



Our Association in the 1980's

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International President
1982 - 1983**

This decade commenced with debate and ultimate agreement on changing the name of the American Right of Way Association to the International Right of Way Association. The subject of name change had surfaced several times in the past but it was always concluded that the time was not right. However, with an increasing amount of interplay between our members and chapters, regardless of their country, as well as an increasing number of Canadian members, and with meetings and seminars taking place in both countries, the time for a name change was appropriate for our international organization.

While our name changed to reflect the conditions of our organization, the economy made a downward turn and plunged into a recession, greatly affecting our profession and employment opportunities. Right of way acquisition activities slowed down, but property and land management activities increased. Overall, the slowdown led to the release of personnel. Many companies and agencies continue to offer early retirement to their experienced personnel in an effort to streamline their organization and reduce salary overhead. In the process, reorganization is now a reality in numerous organizations.

The Association is also reorganizing, focusing its attention on a sizeable group of "new-breed" right of way practitioners who should be

members of our association. Recognizing this factor, we have oriented our new membership efforts to taking the Association to the member, rather than the member to the Association. Through the encouragement of new chapters, new affiliates, and satellite meetings, we have been able to rekindle interest in the Association. As a result, we have not lost as many members as other organizations our size experienced during this past economic event. The diversity of our membership enables the organization to make it through difficult times. The new breed provides an additional base of membership from which to expand and grow. We should exceed the number of members we had prior to this recessionary period.

Over the past four years, the association has chartered five new chapters. The new chapters are Chapter 69 (Victoria, British Columbia), 70 (Grand Junction, Colorado), 71 (Fairbanks, Alaska), 72 (The Dakotas), and 73 (Tucson, Arizona). Likewise a number of affiliates have also been organized. They include Tyler, Texas; Pocatello, Idaho; Corpus Christi, Texas; Austin, Texas; and St. Johns, Newfoundland. In addition, chapter members who live in remote areas have been encouraged to conduct satellite meetings. Continual encouragement and assistance by local chapters, regional and international officers, as well as international committee members,

are necessary to create and maintain interest in and encourage local organizations to better serve all their members.

Our Association, being an educational organization, has experienced unparalleled growth in the education field thus far in the eighties. By the end of our Association year last June, we presented 120 courses, a 50% increase over 1979-80. The number of course presentations will continue to grow as education needs expand. New persons are coming into the right of way field, current right of way personnel are diversifying their employment skills, and the recertification requirements necessitate that our SR/WA's attend continuing education courses.

To accommodate this need, the Association has developed over 20 educational courses, many over the last four years, which address nearly every facet of our profession. The courses of study range from the basic principles course to managing the right of way organization. In addition, courses specifically developed for continuing education are now available and include advanced engineering and advanced communications. Currently, we are developing one new course every six months. With this continued emphasis on education, the association is providing one of the most important opportunities to the member, employer, client, and the public one can expect of any organization.

With the additional courses and presentations, additional instructor's clinics have been scheduled. Last year, we had a high of eight clinics. This certification procedure is essential to the education program in that the chapters are assured of the availability of a greater number of qualified instructors familiar with local laws, rules, and regulations. Also, local instructors help minimize the cost of course presentations.

This takes us right into the next most important activity of our Association -- the professional development program. At the beginning of this decade, we found the program static. Those members who had made a personal commitment progressed through the education, testing, and experience requirements while others gave little attention to this program. The result was fewer new SR/WA's and few candidates.

With an emphasis on the candidacy portion of the program the last two years, the number of candidates increased by 50% in 1981-82 over the previous year and by 133% in 1982-83 over 81-82. Even though last year's percentage seems high, the number of candidates was 350 which equates to 3.5% of the total membership. We should have twice that number each year and hopefully with each member's encouragement and participation that will occur. Currently, 23% of the members have earned their SR/WA designation. Eleven percent of the members are declared candidates.

A financial situation developed in the eighties which necessitated a belt tightening in the 1982-83 year. This decade started in the recession and we, as many others, felt the recession would not extend over a long period of time. That view was incorrectly optimistic, with many of our members still feeling the impact of the recession today. As membership dropped, education course attendance dropped, investment income dropped and some costs increased. Your elected officers, as stewards of the Association's assets made drastic adjustments to keep

our budget in balance. Expenses were greatly reduced by deferring the hiring of needed staff personnel, trimming RIGHT OF WAY publication costs dramatically, cutting allocated funds to the committees, regions, and executive committee and either eliminating or reducing other activities which promoted a savings. These steps were immediate remedies. The long term solution is now being implemented with a dues structure reflecting today's economy and costs and a constant surveillance of income and expenses to assure the membership that a viable professional organization is being maintained.

On the bright side of the financial picture, our education foundations are growing. The goal of \$50,000 by the 50th anniversary was reached earlier than many anticipated. The fruits of those early investments have been realized by the several courses developed with those funds. Use of education monies for course development frees dues monies to be available for other member services. Many members have made a personal commitment to our education program and now make their contribution each year when paying their dues. Some members and chapters have found unique ways of contributing income derived from the education program to the Foundations. We are certainly proud and appreciative of all those individual members and chapters who have contributed to the International and Canadian Education Foundations.

With the above mentioned overview and accomplishments in the early portion of this decade, I believe we must set our goals higher as we enter the second fifty years of our organization. In the future, I see continued growth in membership as long as we can assure both our new and older members that we have their interests at heart. We must continue to explore new areas of interest, seek out members needs and provide those needs which can be made available. Education will remain the back bone and the heart of the association. It has only been in recent years that education

courses have been developed. I expect this to continue but the method of presentation may change as we are living in an information era and technological changes are constant. With increased educational achievement and professional development by our members, recognition of the designation will be accomplished but it will require promotion and demonstration of its merit to the employer, client and the public. I also foresee the association owning its headquarters building within the next few years. These are but broad areas for which I look toward. I am certain you will see many specific programs and activities which will benefit each of you in the future.

I cannot close without recognizing the contribution each one of our members has made to the association over the past fifty years. We have had outstanding leadership at the chapter, region and international levels. We have also had exceptional seminars at chapter, region and international. We have an exceptional, hard working headquarters staff for which we can all be proud. This simply demonstrates that people working together can accomplish much. I look forward to continued commitment in that direction.



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