



EBR Maintenance personnel experienced a deep sense of accomplishment following a two-day Heavy Equipment and Tractor Mower training session led by LTAP instructor Dwight Hutchinson.

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Preventative Maintenance Training Enhances Baton Rouge Fleet Efficiency

By Courtney Dupre

At the APWA Baton Rouge Branch Board Meeting in September 2024, board member Steven E. Johnson, Fleet Management Director for the City of Baton Rouge/Parish of East Baton Rouge, expressed the city's interest in providing training to their employees on preventative maintenance for their heavy equipment. His goal was to reduce the need to send heavy equipment to the maintenance shop by empowering employees to perform preventative routine maintenance themselves. LTAP, proudly serving as the Education Chair of the APWA Baton Rouge Branch, responded to this request.

To address this training need, LTAP collaborated with Dwight Hutchinson, a heavy equipment instructor at H&L Health and Safety Solutions and a longtime LTAP Roads Scholar Program instructor. Reginal Brumfield, Director of the Department of Maintenance for the City of Baton Rouge/Parish of East Baton Rouge, invited Hutchinson and LTAP Program Manager Courtney Dupre to a Department of Maintenance meeting to discuss the specific training requirements in greater detail.

These discussions led to a series of two-day training sessions at all four of the city's maintenance lots—South, East, North, and Plank Road—resulting in the training of 94 employees. The first day of training featured LTAP's full-day Roads Scholar #6: Heavy Equipment Operations—Safety and Preventive Maintenance class. The second day included LTAP's half-day Tractor/Mower Safety Training mini-workshop, which provided additional time for in-depth instruction and walk-arounds. The revised format extended classroom instruction by three hours, eliminating redundant material and enhancing the overall learning experience. The second day also incorporated outdoor training, where employees received hands-on instruction in pre- and post-operation inspections of various pieces of heavy equipment.

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Visit www.louisianaltap.org for our current classes, training requests, free resources, and much more.



Springtime Safety and Celebrating Public Works Heroes

By Rudynah Entera Capone, MPA

As spring ushers in warmer days and vibrant blooms, we are reminded of the often-overlooked heroes who ensure that our daily lives run smoothly. Work Zone Awareness Week (April 21-25)

affirms the message that road worker safety is one that deserves our attention every day. This year's theme, "Respect the zone so we all get home," underscores the critical need for all of us—drivers and pedestrians alike—to slow down and stay vigilant in work zones. Road workers put themselves at risk every day to maintain the infrastructure that keeps us moving, and it is our responsibility to make sure they—and we—get home safely.

May 18-24, we will also join our colleagues across the nation to celebrate National Public Works Week, with this year's theme, "People, Purpose, Presence," perfectly encapsulating the heart of public works. Public works professionals, from road crews to utility workers, are dedicated to creating a world that functions efficiently for everyone. Yet, when they perform their jobs well, most of us don't even notice their tireless efforts. That is the beauty of public works—they work quietly behind the scenes, ensuring our communities are functional, safe, and thriving.

Public works professionals are the backbone of our society. They are the people who keep our roads safe, our water clean, and our infrastructure strong. Whether we are commuting to work, taking our children to school, or simply enjoying a walk in the park, we often take for granted the convenience and reliability these services provide. When public works professionals do their job correctly, everything runs smoothly—and we don't even realize the impact they have on our lives.

Yet, their work goes beyond just maintaining daily conveniences. Public works make our environments safer and healthier. Think about the sidewalks, bike paths, and public parks that encourage us to stay active and enjoy our surroundings. Consider the drainage systems that protect us from floods or the efficient transportation networks that allow us to get where we

need to go without delay. These are the systems that often go unnoticed until something goes wrong. It is only when disruptions occur—be it a road closure, water system failure, or a missed bus—that we realize how essential they are.

As we approach National Public Works Week, let us remember that public works professionals are integral to the quality of life in our communities. Their work impacts our safety, economy, and overall well-being. It is also important to recognize their presence is felt most when they are not in the spotlight. The work they do is often invisible, but it is essential for the smooth functioning of society.

In support of this effort, the Louisiana Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) will be offering the Roads Scholar 15 course on "Operational Safety for Public Works Responders" with Dwight Hutchinson teaching it in seven locations across the state. This course, along with upcoming events such as the Louisiana Parish Engineers and Supervisors Association Conference on May 7-8, 2025, at the River Oaks Event Center in Lafayette, will continue to highlight the importance of public works and safety in our communities. See page 7 for event information.

