

# Tony Jobanek - Excellence in Communication Award 2018

## DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE NOMINEE HAS SHOWN EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNICATION.



When it comes to public works communications, Tony Jobanek is the real deal. With a long history in public works and an educational background in business communications Tony has been helping public works professionals at all levels develop important - and sometimes overlooked - skills in communication, leadership and conflict resolution.

Tony started his public works career in 1980 as a concrete construction maintenance worker for Eugene Public Works. In 1990, while working and going to college Tony graduated from University of Oregon with a degree in Business Management and emphasis in Business Communication. In 1991 he became Eugene's Street Sanitation and Stormwater Maintenance Supervisor. He was also good natured and agreed to serve as "Mr. Stormwater," answering questions from the public in the city's stormwater program newsletter. In 2003 he started as the Surface Operations Maintenance Supervisor and served in that role until 2007. From 2007 to 2013 he was Eugene's Fleet Manager. He retired in 2013.

In 1990, Tony taught his first class at Oregon APWA's short school while still a maintenance worker (it was a concrete sawing and grinding class and Tony admits he was "terrified" as a rookie instructor). While there, Tony saw a big void in opportunities for front-line staff to develop leadership, communication and conflict resolution skills. Tony says, "It was easy to get technical training, but there were not enough opportunities for field workers to develop soft skills. That became my niche; putting classes together to meet this need. Even if they don't want to move to leadership, they have to have basic communication skills."

From his own career experience, Tony understood the value of communicating with citizens and coworkers. He is passionate about helping individuals develop those skills. And for more than 15 years, he has been doing just that!

While he teaches a wide range of classes at short school, communication development is his passion. Tony says what he enjoys most about teaching communications is "having students come up to me and say, I remember a course you taught two years ago. I've become a part of their long-term memory. That's enough."

Tony describes his communication style as straightforward and relational. He is himself and injects a bit of sarcasm and humor into his classes to get people to smile and be engaged. He draws on his diverse background to tell stories and relate to his audience, creating a rich connection and learning experience for the people who take his classes. He understands it is important to read his audience and adjust stories or speaking styles so that his audience is getting the most out of his class, while always being authentic, genuine and interactive. He tries to take his audience on a journey to connect with the material. Tony sums it up by saying, "To paraphrase Maya Angelou, they might not remember what you said, but they will remember how you made them feel."

As a communication "expert" Tony understands the pivotal role communication plays in our everyday lives and careers. He is passionate about helping public works professionals at all levels develop effective communication skills, and he has spent nearly two decades helping numerous individuals develop and hone those skills.

Even though he is retired, Tony continues to teach at Oregon APWA short schools and with ODOT's Technology Transfer (T2) Center.

*Testimony: "If there is one standout that I have worked with at the short schools, it has to be Tony. Not just as a committee member or even his presentations; he is completely available to everyone for anything while he is with us, and that includes now that he is retired." - Maggie Vohs, President, Cameo Management Solutions*

*Testimony: "Tony is a phenomenal speaker and trainer. He is very clear on what he means without being offensive or curt. One does not have to question what Tony means by what he says. I get customer feedback praising Tony's training delivery and style regularly. I also get requests from customers for him to be the trainer we send to them. I believe that Tony is a skilled communicator and a very successful professional as a result." - Rebekah Jacobson, Director, Oregon Technology Transfer Center*



If Tony could be any dog it would be a Great Dane, like Tony's dog Sampson. They are easy to get along with, don't demand much, and are very social.