

# Engineer named national fellow

■ Dimmick one of 96 in North America honored

By NANCY MADSEN  
*NNY Business*

**K**ris D. Dimmick, vice president of municipal engineering at Bernier, Carr and Associates, Watertown, is a public works leadership fellow, one of 96 North Americans to receive that honor.

The fellows are the first class named by the American Public Works Association and will serve as mentors to younger public works professionals working through the association's new credentialing training, which begins this year.

"When we sat down with number of members, they said there really isn't a clear career path in the public works field," said APWA Executive Director Peter B. King. "Public works professionals are coming in from civil engineering, public administration, business and other technical areas, but it's always not clear how to get to the public works path. The mentors are going to be able to share that information and give some guidance on the career path."

Mr. Dimmick and the other fellows have more than 20 years of experience in public works, are engineers and have education in other disciplines as well. They were chosen by a committee to be the first class of fellows.

"Like most professions, we're seeing a graying of the profession," Mr. King said. "Our average age is over 50. Like so many professions, we are wondering where our future leaders are coming from, so this is an opportunity to transmit knowledge and wisdom back to the younger folks coming up."

Mr. Dimmick applied to be part of the group after hearing about plans for the program from former APWA President George Crombie and identifying with the vision.

"There has been no national-level public works certification," he said. "Public works is an ever-changing environment, so the training has less and less technology, with more and more social and other disciplines involved, but still, sound science is needed."

Mr. Dimmick earned a bachelor's de-



AMANDA MORRISON | NNY BUSINESS

Kris D. Dimmick stands in front of a wall of plaques that he helped Watertown's Bernier, Carr & Associates earn for public works in the region. Mr. Dimmick was recently named a public works leadership fellow by the American Public Works Association.

gree in forest engineering and a master's degree in environmental engineering from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Syracuse. He started as a forest technician in Leslie, Ark., then became a construction inspector for New York Department on Transportation.

"From my first engineering assignment, in public works with DOT, to now, I have never really left working with the rural village and town public works," he said. "It's a much different setting, particularly as a consultant-for-hire, where you go in understanding that your clients all wear six different hats, budgets have been tight for years and one person will have the role of four or five people."

Those difficulties allow more opportunities for consultants to provide educational and collaborative services, pressing the importance of training. Public works professionals see a fluid environment of technology, rules and emergencies.

"The arena itself changes, it's not that the job is static – the job changes immensely," Mr. Dimmick said. "Whether it's a college facility, road or water plan, public works professionals are responsible for their maintenance. There is a vast range of facilities conceived, built and maintained by public works professionals."

Mr. Dimmick is a registered professional engineer, with 28 years in the field

and more than 10 years at Bernier Carr. He just wrapped up a term as chairman of the Central Branch New York Chapter of the association and continues as a chapter director and alternate delegate to the national association.

Mr. Dimmick and other fellows will spend at least 40 hours mentoring a younger public works professional, guiding them in projects and professional development training. The program will be unusual in that the students, taking three levels of leadership programs through the Donald C. Stone Center, will choose their mentors based on background and experience.

So far, 140 younger professionals have asked for mentors, so the association is trying to get to 200 fellows by April. After the initial start to the program, participants will be added on a rolling basis.

"We are encouraging them to not only focus on engineering, but also on strategic thinking and sustainability principles, which are becoming part of engineering programs now," Mr. King said. "We want to create an opportunity for those who are mid-career to have access to those kinds of training and professional development."

■ **NANCY MADSEN** is a former Johnson Newspapers staff writer. Contact her at [nancy.madsen@gmail.com](mailto:nancy.madsen@gmail.com).