HIGH-IMPACT Partnerships

IRWA Mexico Chapter 85 embraces the SR/WA path and opens the door to Central and South America

BY KARINNE ELSON

Displaying the IRWA Chapter 85 charter, from left, Jesús Rodríguez Dávalos, Soraya Pérez Munguía, IRWA International President Lee Hamre, SR/WA, Carlos Sandoval Miranda, Guillermo Manning Martínez and Jesús Sandoval Sevilla.

"Chance favors the prepared mind." That quote has remained top of mind ever since I first heard it at IRWA's 2014 Annual International Education Conference in Hartford, CT. Motivational speaker Steve Uzzell, an award-winning National Geographic photographer, spoke about using creative approaches to problem-solving, as he challenged the conference attendees to stay open to what's possible.

But the key in Uzell's message was preparation, which helps us to truly maximize the potential impact of our efforts. Reflecting on the formation of our newest chapter, it's hard not to see Uzell's point. This past October, Chapter 85 received its charter at a reception in Mexico City and became the Association's first chapter in Latin America. This could not have been possible without the inspiration and preparation of right of way professionals on both sides of the border.

Laying the Groundwork

In spearheading IRWA's International Relations Group, Past International President Randy Williams, SR/WA has had a longstanding vision for establishing an IRWA presence in Latin America. Over the years, Randy has developed working relationships with professionals and organizations in Mexico who expressed interest in bringing IRWA's body of knowledge and credentials to their country. These efforts finally began to gain traction in early 2013, as planning for IRWA's Annual International Education Conference was in full swing.

A few months before the conference in West Virginia, a professionally diverse group of Mexican leaders active in the Appraisal Institute, The Federation of Valuers in Mexico and the Union of Pan American Valuation Associations, among others, contacted Randy for help with bringing professional development for right of way professionals to Mexico. Randy invited these professionals, who represented both the public and private sectors, to attend the conference and meet with IRWA's leadership. The meeting centered on education and credentialing opportunities, as this was in alignment with Mexico's desire to promote formal training for right of way professionals. Recognizing the value of an affiliation with IRWA, the group became At-Large members and began envisioning the benefits of a joint venture.

Karinne is IRWA's Manager of Accreditation Programs

From Intention to Action

Following the conference in June 2013, the group worked to establish the Asociación de Derechos de Vía A. C. en México (DDV), an organization comprised of companies, government officials and subject matter experts active in right of way acquisition and infrastructure development.

The founding members of DDV attended IRWA's 2014 Annual Conference, and presented a session on Energy Reform in Mexico where they outlined the opportunities available to North American oil and gas companies. They also met with IRWA's International Relations Group and presented a formal proposal to become an IRWA Chapter, with the goal of bringing right of way education and credentials to the country's professionals, to establish a common language for right of way acquisition in North America and to serve as the cornerstone for IRWA's expansion into Central and South America.

To this end, the developing chapter collaborated with IRWA to organize a weeklong education program to set right of way professionals in Mexico City on the path toward the SR/WA Designation. IRWA instructor Randy Williams and Course 230 developer and instructor Warren Doyle travelled to Mexico to present the foundation courses for IRWA's Right of Way Agent credential. The education program featured IRWA's first use of digital study guides, and the exams were translated into Spanish. IRWA also engaged national subject matter experts and offered simultaneous interpretation to localize the material and overcome the language barrier. In total, IRWA delivered right of way education to 45 highly experienced professionals active in the planning, development and implementation of important infrastructure projects in Mexico. The group included attorneys, engineers, appraisers and realty professionals from the country's public and private sectors. According to Randy, "the professional diversity and level of influence of the participants contributed to rich, substantive discussions that will inform right of way policy in the country for years to come."

International President Lee Hamre, SR/WA installs IRWA Chapter 85 officers. From left, Vice President César Cantú Martínez, President Carlos Sandoval Miranda, Secretary José Jesús Sandoval Sevilla and Treasurer Guillermo Manning Martínez.

Installation of Chapter Officers

Following the education program, International President Lee Hamre, SR/WA, R/W-URAC, R/W-RAC and IRWA Executive Vice President Mark Rieck presented IRWA Mexico Chapter 85 with its charter, and Lee installed the chapter's first officers.

In his installation address, IRWA Chapter President, the Engineer Carlos A. Sandoval Miranda reflected on the occasion and shared the following:

"Today we are gathered for the first time in history, a multidisciplinary group of people, lawyers, topographers, engineers, architects, agronomists, committed to professional development and ready to face the challenges ahead. This week, President Lee Hamre shared a visual that I am sure I will be able to put it into practice. It is the equilateral triangle where on the left side we have the infrastructure project, the reason we are all here, the right side is the budget for the project which represents the desire to invest in a country with great potential. The foundation that connects the sides represents people and the social impact of the project. Without this side, we are out of balance, as it closes the shape and brings perfection to the form. I stand today an ardent proponent of this ideal. We mark our collective commitment to it with the formation of Chapter 85, joining our friends at the International Right of Way Association."

