

Planting Our Flag

Turning our outwardly focused mission into a reality

JERRY COLBURN, SR/WA

I am so fortunate to represent the IRWA during these remarkable times. Having reached a tipping point in our organization, we are truly on the path to expanding our reach and elevating our profession. Whatever role you play in this industry, you have an incredible opportunity to make an impact on a day-to-day basis. Whether it's our colleagues at work, the people affected by our projects or even friends and family, we are all working to improve the quality of people's lives through our piece in infrastructure development.

IRWA's International Vice President, Aimie Mims, SR/WA, describes the IRWA as the "means" by which we all can accomplish our higher purpose of improving people's quality of life. Think about it—our Association is constantly elevating ethics in our communities, promoting excellence through teaching best practices, and now, we have a laser focus on the "learner" in all of our educational offerings.

Almost a decade ago, our CEO Mark Rieck was tasked with making IRWA a truly international organization, expanding outside of Canada and the United States. Mission accomplished! Not only do we have a presence in 16 countries, we are making a difference in all of those places. Our influence is shaping regulations, policy and even law regarding land access for infrastructure projects around the globe.

As your President, it is my goal to make the IRWA relevant outside of our present sphere of influence. We are accomplishing this in other countries and most recently, we have had a major impact in the U.S. In September,



the Trump administration asked the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to explore which regulations have become too burdensome and have caused delays to energy projects. In turn, FERC contacted the IRWA to assemble a delegation of energy company executives to meet with them in Washington, DC to share our insight and experiences regarding these regulations.



We are planting our flag at home and abroad. Planting the IRWA flag is critical to being a truly "outwardly facing" organization. I have spent most of my right of way career in business development for companies that I have a stake in. As the Director of Business Development for Overland, Pacific & Cutler (OPC), I practiced the importance of planting our flag wherever we could with the knowledge that OPC would reap the benefits in the long-term. This was the first step in establishing relationships, and these grew into opportunities that the firm is reaping today. The IRWA is on this path of creating long-lasting relationships and seizing opportunities that will ultimately expand our reach.

So what does "outward facing" mean to you, and more importantly, what can you do to advance this mission? Who can you establish a relationship with that will move the organization forward? We have to tap into other infrastructure authorities to widen our visibility. Reach out to those outside of our organization to broaden our external influence and raise awareness of our industry relevance. Let's invite people from the outside to share in our passion and knowledge. We are the body of knowledge that makes up this professional domain. Plant a flag, raise awareness and make a difference in our future. 🌟