



IRWA's 70TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

A sneak peek at some of the upcoming education sessions

For 70 years, IRWA has invited members from around the globe to gather for the Annual International Education Conference. In addition to special events such as the awards ceremony, gala and networking opportunities, a highlight of the annual conference is the highly anticipated batch of education sessions. These sessions allow members to share best practices, provide insight into the latest industry trends and report on the most challenging issues facing the right of way profession today.

This year will be no exception. The Association is proud to offer the same exceptional education sessions right of way professionals have come to expect from IRWA in Long Beach, California.

For a full schedule of events and more information on the conference, visit www.irwalongbeach2024.org.



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MAXIMIZING PROJECT RESULTS THROUGH INCENTIVE PAYMENTS



Alright, folks, let's talk incentives — the secret sauce to shaking up project delivery! Picture this: by offering sweet deals to property owners and occupants, we're not just cutting costs and speeding up delivery time, we're making moves that keep condemnations at bay and getting things done in record time.

Now, let's get into the nitty-gritty. Federal regulations (23 CFR 710.203(b)(2)(ii)) say we can sprinkle some extra cash on property owners to seal the deal quicker than you can say "construction chaos." And you know what? It works like a charm! By dangling a juicy incentive carrot, we're encouraging folks to sign on the bottom line faster than ever before.

But hold onto your hard hats because we've got some real-life success stories to share! From the State Route 91 Widening Project to the I-405 Improvement Project and to the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor Project, incentives are making waves and saving agencies millions of dollars. We're talking about boosting offers by 10%, 20%, all to get those wheels turning and projects moving forward.

And guess what? We at Monument are not stopping there! The pros and cons, pitfalls and strategies — we're covering it all. So, buckle up and get ready to dive deep into the world of incentive programs with our panel of experts. This discussion isn't just informative — it's downright entertaining! You won't want to miss it! 🎤



Joey Mendoza, vice president at Monument, oversaw the implementation of the incentive programs on behalf of OCTA for the I-405 Improvement Project and Metro for the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor Project.



Ricky Rodriguez, former Caltrans District 12 R/W supervisor, managed the first incentive program for Caltrans on the SR-91 Widening Project.



Darryl Root, director of real property management at Metro, developed the acquisition and relocation incentive program and secured concurrence from Caltrans and FTA.



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION 101:

How Technology Transforms Eminent Domain Valuation Efficiency and Quality

The eminent domain (ED) and right of way (ROW) business is at a crossroads. Appraisers need to meet the surging demand for ED and ROW appraisals, dialing up production while maintaining quality and objectivity.

New technologies and reimagined processes can empower appraisers to use high-quality, verified data to quickly deliver the reports clients need, with confidence in their accuracy.

In this presentation, an experienced valuation expert, a commercial real estate PropTech leader and a software engineer with significant hands-on experience as an appraiser will discuss personal experiences and key learnings from incorporating new technologies and processes in valuation. The panelists will also discuss:

- The urgent need for digital transformation in the ED/ROW Valuation industry
- How adopting technology can impact quality, and turnaround time for complex appraisals
- Tips for how to successfully adopt and implement new technologies (along with avoiding common pitfalls!)
- Specific case studies of technology adoption by ED and ROW Valuation professionals

By sharing these firsthand experiences, this presentation will equip participants with actionable tools and strategies to produce complex appraisals by incorporating new technologies and processes. 🌟



Jacinto Munoz, MAI, SRA, AI-GRS, AI-RRS, is a managing director and principal for Cogito Realty Partners. He is an experienced leader in valuation, eminent domain/condemnation, litigation support, expert witness and environmental real estate roles with more than 25 years of experience at firms like Cogito, Apprise by Walker and Dunlop and JPMorgan Chase Bank.



Annie Schwab, MBA, is the vice president of product at Valcre, an appraisal technology company focused on using workflow solutions to empower appraisers. She is an experienced builder of commercial real estate PropTech solutions with past leadership roles at Lightbox, Digital Maps Products, Kroll and Andersen.



