

Education Takes Center Stage

IRWA's 57th Annual International Education Conference

BY BARBARA BILLITZER



Highlighting recent educational advancements, IRWA International President, Ken Davis, SR/WA outlined plans for raising the perceived value of IRWA's certifications and designations in the marketplace.

For the dedicated professionals who convened for this year's Education Conference, held in Atlanta, Georgia from June 12-15, education was clearly top of mind. Kicking off the event were Atlanta Chapter 22 Conference Co-Chairs, Cheryl Lee, SR/WA, R/W-NAC and Joseph Neighbors, SR/WA, who recognized IRWA's International Committees for assembling sessions that address important issues facing right of way professionals today.

In the annual state of the profession message, International President Kenneth Davis, SR/WA detailed the success of IRWA's new Generalist Certification/Designation program, designed to encourage newer members to get a jump on their pathway toward certification early on in their careers. He spoke on the important actions taken toward improving the Association's governance and bringing the decision-making process closer to the general membership. "With the ongoing support of our regions, chapters and committees, we have taken our initiatives from ideas to fruition," said Ken. "The new International Governing Council, which includes Region Chairs in our planning and decision-making processes, was a huge step in the right direction. Within a short time, the needs of our regions, chapters and individual members have been heard and represented as never before."

Acknowledging the various countries represented at the conference, Ken reiterated the importance of expanding IRWA's offerings internationally. "From the standpoint of members and the organizations we all represent, international outreach has the potential to open doors to new opportunities. The need for training is a direct result of the demand for new and improved infrastructure in these countries, and this will lead to the need for more seasoned right of way professionals to assist in these endeavors. The funds generated from these courses will help generate more funding, which we can use to create even more courses. At the same time, we have an opportunity to enlarge our membership base, in contrast to other organizations that are experiencing a shrinking membership. This represents a win-win for our members and the Association."

Ken shared some specific initiatives, such the contract IRWA has with China to conduct courses in Beijing in late 2011. Since many of those attendees are appraisers holding the MAI designation, they will be seeking our appraisal certification as part of an agreement we have with the Appraisal Institute. The American Society of Appraisers de Mexico has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with IRWA to bring appraisal courses to their members, and the designated ASA's will also be seeking IRWA's certification. The Compulsory Purchase Association will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding with IRWA, promoting greater activity between the two organizations. IRWA leadership has also been in discussions



Noting a strong year, Executive Vice President Mark Rieck assured members that "IRWA will continue to adapt and innovate so members have the tools they need to build and grow their careers."



Conference Co-Chairs, Cheryl Lee, SR/WA, R/W-NAC and Joseph Neighbors, SR/WA encouraged attendees to have a great educational experience while enjoying the peach city of Hot-lanta.

with organizations from Australia, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, South Korea and Uganda regarding chapter formation and education leading to credentialing. And to be eligible for credentialing, these individuals will need to become IRWA members. Explaining the affiliate relationship IRWA enjoys with the South African Right of Way Association (SARWA), Ken invited Ernest Grunewald, President of SARWA to the stage to sign an agreement making SARWA a region partner. “We will partner with SARWA to conduct education courses in South Africa with modifications to reflect South African law and culture. SARWA members who take IRWA courses will also want IRWA credentialing, and we look forward to them joining as individual members,” said Ken.

In his state of the Association address, IRWA Executive Vice President Mark Rieck reported on a very solid year, despite the struggling U.S. economy. “Even as senior members begin to retire in greater numbers and others leave the profession through staff reductions, IRWA was able to hit its 90% member retention goal and gained an average of 68 new members per month,” said Mark. “IRWA education is beginning to rebound. As of April, 4,565 people have participated in classroom courses and another 845 have taken an online course, with online education more than doubling last year at this time.” Mark outlined some of the collaborative efforts between chapters, regions and committees, noting that IRWA has joined the National League of Cities and will begin to market IRWA membership, education and credentialing to 1,900 towns and municipalities in the fall. The plan is to call on 10 key cities, 10 agencies and 10 companies next fiscal year to personally present all the Association has to offer.

