



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF SAFETY PROFESSIONALS

Heart of America Chapter

Edition 86, Volume 4
April 23rd, 2025

President's Message April 2025

Hello to my fellow members of the ASSP Heart of America Chapter. Our latest meeting brought great success to our local students and professionals. The speed meet event held at Scheel's saw phenomenal feedback on our satisfaction survey and we hope to top that at our next event held at Terracon in Olathe on active assailant preparedness. We are fortunate to have Strategos, an internationally recognized training and consulting firm right here in KC, and even more fortunate to have them speak at our next event. Ask any police officer in town, they have heard of them.

I would like to personally thank our members who have completed our surveys and yes, we are on the right track thanks to your feedback.

Derek Farmer, MBA, CSP, Director of Risk and Safety Services at Progressive Safety Services, has been awarded the Heart of America Chapter Safety Professional of the Year (SPY). Our board was happy to present Derek with his award at our last meeting. Thank you to all who cheered him on, and we look forward to Derek's future success.

I was happy to attend our Region V Regional Operating Committee (ROC) in St. Louis accompanied by Derek, our past president. This meeting allows chapters within our region to share their successes and opportunities with each other and our regional leadership. Our chapter is looking to plan the April 2026 ROC and hosting it in KC.

In closing, the state of our chapter is strong and as you can see we have new members every month to be recognized in our newsletter. I am looking forward to having a chapter election with our great candidates and showcasing them below.

Thank you,

Michael Carlson, CSP

Officers List

President

Michael Carlson, CSP

Vice President

Open to Elected Candidates

Secretary

Mindy Prichard, CSP

Treasurer

Ravi Narayan, CSP, ARM

Past President

Derek Farmer, MBA, CSP

Website/Social Media

Dave Hallerud, ALCM

Derek Farmer, MBA, CSP

Newsletter Coordinator

Michael Carlson, CSP

Liaison for Student Sections

Phil Shoemaker, CSP, CRIS, CHST

Members at Large

Tom Metzner, CSP, ARM-P, CFPS

Dave Hallerud, ALCM

New Member Engagement

Eric Hallerud, CSP

Event Photos

Safety Professional Speed Meet Event



Derek Farmer's SPY Award



ASSP Region V ROC Meeting in Saint Louis



2025 – 2026 Election – President Elect / VP Candidate

Our August 25' – July 26' elections are live starting April 24th – May 9th. It's been more than a few years since our chapter has had this many running for President Elect position. This person will serve as the VP for August of this year until Summer of 2026 and will take over as President in August of 2026. This election is very important and we have 3 qualified individuals running. Please take a few minutes to read through the bio's and make your selection electronically in the email invite that was sent to you. Should you need help, please contact Derek Farmer, Tom Metzner or Mindy Prichard.

Michael L. Combs, COSS

Mike Combs is a Certified Occupational Safety Specialist with over 20 years of experience in safety. Over the past 15 years, he has been committed to creating and maintaining a culture of safety, ensuring regulatory compliance, and leading training programs. Starting his career off at Aquila as a meter reader then merging with KCP&L, Mike served as a field service professional. During that time, Mike was actively involved in multiple safety committees such as the Central Safety Committee and the Joint Health and Safety Committee as the Bargaining Unit Safety Representative in Maryville, MO. These two committees allowed Mr. Combs to contribute to the development and enforcement of safety policies ensuring employee safety and facility guidelines early on in his career.

Following his position at KCP&L, Michael has taken on key safety positions, including serving as a Safety Coordinator, Lead Safety Coordinator, and currently Terracon's Regional Safety Partner and Fleet Manager. His responsibilities have included organizing safety meetings, investigating incidents, managing personal protective equipment, and conducting job site audits. He has also played a significant role in training employees, ensuring compliance with safety standards, and overseeing fleet safety operations. His ability to lead and participate in safety discussions has made a lasting impact on workplace environments.

His certifications in occupational safety are, CPR/AED/First Aid training, Red Cross Instructor Certification, and defensive driving. These prove his dedication to continuous learning and professional development in himself and his colleagues around him. Mike has also been an ASSP member since 2023, and Missouri Common Ground Alliance Trench member.

Beyond his professional achievements, Mike has been an engaged member of his community, serving as a volunteer for local fairs and events, youth sports coach, and Eagle Scout. And most recently, a loving grandfather to his grandchildren, Embree and Azrael. Mike's goal is to share his experience and leadership in safety with the members of this committee, fostering crucial safety conversation, know-how, and guidance.

2025 – 2026 Election – President Elect / VP Candidate



ASHLEY PARKER, MS, CSP, CRIS **SENIOR RISK MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT**

PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS

- ▶ **Certified Safety Professional (CSP)**
- ▶ **Construction Risk Insurance Specialist (CRIS)**

EDUCATION

- ▶ **BACHELOR OF SCIENCE**
Occupational Safety & Health
Columbia Southern University
- ▶ **MASTER OF SCIENCE**
Occupational Safety & Health
Columbia Southern University

MEMBERSHIP AFFILIATIONS

- ▶ **American Society of Safety Professionals**
*Heart of America Chapter
Kansas City, MO*
- ▶ **Construction Safety Group**
Kansas City, MO

CONTACT INFORMATION

Cell: 804-337-2863

Email: aparker@amerisure.com

Ashley Parker is a Senior Risk Management Consultant at Amerisure Insurance.

