



TRANSPORTATION SPOTLIGHT

PROFESSIONAL: JANET LUESSENHEIDE

NAME: Janet Luessenheide

COMPANY: City of Overland Park, Kansas

TITLE: Sr. Traffic Engineering Technician

COLLEGE: Southern Illinois University
at Edwardsville & Johnson
County Community College

CERTIFICATION/DEGREE: BA in Finance,
Associates in Drafting, APWA Construction
Inspector Course. Took Implementing a
Sidewalk Management System through
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Q: How did you select your certification program or college major?

A: Originally worked in the business/retail environment. In the early 1990's I took the opportunity to change careers by going back to school for the drafting degree.

Q: What was the biggest influence in your selection of major/career pathway?

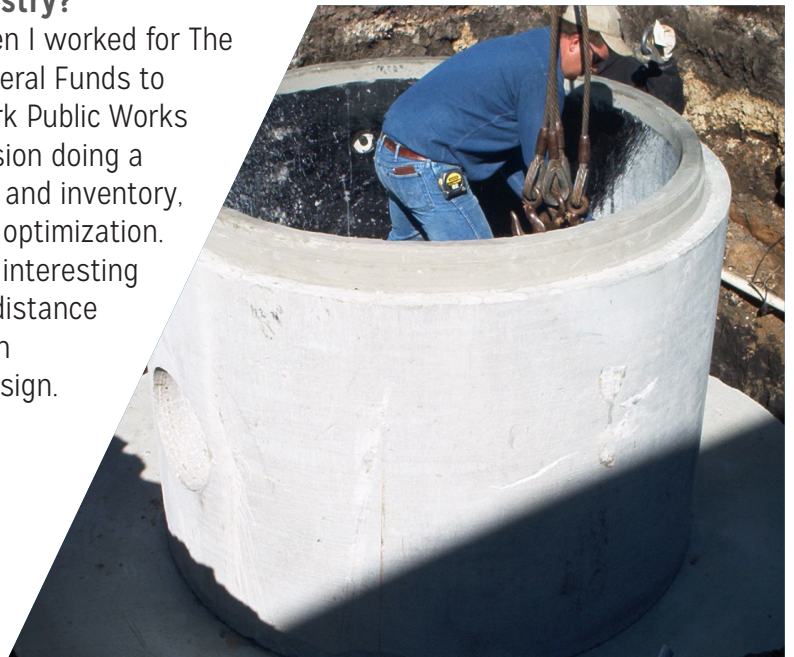
A: Drafting was something I loved to do. Sketching out floorplans was one of my favorite things to do. I was first exposed to it in school during grades 7th and 8th. Also several family members who did some drafting as part of their jobs. Eventually, I looked at the things I liked to do and went about doing what I needed to do to build my next career. That involved going back to school for the drafting degree.

Q: What attracted you to the transportation industry?

A: Kind of fell into it. I did a sign database project when I worked for The Larkin Group. It was for a client that was seeking Federal Funds to school zone signing. When I started with Overland Park Public Works as an Engineering Technician in the Maintenance Division doing a wide variety of projects, such as, sidewalk inspection and inventory, street light asset management, and snow plow route optimization. A year ago I transferred into the Traffic Division doing interesting projects like creating pavement marking plans, sight distance studies, school zone studies, traffic counts, pedestrian counts, creating streetlight plans and traffic signal design.

Q: What is your favorite aspect of your job?

A: The variety of projects I work on. One day drawing up pavement marking plans, the next doing data entry of traffic infrastructure assets into a database and another day making school crossing observations. Keeps me on my toes.





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Q: How do you/your company make a positive impact on society/our community?

A: Too many ways to list. A few would be designing traffic signals and streetlights. Improving pedestrian crossing, traffic calming and flow. And responding to citizen requests and concerns.

Q: What's the most interesting thing you have been able to do in your professional career?

A: Create and maintain an infrastructure asset database. Also, presenting on our sidewalk inspection program at several national conferences.

Q: What makes you get up each morning excited about your profession?

A: Knowing I'm making a positive difference in the community, especially improving safety and mobility.

Q: If you could go back to high school and select any elective course to take that would have better prepared you for college, what would it be?

A: The high school drafting course. Also, higher level in math would have made the career switch a little easier. Computer programming would be helpful too.

Q: What advice would you share with K-12 students that are considering your profession?

A: Take as much math, science and computer science as you can. This will help you to be flexible and adaptable to your organization's needs.