Mark thanked the Educacion Foundations for their partnership and three-year funding commitment to establish the IRWA Leadership Institute with the Pennington Performance Group, noting “Our commitment to leadership development will differentiate IRWA members from other associations because of our ability to deliver leadership training all the way to the individual member level. While the future is uncertain, members can count on IRWA to continually adapt, innovate and deliver a high quality membership, education and credentialing experience for our members and to provide the tools members need to build and grow their careers.”



Ronald L. Williams, SR/WA was honored to receive IRWA's Lifetime Achievement Award.

In the area of credentialing, IRWA enjoyed a banner year with 1,151 members declaring candidacy for the generalist and specialist certifications and designation, nearly triple the number of candidates from a year ago. “Members have asked that we market our credentialed members to the industry, and we have responded,” said Mark. The organization is working hard to promote them by running ads in Civil Engineering Magazine and generating awareness through public relations campaigns. To better reach and support chapter leadership, IRWA web conferences are now held on a monthly/quarterly basis, focusing on essential education and membership topics. To demonstrate the ease of web conferencing, Mark conducted a live demonstration with members of IRWA staff located in Gardena, showcasing how the two-way communication works to create a face-to-face experience.

As the recipient of IRWA's Lifetime Achievement Award, Ronald L. Williams, SR/WA, International President during 1987-1988, was honored to be recognized by his peers. “I have been truly blessed by the many opportunities that IRWA has opened up for me,” said Ron. “The places I've been, the people I've met and can call friends, and the chance to give back to the Association that provided me with those benefits, has made it all so worthwhile.”



Frank C. Balfour Professional of the Year Award Finalists were acknowledged for their outstanding contributions to the Association. From left, Pat Thayer, SR/WA, Tamara Benson, SR/WA, Mary Anne Marr, SR/WA and Jerome Lund, SR/WA.

AFFILIATE EXCHANGE

On Sunday, June 12th, IRWA hosted the International Affiliates Luncheon where delegates met to share unique challenges in their respective countries while identifying potential partnering opportunities.

From the Uganda Electricity Transmission Company, Innocent Kihika shared about how oil was discovered several years ago in his country, expediting the need for interconnection projects to transport oil to and from refineries. While natural gas was also discovered, it has not proven commercially viable. The enormous need for new roads has brought challenges with right of way acquisition and environmental impact assessments, and the area has attracted speculators and outsiders trying to get involved in public works projects.

South Africa is still considered an emerging country, as noted by Ernest Grunewald, President of the South African Right of Way Association. There were no projects done during a 14-year period, and the country is now trying to catch up and fix their deteriorating roads. They continue to face challenges caused by utilities that pass through jungle areas, where gun fire jeopardizes power lines. They are also working to evacuate power by pumping water up to produce electricity.

Japanese Compensation Consultant Association Executive Director Shinichi Sakai thanked IRWA for its financial support following their earthquake, tsunami and radiation disasters. He shared that, despite the number of displacees and other casualties, their citizens have remained motivated to get back on their feet. Public works projects have been reduced in recent years and they will need continuous support moving forward.

Dr. Sapon Pornchokchai, President of the Thai Appraisal Foundation, spoke about Thailand's 20 million tourists warranting the need for mass transit trains. Challenged by the number of expropriations for condemnation required, they are seeking help from IRWA members in learning how to better negotiate with property owners and build better relations with the public.



Dr. Sapon Pornchokchai (far right) attended the Conference with a host of representatives from the Thai Appraisal Foundation.



From the Japanese Compensation Consultant Association, Executive Director Shinichi Sakai (left) exchanges business cards with Thailand representatives.

Christoph Bennerscheidt, a Senior Research Fellow at Germany's Institute for Underground Infrastructure addressed the impact of tree roots on underground pipelines. The country requires new power lines to support future needs, and they currently face issues where supply is small and demand is large. Solar panels are being used, but weather conditions makes it an unreliable source.

In the United Kingdom, Philip Maude said that slow processes are their biggest challenge. Their planning commission approved only three projects in three years, yet 35 projects were submitted for approval. The UK is in dire need of upgrades in sewer pipelines and overhead transmission lines. Small land parcels are valued too high, causing a major roadblock in property negotiations. New high-speed rail link project proposed is very controversial; will require an Act of Parliament in order to proceed.

