



# 2017 CONGRESS FOR GLOBAL INFRASTRUCTURE REAL ESTATE

Mexico City hosts the industry's leading practitioners from around the world

**BY MARK RIECK**

In November 2017, right of way professionals from around the world gathered in Mexico City for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Congress for Global Infrastructure Real Estate. The two-day event was filled with networking opportunities, memorable sites and valuable insight into the future of IRWA's global membership.

## **A Brief History**

IRWA's global presence has grown dramatically over the past 10 years. We started with members in Canada and the United States and with affiliate organizations in Japan and South Africa. Now, IRWA boasts members in 17 countries, with new Chapters in Australia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Nigeria as well as an affiliate in South Korea.

The efforts toward a Global Congress originated decades ago with an International Luncheon conducted annually by IRWA officers with the JCCA, Japan's Compensation Consultants Association. This luncheon grew in size and stature when it became part of IRWA's Annual International Education Conference, evolving into a multi-country affair. At the 2015 Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, IRWA conducted its first ever Congress with 15 countries participating in presentations. That event paved the way for a free-standing Congress in 2017.

### Expanding the Event

Mexico City was seen as a natural partner for the 2017 Congress because of its strategic location in North and

Latin America and because of the budding relationship between IRWA and INDAABIN, Mexico's Institute for Administration and Appraisal of National Real Estate.

One challenge in conducting an event in another country is that language can be a barrier to fully understanding vendors and even partners. For that reason, IRWA engaged a meeting planner, Cindy Noboa-Garcia, who had a mastery of language and cultural expertise. We were concerned about moving our VIPs through Mexico City traffic as we visited multiple cultural and social venues, but thanks to event sponsors Percheron, LLC and Parametrix, we were able to rent Mercedes Sprinters that literally whisked participants to the venues we visited.

### A Cut Above the Norm

"From the beginning, we wanted to branch out from the norm of always having events in a hotel venue and not allowing enough time for the attendees to enjoy the host city," Cindy explained. "We also focused on providing talented keynote speakers, great educational resources and a considerable amount of networking opportunities, all while visiting a few of the most memorable Mexico City sites and venues."

Attendees were welcomed with an outdoor cocktail reception at the Terraza Restaurant at the Hilton Reforma, which set the tone for the next few days of the event. The following morning, attendees were met with a networking breakfast and



Mexico Chapter 85 President, Luis Medina



INDAABIN President, Soraya Pérez Munguía



IRWA CEO, Mark Rieck and RDA's Founding Partner, Jesús Rodríguez



IKT Managing Director, Roland Waniek



IRWA's Jerry Colburn, Alejandra Ceron, Mary Anne Marr and Ana Rausch



Justin Lyon, Carlos Sandoval and Carlos Sandoval, Jr.



Daniel Stekol, Jesus Sandoval, Carlos Varela, Tim Drennan



Percheron CEO, Trent Oglesby

a warm welcome by Congress Event Chair and President of INDAABIN Mexico, **Soraya Pérez Munguía**, as well as IRWA International President, **Jerry Colburn**, SR/WA. Our first keynote speaker, **Edgar Olvera Jiménez**, Sub Secretary of Communications and Transportation Agency, Mexico, discussed the importance of the right of way of telecommunications. **David Madero Suárez**, PH.D, CEO of National Control Center of Natural Gas in Mexico (CENAGAS), shared the different strategies of Cenagas. Wrapping up the sessions was **Trent Oglesby**, President and CEO of Percheron, LLC, who addressed right of way best practices in the U.S.

Following lunch inside the Archbishop Central Patio in the Zócalo area, attendees were able to take a private tour of the National Palace sponsored by INDAABIN. "To end our evening,

we walked through the Zócalo area to embrace the beautiful scenery and historic buildings on our way to one of the most famous restaurants, the Gran Hotel Terraza sponsored by Rodriguez Davalos Abogados," Cindy explained. "Our attendees were able to enjoy an authentic three course dinner of Mexican cuisine."

Our final day started with international keynote speaker, **Roland W. Waniek**, Managing Director of IKT's Institute for Underground Infrastructure in Germany, who discussed lessons from a developed economy in an aging society. We then traveled to the new INDAABIN building, El Centro del Patrimonio Inmobiliario, where we had a panel discussion on hydrocarbons with key stakeholders and speakers, including **Soraya Pérez Munguía**, **Daniel Engel**, Pulino, Boulos & Santos Advogados Partner-Infrastructure and

Energy, Brazil and **Abelardo García Badilla**, Major Officer of National Commission of Hydrocarbons, Mexico. Our final keynote speaker, **Enrique González Tiburcio**, Sub Secretary of Land Use Planning, Mexico, discussed the right of way of social property. Finally, we traveled through San Ángel and had a private tour of the Museo De El Carmen before dining in San Ángel popular restaurant, El Bonito.

### Building Relationships

"By far the best part of the Congress was the time we spent outside of our sessions as a group," said Mary Anne Marr, SR/WA, Chair of the Council on International Relations. "We not only learned about Mexico, its history and gained some insight into the future, we also spent a lot of time together growing existing relationships and building new ones."



Humberto Olavarría, Ben Greenberg, Ale Ceron, Diana Alarcon, Carlos de la Fuente and Trent Oglesby



The event exceeded expectations in every area, with top-notch presenters and venues. Thanks to IRWA event partner, INDAABIN, we were able to attract undersecretaries for Telecommunications, Energy and Housing, and access private buildings like the President's Palace. Even our high-level partner firms from Mexico had never visited these locations before.

"The event went exceptionally well," said IRWA International Secretary, Ana Rausch, SR/WA. "I gained a better understanding of how land is acquired for infrastructure projects in Mexico, and I had multiple opportunities to ask questions and engage in discussion with key stakeholders operating in Mexico. By the end of the second day, I can honestly say that not only did I make new contacts in Mexico, I also made new friends through our shared experience at the Global Congress."

Frank Van Horn of Howard Energy Partners agrees with Ana's sentiments. "As with most of these types of events, probably the greatest value is in the people you meet and get to know," he explained. "The IRWA's 2017 Congress for Global Infrastructure Real Estate was no exception. From the questions and interaction with the keynote speakers to the attendees from across the globe, I made so many contacts that will improve my professional abilities and enrich my personal life with new friendships."

### A Look to the Future

Congress and smaller summit events give IRWA the opportunity to introduce our Association to government and business leaders in other countries and dive deep into issues that we are typically unable to address in other settings. Going forward, we hope to partner with RICS, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and CPA, the Compulsory Purchase Association, in the United Kingdom for a 2018 Land Summit. And consideration is being given to a 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Global Congress to be hosted in Canada in 2019. IRWA is proud to serve as a catalyst as the industry addresses the many challenges and opportunities in infrastructure real estate. 🌟

To explore the event program, keynote presentations and photos of the event, please visit [News & Events](#) on the IRWA website.

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