



## **Interview with Damon McClure, President of COK Chapter, 2017/18**

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Pam Duffy, Region VIII Electronic Communications Chair

Damon McClure led the Central Oklahoma chapter to win the 2018 Golden Gavel. Below is an interview of Damon, where he shares more about his chapter's successful year.

### **What made you get involved in ASHRAE?**

As a project manager of a large mechanical contractor, our company strives to be diversified and serve in several influential industry arenas such as ASHRAE, SMACNA, PHCC, & Rotary. I choose ASHRAE because it allows me as mechanical contractor to be in the room with the engineers, sales reps, and owners of the projects we are working on and/or pursuing.

### **What positions make up your “climb” to the President position?**

Well my chapter service was not much of climb but more of dive head first. I began with as newsletter chair in 2014-2015, then I was directly nominated to start the officer rotation of secretary, president-elect, and then president. Next year I will serve as vice-president in an advisory role for our chapter.

### **Did you want to serve as President, or did someone ask/encourage you to do so?**

To be honest and transparent, I had never really given it much thought when I accepted the newsletter chair position. I knew I wanted to be involved in the rich history of our chapter but I had no idea how quickly I would rise to president. I was encouraged to take the secretary position based on the chapter's unwritten rotation of sales rep, engineer, and contractor. It was contractor's rotation the year I was nominated for secretary position. I accepted the secretary position knowing I would become president in two years.

### **Did you have any personal goals going into your year as Chapter President?**

My personal goals heading into my year as Chapter President, was to leave an impact on my chapter. As Bill Klock (former Region VIII DRC) stated and challenged each chapter president-elect in February 2017 at President-Elect Training, “Leave the Chapter better than you found it.” Our chapter mantra I put forward at the beginning of the chapter year was “Contribute. Purpose.” I wanted to give back (contribute) but yet have a resolve (purpose) in doing so. My main focus throughout year was the student outreach and paired with, Scott Sanders, our Student Activities Chair I felt we accomplished more than I would have ever imagined. I believe our two biggest impacts in this area were sponsoring fourteen (14) college students to attend the Winter Conference and our chapter's student outreach to trade apprenticeship schools and local vocational schools.

### **What were some of the more positive things in serving as chapter president?**

The more positive things in serving as chapter president was the experience itself. Even though ASHRAE is volunteer society, it is amazing the diverse culture and outreach the society itself embodies. As Chapter President you are essentially operating your own small business, yet the structure of the local chapter operations in conjunction with regional and society operations allows endless opportunity to network and learn from various industry peers. Region VIII is a prime example of this, during my chapter



year as president I was able to monitor the efforts of the Monterrey Chapter and Austin Chapters via their reporting to Regional Basecamp. Monterrey's approach to numerous technical sessions and the endless social media outreach is stifling to say the least and should be highly applauded. It is also something that other chapters can use as a model to improve their chapter operations. The Austin Chapter labors were not overlooked by myself or Region DRC Jon Symko. Steve Hansen leadership and determination for his chapter's improvement and rectifying Regional communication is an ideal each chapter should desire. His development of "Duties of Officers Document" is a great guideline for chapter operation and I believe this is one of the reasons Steve should be commended by Region for receiving the Jack Thompson Award.

**What were some of the challenging things in serving as chapter president?**

Our chapter's largest challenge this membership promotion. The task of gaining new members as the number of delinquency and transfers climbed seemed insurmountable, however, we have slowly chipped away at it. The challenges of serving as chapter president could be numerous for various reasons, however, I found that if you develop a team of like-minded individuals to serve as your chapter chairs or on chapter committees the daunting task seem negligible in most instances.

**Is there one event/meeting/experience this year that sticks out in your mind as extra memorable? Why?**

The one event this chapter year that sticks out in my mind as extra memorable is our chapter sponsoring fourteen (14) college students (student members) to attend the Winter Conference. Scott Sanders (SAC) lobbied his RVC (Chris Anhe) for regional funds to help pursue this endeavor. Therefore, our chapter was able to utilize \$1000 we had previously budgeted in conjunction with matching \$1000 funds from region as well as \$200 donated by myself and Scott Sanders to total \$2600 sponsorship. For most of the students attending it was eye opening the breadth and depth of our industry presented at AHR Expo, as well as the ASHRAE culture on displayed at the Winter Conference. I could have never imagined attending an event of that magnitude as college student, so I am proud we were able to help fourteen students experience it.

**What role did ASHRAE programs like CRC, PAOE, etc. play in your year as chapter president?**

ASHRAE programs like CRC and PAOE play a significant role in my year as chapter president. We did a general review of PAOE points at most Board of Governors (BOG) meetings. I am also fortunate to have a great team that continually entered points each month, as well as we had two (2) separate lunch meeting to coordinate PAOE point entry into the system for tracking. CRC was the largest undertaking of the year for me as president, as it took two (2) weeks to prepare our chapter's Golden Gavel Report along with the Chapter Summary Report for regional reporting. To be honest, I was reviewing and critiquing the Golden Gavel Report up until the night before it was due. I would recommend to other chapter president that are focused on this aspect of ASHRAE to start 3-4 weeks prior to CRC preparing your reporting if you have a Golden Gavel Submission.

**What was your reaction to winning the golden gavel?**

Heading into the awards luncheon I was really nervous and uneasy. I had an idea that our chapter had a chance at contending for the Golden Gavel based on our chapter's body of work throughout the year. However, I can say that I was astounded and speechless when I heard my name called. I remember



walking to Hugh McMillan as he was presenting the Golden Gavel pin and then turning around to the crowd at a standing ovation. I am very humbled and honored that our chapter has won this award.

**If you could have given a speech after winning the golden gavel ,what would you have said?**

If I could have given a speech after winning the golden gavel I would have probably said the following: "Surround yourself with like minded people as you are only as strong as your weakest team member. Therefore, I know that I could have not achieved this award without the help of all the local chapter volunteers, chairs, and members. I am grateful that I was nominated by my peers to service in this capacity and able to add to storied history of the Central Oklahoma Chapter. Thank you to everyone that believed in my goals and helped our chapter achieve these goals and much. Our chapter was truly able to contribute purpose (refer to our mantra mentioned above) to ASHRAE."

**What advice would you have for a new chapter president that hopes to repeat your success?**

As previously mentioned, start developing and planning your chapter goals early and surround yourself with like-minded people hoping to achieve the same goals as yourself. You cannot perform all the chapter duties yourself, therefore, delegate and follow up often.

**Now that your year is over, what are you going to do now?**

I will service as vice president next chapter year. This role for our chapter is basically an advisory role for the incoming president.

**Will you pursue further ASHRAE leadership roles?**

I am undecided at the moment. I have had discussions with Jon Symko, Region VIII DRC, however, my decision to pursue further leadership roles is solely dependent on the time commitment. My family is very important to me and my three (3) boys are growing up quickly, so I don't want to take on a new role that requires a large time commitment. I am hopeful that I will find something that will fit my time constraints.