Representatives from the Korea Appraisal Board discussed real estate project compensation and the need for benchmarking best practices. Eric Finn outlined the potential for using water for future energy needs in Canada, noting that plans for an underground tunnel project utilizing Niagara Falls to transport water, is expected to double capacity of hydroelectric plants. Ken Davis addressed natural gas in the U.S., naming the Marcellus Shale as the second largest source in the world. A recent increase in right of way work has led to a shortage of experienced agents to negotiate and research title. Efforts are underway for recruiting at universities and colleges.



Representing the South African Right of Way Association, Ernest Grunewald, Ampie Potgieter and IRWA's Douglas Hummel, SR/WA.



FIABCI World President Judy Schennefield, (center) met with Mark Rieck, Randy Williams, Lee Hamre and Valerie Fries-Wade to outline potential credentialing programs.



From Saudi Aramco, Mark Tucker, Director of Right of Way.



Innocent Kahika from Uganda Electricity Transmission Company (left) talks with Christoph Bennerscheidt from Germany's Institute for Underground Infrastructure.

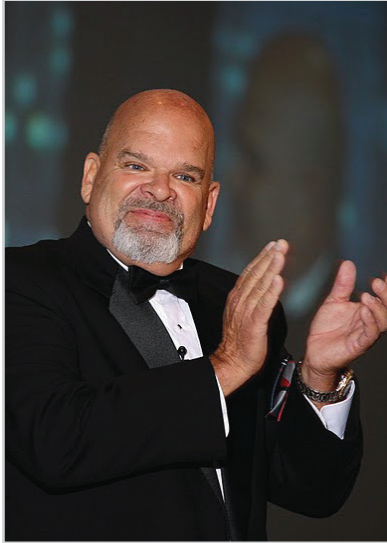


Joe Magdziarz, President of the Appraisal Institute and Philip Maude of the Compulsory Purchase Association



Attendees at the International Affiliates luncheon represented Japan, South Africa, Uganda, Thailand, Germany, the United Kingdom and Korea.

AWARDS LUNCHEON



INEC Chair, Charles Anderson, III, SR/WA shared great pride in recognizing this year's winners.

Held on Monday, June 13th, the Annual Awards Luncheon acknowledged those individuals, chapters and employers who have demonstrated outstanding achievements over the past year. International Nominations and Elections Committee Chair, Charles Anderson III, SR/WA, congratulated this year's nominees for their extraordinary achievements in 2010, noting, "Today, we take great pride in recognizing those members who have demonstrated exemplary efforts in advancing the Association and the right of way profession. As we acknowledge the many talents and achievements of our colleagues, we also want to take thank our predecessors, those who have continually inspired each succeeding generation to reach new heights. It is through their dedication and high ethical standards that we are able to distinguish ourselves as true professionals."

Tamara Benson, SR/WA, was honored with the prestigious Frank C. Balfour Professional of the Year Award. Tami shared, "I'm honored to be of service to the Association, and receiving this recognition is both humbling and rewarding. I've always believed in servant leadership, and the importance of raising the bar in professional conduct and education is one of my driving forces. My employer, Universal Field Services, Inc., has been a vital supporter of this Association for more than 50 years. They have given me the time and opportunity to serve IRWA and without their support, I would not have received this honor."

Tami is Director of Training and Development for Universal Field Services, Inc., where she develops training programs and assists with client relations, business development and quality assurance reviews. She served as Chair of the International Relocation Assistance Committee, and she is an approved facilitator for the IRWA Relocation Assistance courses and Leadership Institute training modules. She was named Chapter 33 Professional of the Year twice and Region 2 Professional of the Year in 2010.



The recipient of the 2010 Frank C. Balfour Professional of the Year Award was Tamara Benson, SR/WA, R/W-RAC.

New to the proceedings this year was recognition for the first annual Project of the Year winner, which was awarded to the Utah Transit Authority Fontlines 2015 Program. The project was a collaborative effort between the Utah Transit Authority and Parsons Brinckerhoff.



The Utah Transit Authority Frontlines 2015 Program was named Project of the Year for 2010. Accepting the award from Ken Davis, Gale Padgett, SR/WA, R/W-RAC, R/W-NAC, John Cluff, Ruth Hawe, Wayne Larsen, SR/WA, R/W-URAC, R/W-AC, and David Serdar.



