

# Education in Action

## Witnessing the minds, hands and hearts at work

BY DEIDRE ALVES, M.ED.

This past year has been a whirlwind of positive momentum and growth for IRWA Professional Development. I am proud of the results, as it represents a steadfast strategic vision and commitment to learning excellence, as well as a lot of hard work and dedication from many great people.



Over the last 12 months, we have achieved some important milestones for delivering new and innovative learning products, as established in IRWA's Five-Phase Curriculum Design Plan. The prioritization was vital, and the final list of proposed projects was the result of deep research and industry data that pinpointed critical areas of learning needed in the profession. Leadership worked feverishly to ensure that the proposed projects were also strategically aligned with the industry-centric certifications in our four core industries: Oil and Gas Pipeline, Electric and Utilities, Transportation and Public Agencies.

As a result, IRWA's new learning products offer insider knowledge, relevance and spot-on member value. Among the new releases are several classroom-based courses, including Course 218: Right of Way Acquisition for Electrical Utility Projects, Course 225: Social Ecology and Course 230: Oil and Gas Land Basics and Related Surface Rights Issues. We also launched two exclusive video-powered online courses, including Course 213: Conflict Management and Course 100i: Principles of Land Acquisition International Version.

Our vision to bring a virtual university to IRWA was realized this year when IRWA University was born. At IRWA University ([www.irwauniversity.org](http://www.irwauniversity.org)), members have access to all our educational resources in one centralized location. This includes 23 on-demand classes, links to register for all of our classroom-based classes, Leadership Institute modules and an invaluable list of additional resources. We are growing IRWA University every day, adding more relevant educational content, including an archived webinar series, anthologies, white papers, e-book materials, bite-size learning and more!

In my travels, I was able to witness IRWA education in action. During our launch of Course 225: Social Ecology, I visited Montana to see first-hand the profound impact of teaching about developing community engagement at the front end of a right of way project. I traveled to Vancouver, British Columbia to direct the production of the video-powered online Course 100i – IRWA's first international course with general right of way content and country-specific modules. San Francisco was another key stop as we began the critical development of the Environmental Due Diligence Course. And in Houston, we experienced a sold-out learning event when we introduced the first



At the launch of IRWA's Course 230, Oil and Gas Land Basics and Related Surface Rights, Deidre Alves and course developer, J. Warren Doyle.

lecture series called Oil and Gas Land Basics and Related Surface Rights Issues with course developer Warren Doyle, the President of Doyle Land Services.

In addition to our North American course development, we are also working with our South African Chapter members on a professional development program customized to their unique requirements. And our representatives from Mexico are eager to start on their journey to designation. With every meeting, I am learning more about the professional goals and needs of our expanding membership, and determining how we can best serve them all.

What I enjoy most is listening to the amazing stories that members share with me. Learning about the many ways they serve people on a daily basis, I am proud of the dedication to humanity that the profession holds so dear. In fact, a statement I heard recently is a perfect example of what makes our right of way professionals true heroes. One member said, *“When I approach a property owner, I think to myself, ‘how would I like to be treated?’ And then, that’s how I treat them.”*

I am proud to know, how at the heart of thoughtful infrastructure development, that the persons and businesses affected are held at such a high professional and ethical regard and are handled with such care, concern and respect. Our education, attitude, and our standards of practice are what make us great.

This year has been a whirlwind of positive momentum, and I couldn’t be more proud of all the minds, hands, and hearts at work that make IRWA an outstanding leading edge organization. Buckle up. We are just getting started! ⚡

“Our education, attitude, and our standards of practice are what make us great.”



In May, attendees gathered in Woodlands, TX for IRWA’s Course 230, Oil and Gas Land Basics and Related Surface Rights. Photo left, Courtney Otto, Judy DuPra, Joannie Hodges, Faith Roland, SR/WA and Jodi Armenta. Top photo, Rob Love and Clint Herbert. Photo below, David Ross, Norm Henenberg and James Valenta.