and they've been very successful in confirming these sponsorships.

Revenues and Fundraising

The chapter may engage in various fundraising efforts. Solicitation of sponsorship dollars from exhibiting companies and contributions from public works agencies are popular methods of raising funds. Because APWA is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and must follow specific tax regulations related to fundraising and sponsorships, chapter fundraising activities related to the Snow Conference must be pre-approved by APWA National. In addition, staff will work with the chapter to be sure financial supporters are recognized within the structures and restrictions of a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

All funds raised specifically for the Snow Conference must be spent on the Snow Conference.

The chapter's funds should be used first for the expenses outlined below, then can also be used to pay for other activities that the chapter wishes to include but are not budgeted by APWA National. If a dollar amount is shown it is only an estimate based on past chapters' expenses. The host chapter's financial commitment will be confirmed during the MOU process.

Expenses

The chapter is directly responsible for the following items.

1. Speaker Gifts. Speakers receive small gifts in appreciation of their participation in the conference. There are usually 80+ speakers. (\$2,000)
2. Prizes for the daily prize drawings on the exhibit floor on Monday and Tuesday. About five prizes are awarded each day, valued at about \$50 each. Exhibiting companies may contribute prizes, but chapters should plan to donate gift cards or other small prizes. (\$500)
3. Exhibit Booths to promote the conference. APWA arranges a Future Events area at the previous year's Snow Conference and PWX. There is no cost for the booth space and furnishings, but other costs associated with attending and exhibiting are the chapter's responsibility, including any giveaway items for the promo booths. Chapters may also want to promote the conference at other industry events. (5,000)
4. Shirts for on-site volunteers, usually 100+ people. (\$2,500)
5. Food & beverage for the technical tours. (\$2,000)

6. Funds to supplement National's budget for the Tuesday evening Snow Celebration event. These funds are generally spent on drink tickets and entertainment. (\$10,000)
7. Food & beverage for the hospitality area and the volunteer office. (\$5,000)
8. Attendee and/or Exhibitor Mementos. A souvenir item is often given to attendees and exhibitors. (\$10,000)
9. Various other items as agreed upon by National and the chapter.

HOST COMMITTEE – Organization and Responsibilities

Once a chapter and city have been selected to host the North American Snow Conference, the chapter forms a Snow Conference Host Committee. The committee Chairperson is often a public works official from the host city or vicinity. It is important that the Chair is someone with direct access to decision-makers and those that can assign personnel to carry out various tasks. The host committee consists of individuals to head up various subcommittees. Often an event services manager from the city's convention bureau is asked to serve on the host committee, and this person can be a valuable resource to the chapter. The chapter may also ask chapter officers, other members or city officials to serve.

This information is intended only as a guide. Each chapter organizes their host committee in a way that works best for them and still achieves the desired results.

SUGGESTED SUBCOMMITTEES include the following.

Operations/On-Site Volunteers

Recruit and organize volunteers to work on-site at the Snow Conference. APWA staff will assist in building the volunteer schedule and database to ensure that all responsibilities and activities are covered. Usually 100+ people are secured to volunteer in 4-hour shifts on-site. A volunteer may work more than one shift. Volunteers are needed for the following activities, plus additional activities that may be requested by National or deemed appropriate by the host committee:

1. Education Sessions – four (4) to six (6) people for each general session and full-day workshop, and two (2) people for each concurrent education session. Education session volunteers greet attendees, assist the speaker if needed, count the number of people attending the session, notify APWA staff of any audio visual issues, etc.
2. Hospitality Area – at least one (1) person at any time the area is open. Hospitality is located at the convention center. These volunteers welcome attendees and exhibitors, answer questions about the city, suggest restaurants, etc. Chapter may choose to also have hospitality tables at the official hotels during the heaviest arrival days and times.
3. Technical Tours – usually 5+ people per tour. At least one (1) person per bus to collect tickets at the bus door and ride on the bus acting as tour guide, plus as many volunteers as necessary at each tour site to conduct the tours.
4. Exhibits – at least two (2) people at each exhibit entrance door each day, during all hours that the exhibit floor is open. Exhibit volunteers greet attendees and exhibitors and check badges, allowing only authorized Snow Conference participants to enter.