Bluebonnet Chapter 74 was recognized as IRWA's 2010 Chapter of the Year. Chapter President Dennis Sedlachek, SR/WA accepted the award.



Virginia Chapter 52 was recognized as the Gene L. Land Award recipient in both categories, Highest Numerical Gain in new members and Highest Percentage Gain.



For the company with less than 20 employees, Employer of the Year was awarded to Consumers Energy in Michigan's Chapter 7, Region 5. Accepting the award was Mary Anne Marr, SR/WA.



For the company with more than 20 employees, the Employer of the Year was Vectren Land Services, Chapter 10, Region 5. Accepting the award was Greg Mathias, SR/WA, Josh Sherretz, SR/WA, Becky Merkley, SR/WA and Ron Barker, SR/WA.



For excellence in journalism, Gordon E. MacNair, SR/WA received the Mark A. Green Award for his article on "Creating Value with Strategic Asset Management," which was published in Right of Way Magazine, July/August 2010 issue.



Cynthia Colburn, SR/WA, Editor of San Diego Chapter 11 "Cabrillo Newsletter," won Chapter Newsletter of the Year for the chapter with more than 100 members.



The U.S. Student Scholarship, went to Sam Michael Grombacker, who is pursuing a civil engineering degree at Arizona State University. Karen Williams, SR/WA accepted the award on his behalf.



Chapter 44 "The Acquirer" of Southern Nevada/Las Vegas won the Newsletter Award for the Chapter with less than 100 members. Accepting the award was Editor Julie Anderson, R/W-NAC.

Lucas Segall, who was unable to attend, received IRWA's first Canadian Scholarship and is attending the University of British Columbia.

SR/WA BREAKFAST

In acknowledging their commitment to professional development, members who earned their SR/WA designation over the past year were celebrated during a special recognition breakfast on Tuesday, June 14th. While more than 130 members earned their SR/WA this past year, there were 40 members in attendance who received their certificate from William Kyle Ray, Chair of the International Professional Development Committee. The breakfast also featured some enlightening southern etiquette presented by Rhonda Rich, whose memoirs as a NASCAR racing journalist were published in the book, "My Life in the Pits."



SESSIONS

Nearly 60 different educational sessions were offered and attendees were overheard commenting, "With so many great choices, it's hard to pick which ones to attend." For convenience, conference participants could review their options by industry sector. Each International Committee was responsible for assembling topics and speakers addressing areas within their specific discipline, including asset management, environment, ethics, local public agency, pipeline, professional development, relocation, surveying/engineering, transportation, utilities and valuation. In addition, international representatives held sessions on issues facing right of way professionals in their respective countries.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The 2011 Board of Directors Meeting was held on Wednesday, June 15th. Following a roll call and confirmation of a quorum, the 2010 meeting minutes were approved, as well as the financial reports and budget for fiscal year 2011-2012. International President Ken Davis, SR/WA reported that, in spite of the poor economy in the United States and the changing landscape of the right of way industry, the Association expects to end the year on budget. Recapping the educational accomplishments during the past year, he thanked the Right of Way Education Foundation (RWIEF) and the Canadian Right of Way Education Foundation (CRWEF) for their generosity and support in funding IRWA educational initiatives.

RWIEF President David Sinclair, SR/WA acknowledged the Foundation Trustees for their service and reported foundation assets of \$1.2 million at the end of the fiscal year. He thanked the many donors who contributed, as well as those who participated in this year's golf tournament. David reported the success of the auction/casino night, noting that before expenses, approximately \$19,670 had been raised. "The spirit of giving is what really helps us move forward," David said. Calling on Joe Neighbors, SR/WA and Clyde Johnson, SR/WA to accept checks from IRWA, he added that the foundation was looking forward to funding new grants in the future, based on recommendations from the Specialty Certification Task Force.

After serving for more than a decade, David announced that, while he will continue to serve as a trustee, he is ready to step down as President of the RWIEF. He thanked the trustees who worked with him during his term and credited his mentors, Tom Benson, SR/WA and Jeff Triplett, SR/WA for involving him in the foundation

back in 1998. He acknowledged the RWIEF supporters for growing the foundation's assets from \$558,000 to \$1,269,000 while funding more than \$1.3 million in projects during that time. Officers for the upcoming year were announced as Carol Croft, SR/WA serving as President, Craig Poorker, SR/WA as Vice President, Clyde Johnson, SR/WA as Treasurer and Mike Pattison, SR/WA as Secretary.

