



## **Our Association in the 1980's**

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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.