



AN INTERVIEW WITH IRWA'S YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR **KASY BALDAUF, SR/WA**

What did it mean to hear your name and walk across that stage to receive your award?

To hear my name being announced during the award ceremony will be a moment I'll never forget. It took a lot of hours of hard work and volunteering within the IRWA to get to that moment, and it was all worth it. I was also terrified of tripping as I walked up to the stage, so I felt like it took forever to reach the steps.

What advice would you give to someone that is new in their career/the IRWA and looking for the next step?

Ask questions. The best way to learn in this industry is to ask as many questions as possible. If that means asking your questions in the IRWA courses or bouncing ideas off your mentor, just keep doing it. There is nothing better than learning from your peers and mentors who have different experiences than you. Their experiences will help you to continue to grow in the industry and in your career.

What was your favorite part of the Conference in Portland?

I really enjoyed the Monday Night Event. This was the highlight of my conference since I had been working with RWIEF for several months pulling it all together. It took a team effort and it really paid off. Thank you to everyone who volunteered his or her time to setup and execute the event.



If you could go back and tell yourself something 10 years ago, what would it be?

There's a lot of things I would love to go back tell myself about life, love and careers, but I think the top piece of advice would be to do what you love, not what everyone thinks you should do. Only you know what's best for your path forward and how to get there.

What has this career meant to you?

When I graduated from Texas A&M, I didn't know "what I wanted to be when I grew up." Finding my place within the right of way industry has been the best thing I could have ever asked for. I like to claim I talked my way in and I have never looked back.

If we could hold the IRWA Annual International Education Conference anywhere in the world, where would you pick and why?

I've been to the past five conferences and enjoyed every one of them. I'm really looking forward to the San Antonio conference in 2021 so everyone can come get a good taste of Texas! However, if I had to pick somewhere other than Texas, I would chose the New England area. There's so much history in that part of the United States and I would love to spend more time up there.

Share a YPG memory that has impacted your life.

One of my favorite memories with the YPG would be within my own Chapter in Houston. When I was new to the right of way industry and started to volunteer within the Chapter, I was introduced to someone who would ultimately become one of my best friends. We had a lunch setup so we could meet and start planning YP events for the local young professionals. Our friendship immediately kicked off and we haven't looked back. That was a great day to discover someone just as ambitious and driven as I am and we had a lot of fun growing our YP group together.

If you had to describe the YP Committee in one sentence, what would it be?

The YP Committee is and will always be resilient.

What can IRWA do better to support the YPs within the organization?

The IRWA can continue to support the YPs with more educational courses and mentorship opportunities. I believe one thing missing in our course listings are courses dedicated to project management.

How has being a YP representative on the Trustee's Board impacted you?

Being a Trustee for the Right of Way International Education Foundation has been one of the greatest honors of my career. I've learn so much about the Foundation and Association from the other Trustees and it's opened my eyes to all the possibilities that we are so lucky to have. This group is one of the most supportive teams I've ever been a part of.

How have you impacted the Trustee Board?

During my second year as a Trustee, I was given the opportunity to play a big role during the Monday Night Event in Portland. The sub-committee—which was formed to handle the live and silent auction—tried many new things this past year and was part of the reason for the success. One thing about the Foundation and the trustees serving is they all pull their weight and work together as a well-oiled machine. All opinions and ideas are listened to in an environment that is encouraging of growth and development, and that allows the Foundation to continue to be successful.

Bonus Question: What is your favorite food?

Okra. I will eat it any and every way you can possibly cook it, including straight out of the garden. 🌱