Public works professionals are the quiet heroes who work tirelessly to create an environment in which we all can thrive. Let us take a moment this month to recognize and celebrate their invaluable contributions to the smooth running of our daily lives. We owe much of our convenience, comfort, and security to the essential services they provide. As we move into summer, remember to respect the road zones, honor those who work tirelessly to maintain our infrastructure, and always recognize the unsung heroes in our communities who make it all possible.





TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING

Bringing LTAP Training to You

By Haley Beason Ortiz

At the Louisiana Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP), we're always looking for new places to host our training sessions across the state. We understand how important it is for local transportation and public works agencies to stay up-to-date on road and bridge maintenance, as well as safety practices. That's why, at your request, we're more than happy to bring our training directly to you! If you think your agency could benefit from one of our classes, just let us know! We're here to help ensure your team has the tools, skills, and knowledge to stay safe and perform their best on the job.

If you're interested in hosting a class, there are just a few simple requirements. We ask for a minimum of 10 people and no more than 25 participants for each session. We also need a space—whether it's a classroom or another suitable area—where we can set up tables and chairs for the group. Don't worry about the tech! We'll bring a projector, laptop, screen, and speakers to ensure everything runs smoothly. Some of our classes also require an outdoor space for hands-on exercises, such as a parking lot or field that we can safely block off from traffic. Classes typically run for approximately 3.5 hours, with a 7:30 a.m. set-up/registration and the class running from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Of course, times can vary depending on the venue's availability.

Our training is delivered by a mix of contract trainers, in-house experts, and professionals from the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). While trainer availability may vary, we always keep track of your requests and will let you know when a suitable trainer is ready to come to your site. Your training needs are a top priority for us, and we do our best to accommodate them as quickly as possible. These classes are not only informative but also provide Professional Development Hours (PDH) for participants, helping you stay on top of your professional requirements.

Our training is designed to be both cost-effective and convenient. We offer classes on a wide range of topics, including:

- Work Zone Safety with Basic Flagger
- Communications on the Job
- Road Safety 365: A Workshop for Local Governments
- Implementing Local Road Safety Plans
- Safety for Public Works First Responders
- Pavement Preservation
- Drainage and Bridge Maintenance

Interested in hosting a class? Contact LTAP at LTAP@LA.gov.

Leadership Spotlight: Trevor Heap, Traffic Operations Engineer for the City of Baton Rouge

By Haley Beason Ortiz



In this edition of Leadership Spotlight, LTAP is excited to feature Trevor Heap, a seasoned public servant and traffic operations expert who has been making a difference in Baton Rouge for the past several years. With a civil engineering degree from Louisiana State University and a wealth of experience in the public works sector, Trevor has established himself as a dedicated leader who is committed to community development and infrastructure management. From his early career as an engineer intern to managing the Advanced Traffic Management Center, Trevor's expertise and leadership have contributed to the growth and sustainability of traffic infrastructure in East Baton Rouge Parish. As the President of the American Public Works Association – Louisiana Chapter, Trevor's dedication to his team and community has made him a standout figure in the public works field.

What is your definition of leadership?

Leadership is the ability to inspire, guide, and empower individuals or teams toward a common goal, while fostering an environment of collaboration, trust, and growth. A true leader unlocks the full potential in others, sparking collective achievement in pursuit of the group's mission. For me, leadership is about making a meaningful impact, not only within my team but also in the broader community. I help my employees achieve their personal goals and continue their education.

Can you share with us some of the highlights of your experience as an engineer and how you evolved as a leader?

In local government, we have the unique opportunity to collaborate with consultants, politicians, and the public, creating a diverse and engaging environment. My work as an engineer for a local public works department puts me in a position to drive continuous improvements that make a tangible, positive impact on the community. I can witness and implement change on a daily basis.

What other previous jobs or community roles did you have that shaped your leadership skills?

My experience as President of the American Public Works Association—Louisiana Chapter has been instrumental in shaping me into a strong, effective leader. I've been fortunate to learn from exceptional mentors like Cyndi Pennington and Sarah Edel, whose guidance has shaped me in the way I represent both the organization and my current role. Throughout this journey, I've mastered key skills in organization, community service, event planning, communication, and management. One crucial lesson I've learned is that effective communication is the cornerstone of any organization's success. Leading meetings has also given me the opportunity to navigate diverse personalities and keep discussions focused and productive.

If you were to pinpoint three traits that a leader should possess to be effective in leading teams, what would they be?

Communication: Clear and transparent communication ensures alignment, minimizes misunderstandings, and fosters trust within the team.

Empathy: Understanding and valuing the perspectives and needs of team members fosters a supportive environment. It not only motivates individuals to achieve their personal goals but also reinforces their sense of appreciation. Genuine recognition goes beyond gestures like offering a free lunch—it's about showing you care and acknowledging their contributions.

