



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF **SAFETY PROFESSIONALS**

Heart of America Chapter

NEWSLETTER | Edition 88, Volume 1



Table of Contents

- 1 Officer List
- 2 President's Message
- 3 New Members
- 4 Member Spotlight
- 5 Chapter News
- 6 Sponsors
- 7 Job Openings
- 8 Executive Committee



Officer List

1



president@kc.assp.org

President

| **Ashley Parker, MS, CSP, CRIS**



vp@kc.assp.org

Vice President

| **Shelly Higgins, CSP**



secretary@kc.assp.org

Secretary

| **Ashlie Walker-Deffenbaugh, MS, CSP**



treasurer@kc.assp.org

Treasurer

| **Ravi Narayan, CSP, ARM**



Past President

| **Michael Carlson, CSP**



President's Message

AUGUST 2026

2



Welcome to a New Chapter Year

As I begin my term as President of the ASSP Heart of America Chapter, I want to take a moment to introduce myself and share how honored I am to serve this incredible community of safety professionals.

For those I haven't had the opportunity to meet yet, my name is Ashley Parker. I am passionate about advancing the safety profession, building meaningful connections, and supporting the growth and success of our members. One of the things I value most about ASSP is the willingness of our members to share their knowledge, experiences, and support with one another. Whether you have been involved for many years or are joining us for the first time, you are an important part of what makes this chapter so special.

I am grateful to our Executive Committee members who volunteer their time, energy, and expertise to help our chapter thrive. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to our new Vice President, Shelly Higgins, and our new Secretary, Ashlie Walker-Deffenbaugh. I look forward to working alongside them as we continue to strengthen our chapter and create meaningful opportunities for our members.

I would also like to recognize and thank Michael Carlson, our immediate Past President, for his leadership during the 2025-2026 chapter year. Michael helped guide our chapter through another successful year, and I appreciate his dedication, service, and continued support.

As we look ahead, I am excited about the excellent lineup of monthly meetings, networking opportunities, and professional development programs planned for the coming year. Our goal is to provide valuable insights, practical knowledge, and opportunities to connect with fellow safety professionals.



President's Message

2

One area I am particularly excited about is increasing our engagement with the student sections at the University of Central Missouri and Pittsburg State University. These students represent the future of our profession, and our chapter has an important role in supporting their development, creating networking opportunities, and helping bridge the gap between the classroom and the workplace.

I am also looking forward to continuing to invest in our Emerging Professionals group, led by Jessie Glenn and Anthony Gallagher. Their efforts are helping create meaningful opportunities for newer safety professionals to build relationships, expand their knowledge, and become active participants in our profession and chapter leadership.

I encourage everyone to attend, participate, and engage throughout the year. The relationships we build through ASSP often become some of the most valuable resources in our professional journeys.

I also hope you'll join us for our upcoming Member Appreciation Event at Chicken N Pickle on Friday, August 28, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. This event is a great opportunity to connect with fellow members, welcome new faces, and enjoy an afternoon of networking and fun. We would love to see you there.

Thank you for your membership, your involvement, and your commitment to creating safer workplaces and stronger organizations. Together, we can continue advancing our profession, supporting one another, and making a positive impact throughout our communities.

I am excited about what lies ahead and look forward to serving alongside each of you during the coming year.

Ashley Parker, MS, CSP, CRIS
President, ASSP Heart of America Chapter



NEW MEMBERS

3

West of America Chapter



Jackson Hawk, CSP
Safety Specialist
Mark One Electric Company, Inc.



Dan Prater
Site Safety Manager
Gateway Safety Consultants LLC

Welcome



PHIL SHOEMAKER

CSP, CHST, CRIS, STS-C

Where did you go to school? I earned a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Safety with a minor in Criminal Justice Administration and a Master of Science in Industrial Safety Management from Central Missouri State University (now the University of Central Missouri). I am currently completing my Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Organizational Leadership at Rockhurst University, with an expected graduation date of May 2027.

How long have you been in the safety industry? I have been fortunate to work in the safety and risk management profession for more than 30 years. Throughout my career, I've had the opportunity to help organizations of all sizes strengthen their safety cultures, protect employees, and improve organizational performance.

How long have you been in your current position? I have been with HNTB Corporation since 2020. HNTB is an infrastructure solutions firm employing more than 8,000 associates across more than 80 offices and supporting projects that account for over 12 million work hours annually. Prior to joining HNTB, I served for almost 28 years as the Safety, Health and Environmental Services Director for The Builders, a chapter of the Associated General Contractors (AGC).

What is your current position, and from a safety standpoint, what are your primary responsibilities (training, supervision, hazard evaluation, etc.)? I currently serve as Associate Vice President and Corporate Safety Director for HNTB Corporation. My responsibilities include leading the continuous improvement, development, implementation, and oversight of the firm's enterprise safety and risk management programs. I work closely with executive leadership, project teams, and field personnel to develop and implement enterprise-wide safety policies, training programs, risk management strategies, regulatory compliance initiatives, and performance metrics that protect our employees, support our clients, and foster a strong safety culture across the organization.



