



Got Connections?

The opportunities are endless



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Current, Credentialed and Connected. That line really sums up how I personally feel about my IRWA membership. However, until an unfortunate incident took place last year, I had not experienced the true extent—and benefits—of being connected.

In October, my firm lost our Senior Vice President, Alex Souder, SR/WA. The memorial was filled with members of our association. Members were ringing my phone off the hook, many of whom are direct competitors, asking how they could help both Pinnacle and Alex's family. To date, we have collected \$10,000 for The Alex Souder Memorial Fund, which will be deposited into a 529-college account for Avery, Alex's seven-year old son. That whole experience prompted me to reflect on how important and special being connected really is within our organization.

When you think about it, we spend nearly as much time with our colleagues as with our families. We have the folks in our office, clients, fellow class participants, chapter and region members, people in our discipline and the industries we work within, and the list goes on. Are you as connected as you could be? Are you creating the kind of connections that can enhance your journey both professionally and personally? We need all of you! Your thoughts and ideas are the energy that makes our organization thrive. If you are wondering what you can do to get connected, here are a few examples.

Generate IRWA buzz in your office – Being part of your local chapter is a great way to meet new people, and bringing your coworkers can enhance your chapter experience from the very beginning. Be sure to include your supervisors in your recruiting so they can see for themselves how your IRWA involvement positively affects your performance, and how willing you are to get involved, volunteer and make a direct impact on the profession.

Take classes – The more classes you attend, the more opportunities you have to expand your network. It's a great way to connect with potential clients, employers, employees and friends. Many of my IRWA friendships developed in

the classroom, and these relationships are a great resource when I need to talk through a particular issue. Taking classes also enhances your knowledge, getting you closer to attaining credentials that will increase your professional opportunities.

Join a Community of Practice – With so many Communities of Practice forming, the opportunities to connect are endless. Our Discipline CoPs are just getting started, so your involvement can really have an impact on the direction they take. For example, the Relocation CoP held an open meeting in conjunction with the Region 2 forum, and an invitation to join the discussion via webinar was sent to all IRWA members. Over 40 members signed up to participate online, in addition to those attending in person. The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers presented a case study, and members from around the globe joined in the discussion. The other CoP's include Environment, Valuation, Survey/Engineering and Asset Management, and they are each planning special content-filled opportunities as we speak. If you don't see a CoP that serves your specific discipline, share your ideas with your Region Chair or an IEC member.

Come to the Annual Conference – These conferences provide the perfect balance of work and the opportunity to connect on a personal level. I have so many great memories from attending, some of which include Craig Poorker, SR/WA in a dress at the Board of Directors meeting when his region met their RWIEF donation goals; bidding for the puppet honoring International President Jim Struble, SR/WA; Angel Banks, Sharen Willis, SR/WA and Lee Hamre, SR/WA singing the Canadian, United States and South African national anthems respectively; the relocation game/talk shows; and me and the IEC serving so many of you adult beverages at the baseball game fundraiser in West Virginia. My personal favorite, however, was connecting with so many of you after my Dad pinned me at last year's Installation Banquet.

If you and I are already connected, I am grateful. If not, join us on Facebook, Twitter, IRWA's Member Network or at the