

Membership doesn't cost ... it pays!

# Encouraging Surveyor's Involvement

by Teri Kahlen  
International Right of Way Surveying Committee Chair

*You can correct  
the erroneous  
public impression  
of a surveyor as  
somebody who  
stands in the street  
looking through a  
telescope, shouting  
and obstructing traffic.*

In addition to the usual operational committees normally associated with any national or international organization, IRWA depends on a number of special industry committees. These committees, each dedicated to a specific area of concern or expertise, keep the education courses current, provide seminar programs in their specific areas, and coordinate the efforts of the members engaged in each particular specialty.

The International Surveying Committee, a standing committee of IRWA, is one of these. Two Canadian and four U.S. representatives make up this six-member committee. The mission of the International Surveying Committee is to provide assistance to the Association on all matters and interests in property for right-of-way purposes and to encourage professional development within the right-of-way and surveying communities. The committee is not concerned with survey regulations, problems, or procedures. Instead, it focuses on educating land-oriented non-surveyors about the services available from the surveying community and, at the same time, pointing out the trouble one can get into by not utilizing these services when appropriate.

The committee provides six to eight hours worth of sessions at the annual Education Seminar, with sessions running from one to two hours. These sessions have been on such topics as metrification, the use of aerial photography in surveying, how to select a surveyor, an illustrated description of a right-of-way survey project, what map projections

are, interpretation of property descriptions, and so forth. The committee is also charged with providing survey oriented articles for publication in *Right of Way*. The committee has volunteered to review and make recommendations for revision or education courses related to engineering and property descriptions.

The international committee encourages the formation of chapter surveying committees and has developed guidelines to assist in their formation and activity. It is at the personal level of chapter activities that really useful things are accomplished. A chapter committee would provide occasional programs for chapter meetings and for the chapter and region seminars: it would provide information to the chapter newsletter editor for monthly publication; and, of course, the members of that committee would participate in chapter activities like any other member.

The committee is also encouraging interaction with surveying organizations through such activities as joint meetings, and the exchange of speakers, at both the chapter and international level. Several chapters have held joint meetings with local survey organizations, and both have found the experience enlightening. The International Committee has held all of its meetings, except those at the annual Education Seminars, in conjunction with meetings of the National Society of Professional Surveyors, who have provided not only the meeting room for the committee, but also exhibit space for the IRWA membership booth. As International President, Donna Crosby, SR/WA, attended the meeting of the NSPS in February, 1995, as a guest of that society. More of this type of exchange is coming soon.

Why would a surveyor who does not work exclusively in the right-of-way field want to join IRWA and participate in a chapter surveying committee? The activities just described offer the opportunity to

educate an involved segment of the public about who surveyors are and what they really do. These activities also provide an opportunity to correct the erroneous public impression of a surveyor as somebody who stands in the street looking through a telescope, shouting and obstructing traffic. Also remember that many of the committee members are prospective clients with substantial projects.

Consider the amount of time spent waiting at public information counters to obtain information about utilities that you need to show on your survey maps. Imagine how much easier and more efficient that becomes when you can call a friend that you met at a chapter meeting and ask her or him to send a copy of the location data to you by mail or fax. It really is nice developing friendships with folks who are not surveyors, but who are in professions closely enough related to make conversation easy. One can experience a great deal of personal pleasure and satisfaction in the of dinner and program with such people.

And we have not yet mentioned the expansion of personal horizons that comes from associating with related professions. IRWA courses available to members include classes in management, communications, and negotiations, which we all use every day, as well as subjects closely related to, but not an integral part of, surveying. These include appraisal, environmental awareness and environmental contamination, property management and leasing, real estate law, legal aspects of easements, and many other subjects that surveyors believe continuing education should include.

Visit a local chapter meeting and experience it for yourself. Arrive early and chat with some of the members. You will find them an affable, interesting, and friendly group. If you don't know any members in your locale, the staff at the IRWA office in Gardena, California will be delighted to put you in touch with an officer or your local chapter. The office can be reached by telephone at (310) 538-0233. □



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### IN SEARCH OF...

Woody Pemberton and Teri Kahlen are looking for an experienced right-of-way professional to be the IRWA liaison to National Society of Professional Surveyors.

The NSPS liaison to IRWA is James Pauk from Illinois and it would be of great benefit for the IRWA liaison to assist the IEC and the International Surveying Committee in establishing a closer relationship between the two organizations.

This is a non-funded position and would

involve some traveling and coordination for the NSPS conferences. This position also requires someone with IRWA experience and enthusiasm and who can commit for a two to three year obligation.

Please call Woody or Teri with any recommendations or for more detailed information.

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