

# Designing Tomorrow Today

by Carol

**T**HE INTERNATIONAL Right of Way Association is made up of individuals employed in all areas of real estate activity and disciplines. This network of right-of-way professionals extends throughout the United States and Canada. Members are grouped in 75 local chapters, and chapters are grouped into 10 regions. During our regional and chapter meetings, the subject of attracting and maintaining members is often a topic of discussion.

Even though we have approximately 10,000 members there are a lot of people that know very little about the work we do and about the IRWA. The majority of school teachers and career counselors are not aware of the right-of-way profession. Yet, these are the people who help direct our youth into professions. How then are we going to ensure that there will be a supply of individuals in the profession and an association in the years to come? It is our responsibility as right-of-way professionals to foster an understanding and awareness of our

profession in our community. We can begin fostering an understanding and awareness of who we are and what we do by informing our employers of the membership benefits and by going into the schools.

On the chapter level, we can promote our profession and the Association by informing our employers, co-workers, customers, suppliers and community of our accomplishments and inviting them to participate in some of the chapter activities and to attend the annual seminars. We can also go into the schools and introduce the teachers, counselors and students to an exciting career opportunity. School career counselors are under-utilized instruments that can provide us the key to an unlimited resource of future right-of-way professionals and association members.

As members of a community and the IRWA, we can participate in career programs at our local high schools and colleges. Chapter 4 (Seattle) is initiating an awareness program called "Designing Tomorrow Today Through IRWA." This program is designed to guide

members in fostering an understanding of the right-of-way profession while helping the younger generation develop career goals.

The program invites employers to industry committee meetings and uses career days in the local high schools as information avenues. Chapter 4's Property Management Committee, for example, holds quarterly luncheon meetings with a speaker on current industry issues and invites local employers and employees to attend. Chapter members participate in career days at local schools. Junior high and high school teachers and counselors are contacted to determine the most appropriate time to talk to a class.

Once permission is granted, a little planning and preparation are required. If available, use slides and photos showing the different kinds of projects and areas in which a right-of-way professional might work. Ask the class for a list of jobs or careers they are interested in, and what attracted them to the job or career. If available, make a list of their responses on a flip chart. Then proceed to show how the careers they

# Through IRWA

*Bellinger*

listed use the results of the right-of-way professional and tie the benefits they listed into the right-of-way profession. For example, traveling, helping people and salary are common responses.

Discuss the mechanics of your daily job, the annual seminars regional forums and education classes.

Demonstrate how other professions depend on the right-of-way professional. Right-of-way professionals are used in a variety of projects such as highways, buildings and utilities. Our profession offers us a direct hand and say in the design of the future. Give students the opportunity to ask questions. Briefly review the history of the Association, and where you fit into the association.

On the regional level, Region 7 is creating a brochure with information about IRWA, the SR/WA designation and educational opportunities. The region is also inviting employers to regional meetings with topics of special or current interest. Employers and local high school and colleges are also invited to participate in regional forums.

By sharing the benefits and

excitement of our profession, we can recharge our membership and enrich the career visions of our youth. Through our efforts, we can become the designers of tomorrow. □

*Carol Bellinger is employed by Tacoma Public Utilities in Tacoma, Wash. An Active Senior Candidate, Carol chairs Chapter 4's Property Management Committee. She also serves on the International Property Management Committee.*

**DICK AVAZIAN**  
PRESIDENT

**GENE SCHMOLL**  
VICE PRESIDENT

RIGHT OF WAY ACQUISITION • SURVEYING •  
TELEPHONE ENGINEERING • MINERALS LEASING •  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS •

**NFS**

**NATIONAL FIELD SERVICE CORP**  
NATIONAL BLDG., 162 ORANGE AVE.  
SUFFERN, N.Y. 10901 914-368-1600