CRWEF President Richard Schatz, SR/WA expressed appreciation to the Association for the strong partnership enjoyed by both organizations. Thanking the CRWEF board members, he introduced the 2011-2012 officers as President Stewart Anderson, SR/WA, Vice President Brenda Becker, SR/WA and Treasurer Dawn MacDougall, SR/WA. Expanding on the foundation's commitment to education, Rick reported \$154,653 in funding for environment and law courses, support for the Leadership Institute, online course conversion and completion of the Principles of Right of Way Text. He recognized Toronto Chapter 29 as a major sponsor with their \$25,000 donation made last year, and announced that the annual student scholarship would be increased next year to \$2,500.

Two resolutions were presented, requiring a two-thirds majority to pass. The first was a dues resolution, and the motion was carried as presented. The second related to a regional rotation of the annual conference, which was defeated.

Charles Anderson, SR/WA, Chair of the International Nominations and Elections Committee reported that two candidates were running for the IEC. Mary Anne Marr, SR/WA and Wayne Goss, SR/WA were given the opportunity to address the board and member testimonials were presented for each candidate.



On behalf of the trustees, Carol Croft, SR/WA expressed gratitude to David Sinclair, SR/WA for his steady hand in helping the foundation grow, and pledging to maintain focus on furthering right of way education.



Following a vote among Directors, Wayne Goss, SR/WA, R/W-NAC was elected to the position of Secretary on the International Executive Committee.



CRWEF President Richard Schatz, SR/WA thanked members for investing in their own professional development through their donations and support.



After receiving the winning number of votes, Tennessee Chapter 32 was named 2016 conference host, thanks to an amusing pitch made by J. Dan Gill, SR/WA.



On behalf of the Canadian Right of Way Education Foundation, Secretary/Treasurer Dawn MacDougall, SR/WA accepted checks from chapters and organizations.



Joe Neighbors, SR/WA, accepted donations from chapters and individuals on behalf of the Right of Way International Education Foundation.



Directors listened to proposed resolutions, IEC candidate speeches and presentations from 2016 conference host bidders before casting their votes.

SPONSOR APPRECIATION

We are pleased to give special recognition and thanks to the sponsors of IRWA's 57th Annual International Education Conference. Please join us as we extend our sincere appreciation for their gracious and generous contributions.

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ANNUAL FUN RUN

The Annual Finnegan Fun Run has been a time-honored conference tradition, and this year was no exception. Over 60 participants took part in the run, which was held in Atlanta's Piedmont Park. This beautiful 193-acre park was the perfect setting for this casual athletic event. The weather was also unusually cooperative – the runners got to jog on a nice “cool” Atlanta morning in the high 70's.



FUNDRAISING

While the annual fundraising events held at conference give attendees a chance to relax and enjoy time with colleagues, their main purpose is to generate funds to support IRWA's educational initiatives. This year's Monday event mixed things up a bit. Following a live auction of items donated by chapters, this year's Casino Night proved to be a huge hit among attendees. Conference registration included play money, giving everyone a chance to win. After a night of blackjack, craps, roulette and other games, participants could cash in their money for raffle tickets and a chance to win vacation packages and other prizes. All proceeds were donated to the Education Foundations, whose sole purpose is to allocate funds to advance the Association's educational programs.



The 15th Annual Golf Tournament, the Peachtree Classic, was held at Chateau Elan Golf Club in Braselton, Georgia. Sponsored by the Right of Way International Education Foundation and the Canadian Right of Way Education Foundation, more than 135 golfers participated in the annual fundraising event. Corporations, individuals, chapters, regions and right of way consultant companies sponsored individual holes, helping to boost funding for educational initiatives. All proceeds generated from the event are overseen by the education foundations, who in turn allocate those funds toward right of way educational initiatives. The RWIEF extends special thanks to its major sponsors, including Contract Land Staff, ENGlobal, Paragon Partners, Ltd., IRWA's International Pipeline Committee, Universal Field Services, Inc., Twin Peaks Field Services, Integra Realty Resources, Coates Field Service, Inc., Allen, Williford & Seale, Inc., Georgia Power Co., Carol A. Croft & Associates, Dwight Pattison, SR/WA, Briggs Field Service and IRWA Region 6.



