

ON COMMON GROUND



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Our Association provides a place for us to come together to acknowledge and appreciate the important work we do as right of way professionals. Throughout the year, we gather at educational courses, Chapter meetings, Region forums and our Annual International Education Conference to share with one another the obstacles we've worked to overcome, lessons learned and stories of hard-earned success. We can often closely relate to each other on what our daily work lives entail—more so than many of the people closest to us. This is the common ground that unites us.

Recently, that common ground was tested as our Association faced our share of challenges and change. We grappled with determining our path forward, especially when it came to the matter of who will lead us and how. Bonds were put through the paces, difficult questions were asked and we were pushed to hold each other accountable. In response, our Association leaders rallied together and put in an incredible amount of hard work in order to thoroughly understand, thoughtfully address and prioritize the issues at hand.

Our Unified Vision

The International Governing Council (IGC)—comprised of our 10 Region Chairs and six International Executive Committee (IEC) members—will refocus its efforts around the fundamentals of our Association, including education,

instructor development, curriculum development and governance. We are working to ensure the appropriate policies and procedures are in place around each. Additionally, the IEC is developing a strategy for recruiting a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and is working with senior management at headquarters to provide on-going support to our staff.

Our International Committee Chairs and Communities of Practice (CoPs) Leaders have been tasked with creating strategic plans outlining their fiscal year goals, as well as strategies and resources required to implement these plans. The intention is to set up our Committees and CoPs for success by providing them with the autonomy to determine the course for the year, while establishing a communication and accountability framework. Our Committees and CoPs are powerful avenues in which to connect right of way professionals in meaningful ways and we look forward to seeing what creative and thoughtful approaches these teams take on.

For several years, our young professionals were operating as an informal (albeit formidable) group. This past November, the IGC unanimously passed the motion to formally establish the Young Professionals Service Committee. Elevating the young professionals to a service committee provides the opportunity to further advance efforts to promote and encourage

IRWA membership, education and leadership amongst the next generation of right of way professionals.

We are continuing to see new and creative programming initiatives led by Chapters and supported by field operations, including “paperless” meetings to reduce costs; sponsorship packages that help secure annual funding; a streamlined approach to achieving the Right of Way Agent (RWA) designation; young professionals’ events, scholarships and funding opportunities; and an emerging member campaign opportunity anticipated to be rolled out this fall. It has often been said that Chapters are the lifeblood of our Association, and that cannot be overstated. Our Chapters are the primary way in which new members are brought into the Association and they create a space for existing members to connect with one another.

Moving Forward

Our leadership and senior staff are well positioned to address additional challenges we may face and going forward, we are aligned on how best to support the important work you do as right of way professionals. It has not been easy, but it has been worth it. We have emerged on the other side a stronger, more aligned community of professionals who have a clearer, unified vision of our future. We are once again on common ground. 🌟