

IRWA Launches Collaborative Online Community

BY KATE SHIRLEY

Social media is everywhere these days. We rely on Facebook, Twitter, blog, and LinkedIn accounts to stay informed and to update others about our lives, our careers, or to share interesting articles and photos. The IRWA Member Network is a new membership benefit which combines the benefits of all these sites into one place. With this new online community, we here at IRWA Headquarters are taking steps to ensure that our members have the best and most current tools at their disposal to stay at the top of their profession.

IRWA's Member Network is a customizable tool that enables you to communicate easily with other members in a private, professional setting. You can view a community calendar of all upcoming association events, post messages, photos or other resources, and participate in specific group discussions based on your areas of interest or involvement. It also gives you full access to the IRWA Member Database, and with the "Member Match" feature, the system will automatically recommend other members considered professionally compatible with you according to your interests, allowing you to build a strong network and make more valuable connections.

Our new online community is very easy to use. In fact, as a member, you are already signed up! All you have to do is visit the Member Network homepage and log in using your IRWA website username and password. Once you are

on your landing page, you can add a profile picture, edit your information, add contacts, link to your other social networking sites, post and view messages, join discussions and access all your groups. Since the network is linked with our member database, your landing page will automatically update your events and group affiliations! It couldn't be more convenient.

Have a question about a local regulation you can't quite wrap your head around? Post a question in your Chapter group to target other professionals in your area. Not sure what the best appraisal method might be for a certain type of property? Ask the folks participating in the Valuation Committee group and start an interactive discussion on best practices in your situation. Taking a course and have a question about some of the material covered? Soon you will be able to post a message in the dedicated course group to contact other members taking the same course. The possibilities are truly endless.

IRWA is making big moves this year to turn our Association into an industry leader, and taking advantage of all the latest technology at our disposal is a big part of this goal. We anticipate that the Member Network will yield a rich online community of professionals working together to enhance their careers and will make IRWA an even better resource for everyone involved in the right of way profession.

Access the Member Network at <http://irwa.ep.memberfuse.com>

The screenshot shows the IRWA Member Network dashboard. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the IRWA logo and the text "MEMBER NETWORK". To the right of the logo, there are links for "Mark Rieck's profile", "Report Feedback", and "Logout", along with a search bar labeled "Search IRWA". Below the navigation bar is a red bar with the word "Dashboard" in the center. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Left Sidebar:** Contains a "Hello, Mark!" greeting with a profile picture and links for "View my profile" and "Edit my settings". Below this is a "My Dashboard" section with links for "Administration Home" and "Reporting Home". At the bottom of the sidebar are links for "My Dashboard" (with a home icon) and "Message Center".
- Center:** Features a status update area with the text "What are you doing?" and a "Share" button. Below this is a post by "Mark Rieck" stating "Just posted August 2012 Financial and Chapter Stats Reports for IGC Members." Below the post is a red bar labeled "Latest Community Updates". At the bottom of the center section, there is a notification: "Oct 19 Vivian Howell is now connected with Mary Anne Marr. 01:41 PM".
- Right Sidebar:** Contains a "My Contacts" section with a grid of profile pictures and names: Nikki Adams, Community Administrator, Brodie Allen, Eric Finn, Esq., Wayne Goss, and Lee Hamre. Below the grid is a "View all contacts" button. At the bottom of the right sidebar is a "My Groups' Events" section.