



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF **SAFETY PROFESSIONALS**

Heart of America Chapter

NEWSLETTER | Edition 87, Volume 7



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President's Message

February 2026



Hello to my fellow chapter members. I hope that we are all feeling well and energized into our new year. I know I have welcomed a new position in my career, and I hope that you do too if you are searching. Keep making those lasting connections new and old...We are here to help.

Speaking of help, our emerging professionals group is active in a winter clothing drive for our next chapter event on Friday, February 20th. If it keeps you warm in the winter months, please consider bringing your donation to our event. I, and our executive committee are very proud of the emerging professionals group, led by Jessie Glenn, MS, GSP, Anthony Gallagher, GSP, and Anna Clevenger, GSP, AINS. Great work to our newest of professionals!

Our latest event at Midwest Public Risk featuring attorneys Andrew Brought, and Paul Jacobson on OSHA's outlook and current enforcement trends drew a large crowd and great survey feedback. Thank you to those who made it out on that cold afternoon!

Thank you to our members who keep our chapter and our society going. If you have any ideas on providing you more value, please attend a meeting, join our executive committee Teams call, take a survey, or reach out to us.

In memory of the late Catherine O'Hara, in her lesser known role starring with Steve Martin in *A Simple Twist of Fate*, I hope you find your safety connection and meaning within our chapter, with or without leaving it to fate.

Respectfully,

Michael Carlson, CSP



NEW MEMBERS WELCOME!!!



Michael Scott Little, STS



Kelly Dunn



Anna Clevenger

Mark W Sullivan



Anna Clevenger



Ruthann Ellis, SMP, STSC



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Thomas Rebecchi PhD | CSP

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Hello. My name is Dr. Thomas Rebecchi, and I have been in the health and safety profession for over a decade, an occupation I am very proud to share with you.

Our profession is a noble one. At face value, the goal of safety is to prevent accidents and injuries that negatively impact people and their environment, and safety professionals work every day to achieve this goal. In our daily pursuit of this goal, it is easy to forget why we willingly undertake this vital responsibility.

In my opinion, the true purpose of safety is to preserve time and opportunity, two of the most important aspects lost following accidents and injuries. These are the two incredibly valuable and irreplaceable assets everyone wishes they had more of, but which, once gone, cannot be reclaimed. Simple examples such as having dinner with family, enjoying time with friends, engaging in hobbies, and traveling the world all require the precious gifts of time and opportunity. They are essential for us to pursue happiness, achieve our full potential, and maximize our quality of life.

Investing in safety isn't merely a business strategy; it is a fundamental method to increase human prosperity and support societal advancement. As we reflect on how far we have come in improving safety for people throughout the world, we must also acknowledge the significant challenges that persist. In recent years, nonfatal and fatal injuries have plateaued, and in some areas, even increased. Many safety professionals struggle to implement effective, lasting strategies, often due to systemic or organizational barriers. Workers across a variety of industries hesitate to report injuries for fear of losing their job or facing other repercussions. Rating systems such as Experience Modification Rate (EMR) hinder small organizations, have become pay-to-play, and reward dishonesty while punishing honesty.

While our profession is a noble endeavor, we are consistently hindered from reaching our true potential by the very systems that dictate how safety is managed. If safety's success is measured by our ability to prevent accidents and injuries, yet injury rates are not decreasing, then there is a compelling reason to critically re-evaluate our current methodologies. As health and safety professionals, we are experts at leading investigations and performing root cause analyses for individual incidents. It is now time for us to apply these same critical skills to evaluate our profession as a whole.

Within the ASSP Heart of America chapter, we collectively possess thousands of years of health and safety experience. This vast reservoir of knowledge, insight, and problem-solving capability is an unparalleled resource waiting to be fully tapped. We must leverage every resource available to us to reshape our profession into one that more effectively preserves the health and well-being of humanity. Together, we can innovate new programs and techniques to push our profession into the next stage of its evolution.

The task may seem daunting, but it is undeniably achievable. Remember, our collective wisdom and influence is greater than that of any one of us. Safety must evolve if it wishes to truly reach its goal. As safety professionals, we have a profound responsibility to re-envision safety in a new way – one that makes it more practical, relatable, and memorable for a wider audience.

Safety for anyone. Safety for everyone. Safety, as it should be.



Save the Dates:

MONTH	DATE	TIME	HOST	LOCATION
February	20th	11:30-1:00 pm	Mark One Electric	Kansas City, MO
March	27th	11:30-1:00 pm	JOCO Emergency Management	Downtown Olathe, KS
April	17th	11:30-1:00 pm	Scheels	Overland Park, KS

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.



ANOUNCEMENT

REQUESTING NOMINATIONS FOR OPEN POSITIONS!!!

We currently have open positions and are inviting anyone who feels called to step forward and get involved. Whether you're looking to lead, support, or simply contribute your skills in a meaningful way, this is your opportunity to make an impact.

- **President-Elect**
- **Treasurer**
- **Secretary**

HEART OF AMERICA CHAPTER

HISTORICAL SUMMARY



Chartered:
March 24, 1939

10th chapter of the American Society of Safety Professionals



First President:
Col. W. W. Williams
(1939-1944)



1940s-1950s
Key role connecting safety professionals across the Midwest



Later decades
Hosted regional safety conferences, supported certification



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STRATEGOS

INTERNATIONAL



JOB OPENINGS

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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.

Looking for a Job?

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

Garmin International: EHS Specialist 2



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MEMBERS



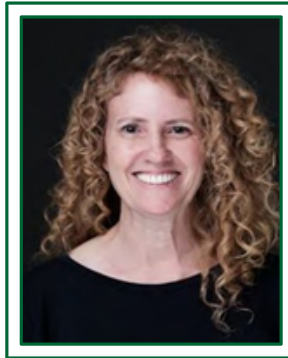
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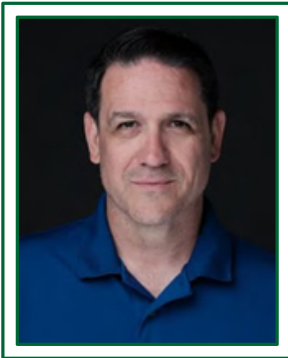
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Past President
Derek Farmer



Members at Large
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New Member Engagement
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Promotions Chair
Shelly Higgins