What made you decide to go into safety? While attending Central Missouri State University, I worked as a member of Millwrights Local #1529 and was originally pursuing a degree in Criminal Justice Administration because I wanted to become a Missouri State Highway Patrolman. Everything changed when a close family friend and coworker, who was a member of Ironworkers Local #10, was fatally injured in a workplace accident. Witnessing the impact of that tragedy firsthand had a profound effect on me and ultimately changed the course of my career. It made me realize that preventing workplace injuries and fatalities was where I wanted to dedicate my life's work. I changed my major to Industrial Safety and have never looked back.

What are some of your most memorable experiences or accomplishments related to your time in the safety profession? One of my proudest accomplishments has been helping found the Construction Safety Group of Kansas City and serving as chair of the organization's scholarship program since its inception. Through the generosity of our members and industry partners, the program has awarded more than \$270,000 in scholarships to students pursuing safety careers at the University of Central Missouri and Pittsburg State University.

Throughout my career, I have also had the privilege of serving on numerous local and national safety and health committees. One of the most rewarding experiences has been serving as a member of the American Ladder Institute (ALI) Accredited Standards Committee (ASC) A14 Committee and the A14.3 Fixed Ladders Subcommittee, where I have the opportunity to help develop and improve national ladder safety standards that help protect workers across the country.

Finally, receiving The Builders, a Chapter of the Associated General Contractors (AGC), 2025 Mark Banden Safety Professional of the Year Award and the American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP) Heart of America Chapter's inaugural 2025 Safety Excellence Professional of the Year Award are honors that I deeply appreciate. While these awards are personally meaningful, they also reflect the dedication, mentorship, and collaboration of the many outstanding coworkers, volunteers, industry partners, and mentors who have influenced and supported me throughout my career.

What are some of your hobbies or favorite activities? Outside of work, I enjoy traveling, boating, spending time outdoors, and making memories with family and friends at our lake house. Those experiences help me recharge and remind me of the importance of maintaining a healthy work-life balance.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

4

What does your ASSP membership mean to you? Early in my career, I was fortunate to have several outstanding safety mentors who encouraged me to become involved with ASSP. I have been a member since 1993 and have had the privilege of serving in numerous chapter leadership roles, including President of the Heart of America Chapter. ASSP has provided me with invaluable networking, professional development, leadership, and mentoring opportunities throughout my career. I am proud to be part of such an outstanding organization and look forward to continuing to give back by mentoring future generations of safety professionals, just as others invested in and mentored me throughout my career.



Read all Chapter News



MONTH	DATE	TIME	HOST	LOCATION
August	28th	2:00-4:00 pm	Chicken N Pickle	1761 Burlington St, North Kansas City, MO 64081
September	25th	11:30-1:00 pm	John Knox Village	1001 NW Jacob Drive, Lee's Summit, MO 64081
October	30th	11:30-1:00 pm	Black & Veatch	11401 Lamar Ave, Overland Park, KS 66211
November	13th	11:30-1:00 pm	Select Physical Therapy	4001 Indian Creek Parkway, Overland Park, KS 66207

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.



CHAPTER NEWS

Achieved Platinum Chapter AGAIN 2025-2026!!!



PLATINUM LEVEL CHAPTER
2024-2025



PLATINUM LEVEL CHAPTER
2023-2024



PLATINUM LEVEL CHAPTER
2022-2023



PLATINUM LEVEL CHAPTER
2021-2022



PLATINUM LEVEL CHAPTER
2020-2021



PLATINUM LEVEL CHAPTER
2019-2020



CONGRATULATIONS



CHAPTER SPONSORS

THANK YOU!

6

Platinum Sponsors

SafetyCulture



**PROGRESSIVE
SAFETY** WORK SAFE —
— LIKE A PRO

Gold Sponsors



US COMPLIANCE

Silver Sponsors



STRATEGOS
INTERNATIONAL

HERZIG
ENGINEERING®



JOB OPENINGS

7

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.

- Safety & Health Manager
- Safety Specialist
- Risk Manager
- Industrial Hygienist
- Safety and Training Specialist III

Looking for a Job?

If so, then send your resume to

president@kc.assp.org



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

MEMBERS

8

Newsletter

| Harold Rudd, STS

Student Section & Scholarships

| Phil Shoemaker, CSP, CRIS, CHST

New Member Engagement

| Mike Combs, COSS | Tommy Rebecchi, PhD, CSP

Vendor Promotions

| Shelly Higgins, CSP | Ashley Parker, MS, CSP, CRIS

Website Update & Job Postings

| Dave Hallerud, ALCM

Social Media & Communications

| Ashlie Walker-Deffenbaugh, MS, CSP

Events Coordinator & Catering

| Mindy Prichard, MS, CSP

Professional Development Workshops

| Tom Metzner, CSP, ARM-P, CFPS | Mindy Prichard, MS, CSP

Emerging Professionals Group

| Jessica Glenn, MS, CSP | Anthony Gallagher, CSP | Eric Hallerud, CSP

Election Committee

| Derek Farmer, MBA, CSP, CRIS | Tom Metzner, CSP, ARM-P, CFPS
| Mindy Prichard, MS