

Young Professionals Convene for a Peer-to-Peer Exchange

New opportunities for right of way education and networking



BY BRADLEY A. BUJAN

Earlier this year, IRWA hosted its first annual Young Professionals Education and Networking Event at the Rio Hotel in Las Vegas, NV. The two-day event ran from March 31-April 1 and attracted more than 40 right of way professionals, aged 30 and under. According to those in attendance, the experience proved to be both educational and inspiring.

The IRWA Young Professionals Committee was formed about a year ago by a task force of right of way individuals (under 30 years young). The committee's main goal was to recruit and rejuvenate the Association with young individuals who have a fresh perspective on the industry.

ON EQUAL FOOTING

This educational venue went far beyond the typical chapter meeting. There was a shared energy and enthusiasm in bringing other young professionals together. As a young professional myself, I am familiar with the intimidating

feeling that often comes with attending a local chapter meeting where you might feel out of place or under-experienced. At this event, however, no one felt like a newbie. Instead, these young professionals were able to interact with others in the industry while feeling like they were on equal footing.

Knowledgeable and successful leaders in the industry spoke in an interactive setting with open discussions. Some of the industry's most experienced presenters included Brent Leftwich, SR/WA of Contract Land Staff, LLC, Brodie Allen, SR/WA of Evolve Surface Strategies, Inc. and past International President Jim Struble, SR/WA.

Sessions focused on a wide range of topics, including the stages of a right of way project, the importance of ethics and etiquette in the industry, technological influences, industry standards and regulations, industry tips, ways to jumpstart your career, professional development programs and how to get involved in IRWA leadership.

LEADERS OF TOMORROW

The event not only brought excitement to the young professionals that attended, but also seemed refreshing to the seasoned right of way speakers, who were impressed by the young talent involved in our industry.

In this economy, to be young and have a job in an industry where you can build a career is rare and fortunate. With that said, we recognize that the few that are in this position in our industry and attended the event will likely become the leaders of tomorrow. IRWA understands the importance of embracing such young professionals and the role they will play in building the future of our industry.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

This was the first in many steps toward embracing our younger members and helping them advance in their right of way careers. I look forward to seeing more participants at next year's educational event. As we all work together to evolve our industry, I am proud to be a part of this exciting process.

I would like to acknowledge the generous sponsors for making this event possible. They included Allen, Williford & Seale Real Estate Appraisers, Percheron Acquisitions, LLC, Keystone Acquisition Services, Corp., and Contract Land Staff, LLC.

I would also like to thank our many speakers, as well as IRWA Headquarters staff. A special thanks goes to the Young Professionals Event Planning Committee for their involvement in organizing the topics and securing the event speakers. They included Nicholas Anitsakis, Blake Barger, Tyler Holmes, Tyler Jans, Zachary Kezar, Stephen Kovar, Tim Magliaro, Christopher Morgan, K.C. Purgason, Aaron Romero and Kevin Taliaferro.

All in all, the event generated new energy for the young professionals in attendance. Being involved in a growing industry at the right place and the right time in our careers is a great feeling.



Brodie Allen, SR/WA, President of Evolve Surface Strategies, Inc., offered key strategies for developing leadership skills and demonstrated how early industry involvement impacts personal and professional growth.



IRWA Director of Business Development, Daniel Stekol, spoke on IRWA leadership opportunities at the chapter level and encouraged participants to get involved.



The sessions generated lively discussion among the participants on topics ranging from energy policy to career opportunities.



Bradley A. Bujan

As a real estate appraisal trainee with Allen, Williford & Seale, Inc. (AWS), Brad appraises all types of right of way and commercial properties. He attended Texas A&M University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agricultural Economics and an Undergraduate Minor in Business. Brad is currently working toward obtaining his certification as a general real estate appraiser.