Listening: A truly exceptional leader knows the importance of listening. It's about creating space for team members to express their concerns, ideas, and challenges. By encouraging open dialogue and giving credit where it's due, a leader empowers their team and fosters a culture of collaboration and respect.

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Cutting Trees with Confidence: A Practical Guide to Chainsaw Safety

By Haley Beason Ortiz

In late 2024, LTAP successfully hosted its second Chainsaw Safety Training session, reaching nearly 500 participants across the state in just four days. The course provided essential instruction on chainsaw operation, with a strong emphasis on one of the most critical aspects of tree felling: developing a comprehensive felling plan. Instructed by Rip Tompkins, Vice President of ArborMaster Training, Inc., the training was designed to enhance safety and efficiency for both field crews and supervisors—particularly those working in high-risk environments like storm-damaged areas. Tompkins, a highly respected instructor in the industry, is known for his ability to engage and challenge even the most experienced chainsaw operators.

At the heart of the training was Tompkins’ Five-Step Felling Plan, a simple yet highly effective process that prioritizes safety, precision, and control. Here’s a breakdown of the five steps:



1 Hazards & Height

Before making any cuts, assess the surroundings for potential hazards, such as power lines, fences, buildings, or bystanders. Inspect the tree itself for weaknesses like decay, insect damage, or structural instability. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)—including gloves, helmet, and chaps—is essential. A good tip Tompkins gave was the “Triangle Method”, which helps one plan where the tree will fall, based on how one measures it.

2 Lean

Every tree naturally leans in a particular direction, which significantly influences its fall. Identifying the “good” side (where the tree should ideally fall) and the “bad” side (where it could pose a danger) is crucial. If the tree has an excessive lean or unpredictable structure, additional tools like ropes or wedges may be required to control the descent safely.

3 Escape Route

A well-planned escape route is essential for safety. This is the path one uses to move away from the tree once it starts falling. One’s escape route should be free of obstacles and should be at a 45-degree angle to the tree’s fall direction. Stay out of the “Danger Zone” (directly in line with where the tree is falling) and move away as soon as it’s safe to do so.

4 Notch and Hinge

When felling a tree, one needs to make cuts in a specific way. The first cut is the notch, which can be done in different styles, such as a common notch or open face notch. The second part, the hinge, controls the tree’s direction as it falls. The hinge should be about 10% of the tree’s diameter, and the back cut (the second main cut) should not be more than 80% of the tree’s diameter. This helps ensure the tree falls the way one intends.

5 Back-Cut Plan

After making the notch, the next step is the back cut, which helps complete the tree felling. This cut should be level with the notch to make sure the tree falls smoothly. Always make the back cut on the “good” side of the tree, where deemed safest. If something goes wrong while making the back cut, stop and reassess the situation. Sometimes, one may need to use wedges or make additional cuts to help guide the tree down safely.

Extra Tips for Chainsaw Safety

Tompkins also covered other important safety topics, such as how to maintain one’s chainsaw, the best way to hold and use it, and how to avoid injuries. He explained how to handle special situations like cutting through storm-damaged trees and how to safely use chainsaws in difficult conditions. The course also covered basic first aid, communication during tree cutting jobs, and how to use chainsaws ergonomically to avoid stress or injury.

LTAP’s Chainsaw Safety Training has proven to be an invaluable resource for both novice and experienced chainsaw operators. Tompkins’ Five-Step Felling Plan provides a structured, safety-first approach to tree felling, ensuring greater control and reducing the likelihood of accidents. By following these principles, field crews and supervisors can enhance workplace safety, improve efficiency, and confidently navigate hazardous conditions—especially in post-storm recovery efforts.

Leadership spotlight (continued from page 4)

In your past and present leadership roles, what has been the most challenging task you've had to overcome?

One of the ongoing challenges I face is keeping my team motivated during disasters and weather events. Essential employees don't have the option to stay home, but being a leader in a public works department, it's crucial for me to stay organized, manage workflows, and maintain morale. To address this, I make it a point to be present at every event, offering hands-on support and leading by example. Ultimately, the key to motivating local government employees is ensuring they are fairly compensated for their hard work and dedication during these critical times.

Who do you see as your model leader?

I've been fortunate to work alongside many exceptional leaders throughout my career, all of whom have played a significant role in shaping my growth. One leader who stands out is Fred Raiford, the Director of Transportation and Drainage. His lifelong career in public works has been a true inspiration. I've had the privilege of observing Fred as he successfully oversees a large department, managing over 100 employees. Through his leadership, particularly in navigating the challenges of the MOVEBR projects, I've learned invaluable lessons. Fred leads the department with respect, fosters a culture of achievement, and continually encourages his team to reach their goals. I aspire to emulate his leadership and hope to one day have the same positive impact on those I lead.

