

China: In Pursuit of IRWA Training and Credentials

BY BARBARA BILLITZER

The competitive marketplace for appraisers in China has become fierce in recent years. Understandably, their appraisers are aggressively looking for ways to differentiate themselves from their competitors. They have determined that one of the best ways to gain higher status is by attaining more credentials.

For several years, groups of Chinese right of way professionals had been requesting that IRWA conduct courses in their country. Until recently, IRWA had been unable to establish a plan that would overcome the logistical challenges, not to mention developing a curriculum that would lead to credentialing, all while proving financially viable for both parties.

However, their perseverance finally paid off. After much dialogue about scheduling, logistics and course fees, an agreement was signed, and a date for training was set. International President, Randy Williams, SR/WA, MAI, FRICS agreed to teach Appraisal of Partial Acquisitions, as well as Ethics and the Right of Way Professional. The two courses were scheduled to be conducted over a five-day period.

In July, a total of 18 highly-advanced appraisers had registered for the two courses, and they included MBAs, attorneys, Ph.Ds, MAIs, college professors and owners of highly-successful appraisal firms. And even though these participants already possessed such prestigious credentials, they were driven to attain additional training in hopes of creating a competitive advantage.

Upon his return, Randy said, "It was interesting to uncover our similarities. There is a strong need for new infrastructure in China, which brings with it the many challenges associated with new construction. They were eager to know how we handle eminent

domain, as condemnees in their country have unrealistic expectations about how much they should be paid. Ethics is another topic of interest because they are facing property owners who are unwilling to allow projects on their property."

BENEFITS FOR ALL MEMBERS

The benefits that IRWA receives by conducting courses internationally are threefold. First, the courses are a new source of revenue for the Association. Second, fourteen of the students signed up to become IRWA members and paid their dues on the spot. Eight of the MAIs received IRWA's Appraisal Certification and applied for IRWA's Valuation Cross-Certification program, all of which generated additional revenue. Third, the funds generated from course fees and membership dues will be

used to develop new IRWA courses, as well as to enhance existing products and services – something that will benefit all members.

As our designations become more widely recognized internationally, the status of right of way professionals in the United States and Canada will be elevated as well. In fact, many of our members are already doing business internationally and their credentials were one of the reasons why they received these lucrative contracts.

So what does the future hold? Well, the Chinese professionals have already shown interest in IRWA's new Generalist pathway, the MAI cross-certification training and for those who are already Appraisal Certified, their next goal is to attain their SR/WA. They are ready to take their relationship with IRWA to the next level, and we will work hard to exceed all their expectations.



Bottom row left to right: Shu Wu, Li Weiwu, Wu Qing, Mark Rieck, Randy Pennington, Kang Xiaoyun, Song Xinghui, Jin Zhi. **Top row left to right:** Jin Xuneng, Li Tonghao, Li Kaimeng, Luo Feng, Luo Shaofeng, Song Shenghua, Jiang Lanlei, Gao Ouye, Xue Hongxia, Grace Chen.