

The Best Lemonade

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There's an old saying that goes, "When life hands you lemons, make lemonade." When I look at the economic environment surrounding our industry, I firmly believe that we have the opportunity to make a lot of lemonade.

I recognize that there are pockets of unbelievable hard times in the right of way profession at the moment, and some sectors are feeling the full impact of the financial downturn. I also know that certain sectors of the industry are experiencing an amazing state of growth not seen for many years.

At a time when other organizations are struggling to maintain membership and financial stability, IRWA is holding strong. We are proud to have such loyal and longstanding members, and while classroom attendance and corresponding revenue may show a temporary decline, our future looks bright. We have the talent imbedded among our Headquarters staff to help advance our Association to the next level. By looking after our Association's best interests and squeezing those lemons, I don't believe for a minute there is any way for our Association to not continue to grow and improve.

There are a number of ways that membership can grow stronger and actually increase if we, as an organization, are willing to focus on the future and pursue new opportunities. Right now, there are many IRWA members and industry professionals who are either out of work or underemployed. Those who are already members have recognized that maintaining their membership, especially during these challenging times, is an important career decision. Where better to network with potential employers and other valuable industry contacts? Visibility is extremely important during an economic downturn, and I can't think of a better way to stay visible than through our Association. And what better time to increase your knowledge and take steps to ensure that you are more marketable in the field of right of way? Now is the perfect opportunity for professional growth.

There are also thousands of individuals who need the kind of training and networking opportunities that only IRWA can offer. Yet, many of these professionals do not even realize that we exist. What better time to toot our own horn? It's up to all of us to promote our organization and help others to recognize what being a member can mean to their financial stability and ultimate career advancement.

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It's also the time to look forward. Historically, countries come out of hard times with a renewed sense of strength. Oftentimes, the need for improved and expanded infrastructure follows, leading to increased demand for trained professionals who can acquire the rights needed to make those improvements and expansions. And there is none better than IRWA to provide the training and professional development necessary to make certain there are educated, qualified and certified individuals ready and able to step up and make things happen.

This is definitely not the time for an organization like ours - with so much to offer - to stick its head in the sand and wait for times to get better. It's time to make a few gallons of lemonade, set up a stand and make sure as many people as possible get a good taste of the best lemonade made. Now is the time to invest in our organization and make it as visible as possible.