INSTALLATION

The conference festivities concluded with the Annual Installation Banquet, held on Wednesday, June 15th, where IRWA International President for 2010-2011, Kenneth Davis, SR/WA handed over the leadership baton to his successor.

“What an honor it is to be serving both the membership and the profession,” said incoming President Randy Williams, SR/WA, MAI, FRICS. “We are constantly reexamining and evolving our organization to meet the needs of a changing membership in a changing marketplace. As we continue to raise the bar for the profession, our goal remains to serve our members, while promoting IRWA to users of right of way services.”

With 30 years of real estate valuation experience, Randy is Managing Director for Integra Realty Resources-Austin, where he leverages his expertise in appraisal, expert testimony and eminent domain for clients in both the private and public sectors. Randy has been active in the real estate valuation profession since 1977 and holds the industry’s most prestigious professional certifications. He is also a certified IRWA course facilitator and has taught numerous IRWA appraisal courses on partial acquisitions, easement valuation and income capitalization.

“Randy’s strong leadership skills and visionary thinking will further advance our educational standards and strengthen our role as an industry innovator,” commented IRWA’s Executive Vice President Mark Rieck. “Our ability to improve the careers and professional opportunities for our members enables right of way professionals to excel in an increasingly technical and competitive environment. Randy’s commitment to raising the bar will keep us focused on the quality of our education while expanding our reach internationally.”



Ken Davis, SR/WA receives his Past President’s pin from wife Marie.



The incoming and outgoing IEC members shared a celebratory toast before the installation.



The 2011-2012 International Executive Committee: Mark A. Rieck; Wayne Goss, SR/WA, R/W-NAC; Lee Hamre, SR/WA, R/W-URAC, R/W-RAC; Lisa Harrison, SR/WA, R/W-URAC, R/W-RAC, R/W-NAC; Patricia Petitto, SR/WA, R/W-RAC; Randy Williams, SR/WA, MAI, FRICS; and Eric Finn, Esq.



In recognition of his many contributions to the Association, Ken Davis, SR/WA accepted an honorary plaque from Randy Williams, SR/WA, MAI, FRICS.



Incoming International President Randy Williams, receives his President's pin from wife Penelope.



Representing the Seattle 2012 Conference Host Committee, Co-Chairs Tom Paine, SR/WA, R/W-AMC, R/W-NAC and Faith Roland, SR/WA invite members to next year's educational event.



IRWA Region Chairs, Vice Chairs and the International Executive Committee for 2011-2012 are sworn in by Past President, Faith Roland, SR/WA.

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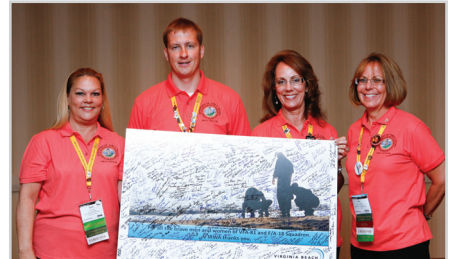
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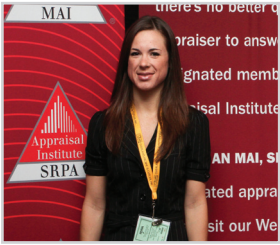
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IRWA 2012 Conference Host - Seattle



IRWA 2013 Conference Host - Charleston



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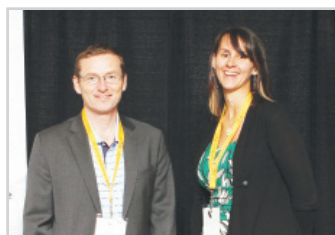
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INTERNATIONAL GOVERNING COUNCIL



RIGHT OF WAY INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION FOUNDATION



CANADIAN RIGHT OF WAY EDUCATION FOUNDATION

REGIONS

Region 1



Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada

Region 2



Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas

Region 3



Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, South Dakota

Region 4



Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont

Region 5



Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Michigan, West Virginia, Wisconsin

REGIONS



Region 6

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee



Region 7

Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington



Region 8

Ontario, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Prince Edward Island



Region 9

Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming



Region 10

Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Saskatchewan