

CHAPTER 12 WELCOMES YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

An evening of networking and education

BY JAIME ROSE TIEU



On February 22, 2019, I had the pleasure of working with Chapter 12 President Smed Bernard and his colleagues to assist in facilitating a Young Professionals event—one that has far surpassed anything I have attended thus far.

Chapter 12 partnered with the Rho Epsilon Real Estate Fraternity from the University of Illinois Champagne-Urbana for an evening of networking and education. We were joined by 20-30 young professionals who ranged from second year undergraduate students to those achieving their master's degree. Despite the different educational backgrounds, these young professionals all had something in common: an interest in infrastructure development and the desire to learn more about the world of right of way.

Setting the Tone

The meeting location was seamless. We filed into a funky bike shop that Smed is a current member of and never found a shortage of food, beverages and comfortable seats to listen to all the remarkable speakers. Best of all, the setting was so quaint and informal that it provided plenty of opportunities to ask questions throughout the evening.

An array of IRWA members and tenured professionals attended the event to ensure its success. Conversations were plentiful, and the questions and comments that were discussed could not have been more intriguing and educational.



A Packed Agenda

Brent Schreiber of Salem Land Services moderated the event and did a great job at introducing all of the speakers, staff and students. Chapter 12 also had the pleasure of having International President Jeff Jones and IRWA's Young Professional Chair Nikkiy Bestgen in attendance. Jeff shared some great guidance and information pertaining to acquisition, relocation and IRWA as a whole. He helped the room understand his position and the adventures that he'd been through to get to where he is today. Nikkiy spoke about being a business development professional in right of way, as well as the achievements and plans of IRWA's Young Professionals. She also conducted a giveaway of three IRWA memberships through an interactive game involving the entire room.

Gary DeClark and Anthony Mule from Valbridge Property Advisors-Chicago Metro spoke about the right of way appraisal process, while Graham Grady of the Taft Law Group gave a detailed description of the right of way condemnation process. Ameren's Robert Kirkpatrick and Shawnee Professional Services' Jennifer Spurlock spoke about their journey to becoming land agents and the need for young professionals in the industry. Finally, Thomas Ball spoke about his journey to becoming a negotiator, while Smed concluded the night speaking about scholarship opportunities for appraisal education.

Needless to say, this was certainly an evening to remember. ✪