Ashley provides Risk Management services in the Kansas City metropolitan area, Wichita, and nearby states including Iowa and Nebraska. She is based out of the St. Louis Core Service Center.

Ashley has been a Certified Safety Professional since 2023 and a Construction Risk Insurance Specialist since 2024. She is also an authorized trainer for OSHA Construction and General Industry.

Ashley has worked in the safety and health profession for over 20 years. She has a background in risk management as well as construction and general industry. Her career in risk management began with a local county government in Chesterfield, VA supporting both County and Public Schools' workplace safety operations and programs as a Safety and Loss Prevention Officer. She was also an Environmental, Health & Safety Consultant and Co-Owner of a consulting company for a little over 9 years. She then took a position as a Plant Safety and Quality Manager for a folding carton manufacturer specializing in food, pharmaceutical and automotive packaging. She was also an SQF Practitioner for Safe Quality Foods and later promoted to Plant Manager. Her career in insurance began in 2021 with a monoline Workers' Compensation carrier as a Loss Control Specialist where she relocated from Richmond, VA to Kansas City, MO. In August 2024, Ashley began at Amerisure and is currently a Senior Risk Management Consultant.

Ashley earned both her Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in Occupational Safety and Health from Columbia Southern University. She is an active member of both the American Society for Safety Professionals (ASSP) Heart of America chapter and Construction Safety Group of KC.

Ashley loves to be involved in her community supporting organizations like Harvesters, Big Brothers Big Sisters Kansas City, Ronald McDonald House of Kansas City, and Girls on the Run of Greater Kansas City.

2025 – 2026 Election – President Elect / VP Candidate

Shelly Higgins, CSP

Shawnee, KS

Shelly Higgins is a Certified Safety Professional (CSP) through the Board of Certified Safety Professionals and a Certified Safety & Health Official (CSHO) through the OSHA Training Institute. With over 18 years of safety expertise and 28 years in the distribution industry, she brings a deep understanding of operational safety and risk mitigation to her work.

Shelly currently serves as a Field Safety Professional at Grainger Industrial Supplies, where she partners with clients to perform hazard recognition and conduct comprehensive safety assessments. Her work supports the achievement of environmental, health, and safety (EHS) compliance and strategic safety goals. She also collaborates with manufacturing vendors to stay at the forefront of innovative products and service solutions that help reduce risk across diverse industrial settings.

She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Missouri State University in Springfield, MO, and has been a resident of the Kansas City area for over 30 years. A dedicated member of the American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP) and Women in Safety Excellence (WISE), Shelly is also an active participant in national ASSP conferences, engaging as both an exhibitor and attendee.

Known for her servant leadership style, Shelly is passionate about fostering a culture where safety is always the priority.



Upcoming HOA Chapter Meeting Calendar – Save the Date!

Friday, April 25th	Terracon 10841 S Ridgeview Rd, Olathe, KS 66061	Active Assailant Preparedness
Thursday, May 22nd	The Builders Education Center 105 W 12th Ave, North Kansas City, MO 64116	Contractor Management

2025 Upcoming Safety & Health Events to Remember

May 14th-16th	SafeConExpo 2025	Safety and Health Council	The Lodge of the Four Seasons 315 Four Seasons Drive Lake Ozark, MO
July 22-24	Safety 2025 Conference and Expo	ASSP	Orange County Convention Center Orlando, FL

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Our Silver Sponsor





New Members

**Steven D Mailand // Paul Harrow // Michael Foster // Ella Morris
Braylyn Bivens, CSHM, GSP // John Howell // William Webb Brooks,
QSSP // Nolyn Rutherford**

Many of us are members of associations and groups that involve safety, health, environmental protection, and risk management advancement. As we engage with our member organizations, remember to network, and share the opportunities and benefits available within the Heart of America Chapter of ASSP for members, non-members, and our community.

If you know someone who would like to join ASSP Heart of America Chapter please direct them [HERE!](#)

ASSP Community

Our new strategic plan incorporates these five values:

- Community: We provide a welcoming and collaborative environment that creates belonging and inclusivity for all.
- Leadership: We exemplify integrity and empower others.
- Excellence: We strive always to deliver our best.
- Accountability: We are ethical, reliable and trustworthy in all we do.
- Respect: We act with humility, listen to others and foster strong working relationships.

Together, they form the acronym CLEAR, which can help us easily recall and readily share them with other stakeholders across the ASSP ecosystem.

Job Openings

If you or someone that you know in the safety profession are looking for employment, jobs openings are posted on our Chapter website. Please check out our website for recent job postings. <https://kc.assp.org/>

Looking for a Job?

If so, then send your resume to president@kc.assp.org

Upcoming Events

The Chapter website provides information regarding upcoming events and training held by our Chapter, other ASSP Chapters, ASSP, and from other organizations with safety, health, environmental and risk management topics that may interest you. Please visit the website regularly to view upcoming events that may not be specifically listed in the newsletter. <https://kc.assp.org/>



Executive Committee



President – president@kc.assp.org
Michael Carlson



Vice-President – vp@kc.assp.org
Position Open to Elected Candidates



Treasurer – treasurer@kc.assp.org
Ravi Narayan



Secretary – secretary@kc.assp.org
Mindy Prichard



Past President – Derek Farmer



Tom Metzner – Members at Large

New Member Engagement –
Eric Hallerud, CSP