After the installation, the group attended a private reception sponsored by the DDV and featuring addresses from the President of the Senate Energy Commission David Pechyna Grub, DDV President, attorney Jesús Rodríguez Dávalos, as well as other prominent figures in infrastructure and energy reform.

In between ministry meetings, from left, Ricardo López Pescador, Carlos Sandoval Miranda, Jesús Sandoval Sevilla, Carlos De la Fuente Herrera, Lee Hamre, Jim Amorin, César Cantú Martínez and Carlos E. Sandoval.

Timing is Everything

While members of the DDV were working to establish an IRWA Chapter, the Mexican government was in the process of analyzing proposals to reform the country's energy sector. A hotly debated issue for decades, it

Past President Randy Williams, SR/WA was invited to Mexico to instruct IRWA Course 100, Ethics and the Right of Way Profession.

Lee met with leading infrastructure agencies to discuss the value of implementing right of way practices and a uniform asset management system in Mexico.

was clearly time for change. In 2013, the President of Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto, was successful in bringing together a bipartisan group of leaders to devise a new energy model for the country. Following the December 2013 constitutional amendment, the Legislative Branch passed its first set of energy reform laws in August 2014. These and subsequent legislation will regulate hydrocarbons exploration and extraction, reorganize and privatize the national petroleum company (PEMEX), outline the role of the Federal Electricity Commission, and establish a new model for the generation, transmission and distribution of electricity. The energy reform legislation also specifies which professionals can participate in land acquisition.

EMPRESAS
SECCIÓN COMERCIAL | Viernes 14 de Noviembre del 2014 | en REFORMA
¿QUÉ SON LOS DERECHOS DE VÍA?
INICIA ACTIVIDADES
ASOCIACIÓN DE DERECHOS DE VÍA
INTEGRANTES DE LA ASOCIACIÓN DE DERECHOS DE VÍA A.C.
CONTACTO
IRWA

Following the conference and installation of officers, Mexico's leading newspaper publicized the event in its business section.

The Right Partners and the Right Time

Relationships were just as crucial as timing in the formation of Chapter 85. One critical partnership, facilitated by IRWA Member and DDV Vice President Carlos De La Fuente Herrera, connected IRWA with the Institute for the Administration and Valuation of National Lands, known in Mexico by its acronym INDAABIN. As the Director of Valuation and Public Works at INDAABIN, Carlos invited Lee Hamre and IRWA members to address representatives of the National Hydrocarbons Commission and the Agricultural and Urban Land Development Ministry. More importantly, he introduced IRWA President Lee Hamre to INDAABIN's President Soraya Pérez Munguía, who invited Lee to present an overview of IRWA's white paper on successful project delivery to an audience of over 100 appraisers, attorneys and engineers involved in infrastructure development.

Lee's presentation was a part of a separate weeklong education conference commemorating the Institute's 10th anniversary. Emphasizing some of the essential components required for successful project delivery, Lee outlined the role that realty professionals play in the planning and implementation of infrastructure projects. The speech was a great success with participants expressing particular interest in the strategies for engaging communities early in the planning process. We learned through our meetings that Mexico is in the process of determining the qualification requirements of realty professionals that will take part in the country's new energy model. As a result, Lee's presentation on successful project delivery stirred a rich discussion on the need for formal training in negotiation and right of way acquisition.

Capitalizing on the interest of the audience, INDAABIN President Pérez Munguía invited Lee back to Mexico City to address a group of leaders from the government entities involved in infrastructure development. At INDAABIN's headquarters, Lee addressed representatives from the Ministry of Communications and Transportation, the national federal entity that regulates commercial road traffic and broadcasting, the Ministry of Agrarian and Urban Land Development, the National Water Commission, PEMEX, Federal Electricity Commission and the office of Legal Counsel for the President of the Republic. Lee shared the history of the Uniform Act and some of the challenges and successes from a U.S. perspective. This prompted the meeting participants to discuss the value of uniformity in right of way acquisition laws and practices, and the benefits of a national asset management system.

A Bright Future

Preparation, timing and high-impact partnerships, along with a group of dedicated and inspired professionals committed to earning the SR/WA Designation gave rise to what promises to be a model chapter for what IRWA can achieve abroad. And this is only the beginning. César Cantú Martínez, MAI, SRA, founding member and officer of Chapter 85 recently introduced IRWA and our credentials to a Latin American audience in a presentation at Union of Pan American Valuation Association's Annual Congress in Santiago, Chile. IRWA stands in eager anticipation of the high-impact, productive partnerships that this speaking engagement is sure to create. ✪