5. Reg Bag Stuffing – twenty (20) to thirty (30) people to stuff materials into the registration bags. This is done on Friday prior to the conference, in a lobby area near the on-site registration desk. It takes 3 to 6 hours to complete, depending on the amount of material to stuff and the number of volunteers that participate. If there is no bag or no items to stuff in the bag, there will be no need for bag stuffing or for these volunteers.
6. Snow Celebration Event – usually 5 to 10 people to greet people at the event, hand out drink tickets, assist along the walking route to the event or with bus transportation if necessary.

Finance

1. Prepare a budget of anticipated chapter-related Snow Conference revenues and expenditures for approval by the host committee and chapter leadership.
2. Raise funds to cover chapter expenditures. Sample fundraising documents from previous years are available.
3. Review and approve all expenditures.

Technical Tours

1. Plan and conduct the technical tours, coordinating with APWA staff. One (1) to three (3) tours of a snow removal, winter maintenance or other public works interest are offered. These tours are considered a part of the Snow Conference education program and may require technical instructors and/or tour guides arranged by the chapter. Most chapters provide some F&B during the tech tours. APWA National will arrange and pay for the transportation.

Education

1. Encourage chapter members to develop and submit technical session proposals for consideration by the Snow Conference Program Review Committee. This committee is appointed by the APWA President, and it may include a member from the host chapter that is recommended by the host chapter although this is not guaranteed. The deadline for submitting proposals is usually in September of the year prior to the conference.
2. Recommend technical session topics, keeping in mind the latest trends, issues and technologies in winter road maintenance and snowfighting.
3. Recommend potential local speakers and make initial contact with these recommended speakers to encourage their participation.

Hospitality

1. Arrange for a local dignitary, often the Mayor or Director of Public Works of the host city, to welcome Snow Conference attendees at the Opening General Session. Chapter and host committee leadership will also be asked to provide welcoming comments.
2. Coordinate the hospitality area at the convention center to welcome and assist Snow Conference attendees and exhibitors, suggesting local restaurants, activities, etc. Some host chapters also choose to have welcome tables at the hotels during the heaviest arrival days and times.

3. Suggest local venues and entertainment options for the Tuesday evening Snow Celebration event. APWA National staff will plan the event but may ask for some assistance from the chapter.

Marketing and Publicity

The host chapter does not develop a logo or website for the Snow Conference. APWA has an established branding program that includes an approved Snow Conference logo. No other logos should be used, with the exception of the chapter's APWA logo. APWA's marketing department will provide the host chapter with the Snow Conference logo to use in chapter publicity efforts and to put on volunteer shirts, etc. APWA's marketing department will also develop the only Snow Conference website.

1. Reach out to other organizations and associations that have a public works interest. Arrange to have notices of the Snow Conference listed in newsletters or added to calendars of events in publications and on websites of regional organizations or public works agencies. Arrange to have links to the Snow Conference website posted on other organizations' websites. Send social media posts to encourage participation.
2. Provide APWA staff with names of regional trade magazines and other similar publications and websites.
3. Provide APWA staff with a list of prospective exhibitors in the regional area. Make contact with these companies to encourage their participation as exhibitors at the Snow Conference.
4. Assist APWA staff in obtaining mailing lists and email addresses of members of other public works organizations and associations, and also attendee and/or exhibitor lists from other public works related conferences.
5. Make arrangements for the Future Events promotional area at the previous year's Snow Conference and PWX, and for promo booths or tables at any other shows the chapter chooses to participate in.
6. If requested, coordinate with APWA staff for local media coverage of the Snow Conference.

Prizes, Gifts and Mementos

1. Organize and conduct prize drawings on the exhibit floor on Monday and Tuesday, including securing the prizes. Exhibit door prizes are provided by the host chapter. Exhibiting companies may also donate prizes.
2. Secure items for attendee and/or exhibitor mementos. These items generally have a local and APWA flavor.
3. Secure items for the speaker gifts.
4. Secure giveaway items for promo booths.
5. Secure volunteer shirts.