Through his dedication to his profession, commitment to his team, and active involvement in the community, Trevor Heap exemplifies what it means to be an effective leader in public works. His journey is a testament to the power of collaboration, communication, and service, and he continues to inspire others to achieve their highest potential in the field.

Preventative Maintenance Training (continued from page 1)

LTAP asked Regional Brumfield, the Director of Maintenance for Baton Rouge, "How do you anticipate the preventative maintenance training for your employees will impact the overall efficiency and cost-effectiveness of your fleet management? Are there any specific challenges you foresee in implementing the practices learned during the training?"

Brumfield shared, "We want to thank your group once again for providing this much-needed training, and we would love to make it an annual event if possible. The tools and knowledge gained are essential in advancing the culture of accountability within our department. The expected impacts of this training are significant: it will reduce downtime by empowering employees to identify potential issues before they turn into major breakdowns, extend the lifespan of our equipment through regular maintenance, and lower repair costs by addressing minor problems early. Additionally, well-maintained vehicles will operate more efficiently, improving fuel efficiency and resulting in cost savings. Most importantly, the training will enhance safety by minimizing the risk of accidents caused by equipment failure. However, there are potential challenges to consider, such as ensuring employees consistently apply the new maintenance practices, managing time constraints due to maintenance schedules, and overcoming budget concerns related to initial training and equipment investments. There may also be resistance from employees accustomed to reactive maintenance, which will require strong leadership to drive this necessary cultural shift."

The training sessions were conducted between December 2024 and February 2025, successfully equipping 94 employees with the knowledge and skills to implement preventative maintenance practices. Through this initiative, Baton Rouge is taking proactive steps to improve fleet efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance workplace safety—a move that could set a precedent for continued investment in workforce development and equipment longevity.

National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW)

is an annual campaign held at the start of construction season to encourage safe driving through highway work zones. The key message is for drivers to use extra caution in work zones. This year, National Work Zone Awareness week is April 21-25. The National Work Zone Memorial is updated annually and is inscribed with more than 1,600 names to honor individuals killed in work zone tragedies. The traveling memorial visits sites across the country, and a virtual representation is available for online or in-person meetings and events.



National Public Works Week | May 18-24

This year's theme, "People, Purpose, Presence," celebrates the values that drive public works professionals to make a difference every day. It's about connecting with people, finding meaning in what they do, and being fully present to support their communities. Serving others gives public works its heart and sense of purpose.

Visit <https://www.apwa.org/events/national-public-works-week-npww/> for more info.



NATIONAL PUBLIC WORKS WEEK • MAY 18-24, 2025

Roads Scholar 15 | April 15-May 29

Designed for Public Works employees, this course covers safety hazards in disaster response and recovery. Participants will gain critical skills to protect themselves, coworkers, and the public.

LPA Core and CE&I Training | To Be Announced Soon

This essential program helps local agencies navigate state and federal transportation funding requirements. Subscribe to our LPA email subscription list to be notified about upcoming classes. Visit <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/sl/mmsfY1f/LPA>. CE&I training is available online through recorded modules, which can be accessed on our website.

Visit <https://www.ltrc.lsu.edu/ltap/lpa-training.html>.



Pictured: Perry Holmes, left; Alison Lognion, right

Leadership Succession. The Louisiana Parish Engineers and Supervisors Association (LPESA) recently held its membership meeting at the Crowne Plaza in Baton Rouge, where they officially installed their new president, Alison Lognion of Lafayette Consolidated Government. In a gesture of gratitude, Lognion presented a plaque of appreciation to the outgoing president, Perry Holmes of Winn Parish, recognizing his tireless efforts and dedicated service throughout his two-term leadership.

Louisiana Parish Engineers and Supervisors Association (LPESA) Conference | May 7-8 | Lafayette, LA

Engineers and road supervisors can earn 8+ PDHs while learning best practices in engineering, maintenance, and public works. Don't miss this opportunity for professional development and networking. More information may be found on LPESA.org.



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The purpose of the Local Technical Assistance Program is to provide technical materials, information, and training to help local government agencies in Louisiana maintain and improve their roads and bridges in a cost-effective manner. To accomplish this purpose, we publish a quarterly newsletter; conduct seminars, workshops, and mini-workshops covering various aspects of road and transportation issues; provide a lending library service of audio/visual programs; provide technical assistance through phone and mail-in requests relating to transportation technology; and undertake special projects of interest to municipalities in Louisiana.