

Pipeline People: Tran Mah-Paulson

Pipelines International chats with YPP's Young Achievement Award winner, TDW Pipeline Engineer Tran Mah-Paulson, who was honoured at PPIM 2019.

What's your educational background and experience in the pipeline industry?

I have a civil engineering degree – with distinction – from the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada and am currently working towards my Masters of Business Administration with Cornell and Queens Universities.

Currently, I'm a pipeline engineer working with T.D. Williamson (TDW), with experience in developing and implementing quality management systems, developing welding procedure, and qualifying and assessing welder and inspector competency. My latest endeavour is assisting with engineering standards and knowledge management.

On a volunteer basis, I have contributed to the growth and development of the Young Pipeliners Association of Canada (YPAC) and young pipeline associations worldwide, including the US, Canada, Brazil, Mexico and Europe.

How did you make your start in the pipeline industry?

I originally started in the pipeline industry with TDW as a summer intern, while also going to school as a project coordinator. During my internship, I was assisting with the execution of hot tapping and repair projects.

I then began consulting for small companies around TDW, developing quality management programs for various scopes, including pressure piping construction, fitting modifications and miniature pressure vessels.

From there, I went on to work for TransCanada as part of another summer internship program. After this, I started worked full time with TDW, continuing as a project coordinator, while completing my engineering degree.

What does your role at TDW entail?

TDW has a long history of designing and manufacturing products in the pipeline industry. My current role is managing the various global design standards by ensuring the development, completion and subsequent implementation of the design standards globally.

Furthermore, due to the gap in knowledge and



YPP Vice Chair Eric Lang presenting the awards at PPIM 2019.



Tran Mah-Paulson receiving the Young Achievement Award.

the need to retain knowledge for future generations within TDW, knowledge management is a critical aspect of the future of the company and the pipeline industry. To this end, I work on developing knowledge management processes, including roadmap development and implementation within the organisation.

Are there any areas of the industry which are of interest?

I'm interested in seeing what the future of the industry will look like, such as understanding how new technology will transform how we do work and the enablement of sustainable growth of pipeline infrastructure.

I'm also eager to see how new technologies will develop to better optimise our quality of life and energy usage.

Have you been involved with any memorable initiatives?

While I have been involved with many pipeline projects regarding pipeline repair and maintenance, construction and fabrication, and welding engineering, some more notable projects are those that have helped push the industry forward.

This includes running the YPAC Pipeline Conferences in 2015 and 2017, and seeing the progression and change that had happens as a result. Also, contributing to engineering through volunteering with the American Welding Society and American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

During my time in the industry, I've worked to empower others – both junior and senior – to help the next generation of workers gain exposure and start leading the industry forward.

Why is it important to be involved in industry groups?

Industry groups and associations provide an increased opportunity to collaborate on challenges. It offers the chance to understand problems faced by the industry, not just from a single perspective, but from different parts of the equation.

From this point, there is an opportunity to build public awareness of industry progress on research and best practices.

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What benefits are there to YPP or YPAC membership?

By getting involved with these groups, both as a member and in a leadership role, young professionals have the opportunity to increase their network on a global scale. In particular, the ability to connect to more technical opportunities is a real advantage.

The industry is traditionally technical, so you really need to be skilled from both technical and business aspects to make it in this industry.

Working in a leadership role helps shift the paradigm about what a leader looks like; there is a realisation that leadership comes in all shapes and sizes. Finally, I think members are able to build strong relationships beyond those that are purely transactional, forming a network of peers and friends.

How has the industry changed during your career?

There has been the development of the young pipeline organisations and the advantages associated with those, which I have already mentioned. Another noticeable change has been the increased acceptance for young pipeliners to be involved in traditionally closed-door meetings.

In the future, I think the industry will be looking for multiskilled, interdisciplinary

employees, and the industry itself will become more creative and innovative. I'm also optimistic that we will continue to work hard to improve the industry and solve the hard problems, including climate change and energy concerns.

My advice to those new to the industry is to be creative and passionate! Don't be afraid to ask your organisation to participate in the industry, including their time and money.

Is there a personal achievement you're particularly proud of?

I have a patent for a thick, long seam welding system and method for distortion control and non post weld heat treatment. The patent relates to welding fittings installed on in-service pipelines, in particular those performed on long seams of pipeline hot tap fittings.

In September 2016, I had the opportunity to speak to the Senate of Canada, at the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications meeting, to discuss the development of a strategy to facilitate the transport of crude oil to eastern Canadian refineries and to ports on the east and west coasts of Canada. At the meeting, I was able to talk about organisations like YPAC, the importance of building a professional community for young pipeliners and ensuring that there is succession planning in the industry. **P**

YPP Young Achievement Award

YPP, in partnership with the Pipeline Pigging and Integrity Management Conference and Exhibition (PPIM), has established annual awards to recognise young professionals in the industry. The Young Achievement Award recognises the achievements of individuals under 35 years of age who have demonstrated a valuable and original contribution to the industry.

In 2019, the award was jointly presented to Mr Mah-Paulson and Molly Doran. Ms Doran will be interviewed in a future edition of *Pipelines International*.