



# Shawn Montgomery

## Public Participation Specialist

U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Legacy Management

“Service to others — whether to my country or my neighbors — is really what the human experience is about.”

### JOB DESCRIPTION

I PROVIDE PROGRAM OVERSIGHT OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND OUTREACH ON THE NAVAJO NATION, LEAD OPERATIONS OF THE ATOMIC LEGACY CABIN INTERPRETIVE CENTER, AND OVERSEE THE STEM WITH LM PROGRAM.

### EDUCATION

- ✓ CERTIFIED EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN (COLORADO MOUNTAIN COLLEGE)
- ✓ GRADUATE CANDIDATE IN COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS (PURDUE UNIVERSITY)
- ✓ BACHELOR OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATIONS (UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA)

## 1 How did you become a public participation specialist?

I've had a winding path toward my current career. First, I was a member of the military. Then, a firefighter and paramedic with the city of Grand Junction in Colorado. Later, I became the public information officer for the fire department, where I oversaw communication, school programs, media, and emergency management.

Next, I built a new marketing department for a home health care company that focused on veterans and former nuclear energy workers. Then, I transitioned into a position at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center as the communication director for western Colorado and eastern Utah.

My current role as a public participation specialist for LM brings all my skills together into one place.

## 2 What have been some of the most exciting projects in your career?

I was the lead public information officer for the joint information center on the Gold King Mine waste spill near Silverton, Colorado. This event opened my eyes to the importance of emergency management and crisis communications. I helped coordinate federal, state, regional, and local governments so that we could respond quickly to this environmental disaster.

Another exciting project was the building of a national marketing program that helped identify former nuclear energy workers. It included a new health questionnaire that increased access to federal assistance.

But the most exciting is my current work with STEM with LM because it has the potential to impact so many young people, who in turn will grow up to help the world.



### 3 Why is science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education important to you?

As a nation, we're going to have so many job openings in the future. We'll need experts in energy, climate change, and alternative fuels. We will need people to fill those positions, and we want to get young people excited about STEM so they aren't intimidated by upper level courses or pursuing scientific careers.

### 4 How does your job affect the world?

I'm a part of a bigger picture. There are a lot of organizations in the pipeline that are working together to cultivate, influence, and inspire future STEM professionals. My job is to help these organizations support and communicate with each other and to tell students about the opportunities available to them.

### 5 Who are the most influential people in the life?

My leaders, under whom I served as a combat medic with the Army's 1st Infantry Division, were the most influential people in my life. They taught me the world was bigger than my myself. During my deployments in Kosovo and Iraq, I learned that service to others — whether to my country or my neighbors — is really what the human experience is about.

I also had some great colleagues who showed me the ropes during my professional development in communications. I had the opportunity to not only lead but also follow these professionals who taught me so much along the way. They taught me that, in order to be a good leader, you must be a good follower, too.