Mark Vella is a senior software engineer at Valcre, an appraisal technology company focused on using workflow solutions to empower appraisers. Mark has the unique perspective of building appraisal software solutions informed by his rich history of hands-on valuation experience. Mark has completed more than one thousand commercial appraisal assignments for or assets ranging from owner-user to complex income-producing properties.

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Deciphering the RFP, RFI and RFQ Alphabet Soup

Get Noticed to Win Contracts



Requests for Proposals (“RFP”), Requests for Information (“RFI”) and/or Requests for Qualifications (“RFQ”) sound like alphabet soup. However, they are a vital tool for project partners and stakeholders to solicit right of way talent to be part of project teams, and project partners and stakeholders use these requests to evaluate, compare and select professionals to determine the best fit for their needs. In the right of way industry, the RFP, RFI or RFQ is used for transportation, utility, recreational and other public improvement projects and can be originated from governmental entities, agencies and commissions, utility companies and/or their consultants, including engineering firms. Whether you receive a request directly through an email message or professional connection or seek out a request on your own, responding to RFPs, RFIs or RFQs can seem overwhelming and complicated, and the process can be time-consuming. XBEs, which include minority-owned businesses (“MBEs”), woman-owned businesses (“WBEs”), veteran-owned businesses (“VBEs”) and businesses owned by economically disadvantaged individuals or entities (“DBEs”), are state certified. These firms are often recruited and sought after but may not have someone, much less multiple people, on their teams to tackle the arduous application process and be a serious contender for an RFP, RFI or RFQ to ultimately win a promising contract and be part of a prestigious project team.



This session is designed to examine and explain the different processes and provide attendees with pointers and superior standards to streamline the application process and propel their firms’ applications to stand out. Topics addressed in the session include:

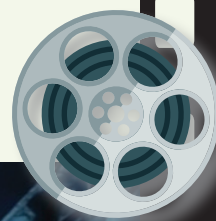
- Differences between RFP, RFI and RFQs in the right of way industry
- Differences between the types of XBEs as they relate to RFPs, RFIs and RFQs
- Research and evaluation tips to apply to the right requests for your firm
- Types of entities and companies that solicit RFPs, RFIs and RFQs
- Responding to both formal and informal RFPs, RFIs and RFQs
- Valuable methods for showcasing your firm’s qualifications, assets, etc.
- Recommendations for writing the best responses
- Best formatting and designs to make your application stand out
- Maximizing your time spent on applications
- Benefits of a supplier profile on SaaS (software as a service) platforms (Pursuit, Salesforce, etc.)
- Calculating and disclosing fee agreements

Designed as a panel discussion, attendees of this session can join the conversation about RFPs, RFIs and RFQs with members from the International Marketing and Membership Committee, a department of transportation representative and a utility company representative. Yasmin L. Stump, Esq., president and founder of Yasmin L. Stump Law Group, PC, a woman-owned business, is familiar with RFP, RFQ and RFI processes and will moderate the program. The panelists and Yasmin will provide session participants with their unique perspectives, along with advice to help proposals stand out and attendees’ companies win more contracts. ★



COMPLEX INDUSTRIAL MOVES:

AS EASY AS TYING YOUR SHOES!



This interactive session will delve into how complex relocations, often necessitated by eminent domain or large public projects, can transcend compliance with federal, state and local regulations. Attendees will hear about transforming these challenges into opportunities for operational improvement and efficiency gains. Through engaging case studies, the speakers will demonstrate the tangible benefits of the “strong knot” approach, showcasing cost savings, enhanced communication and process optimization.

Key takeaways include:

- The significance of a strategic, early approach to project team composition and project planning.
- Insights into building cohesive, cross-functional teams that include right of way professionals, engineering experts and project managers.
- Strategies for process optimization that comply with and exceed legal and regulatory requirements.

This session is designed for professionals engaged in eminent domain, infrastructure development, relocation services and project management. It offers a blueprint for leveraging interdisciplinary expertise to achieve project success. Attendees will leave equipped with the knowledge and strategies to strengthen their project “knots,” ensuring smoother relocations and enhanced outcomes for all stakeholders involved. ✪



Michael Heilman, PMP, a principal at UHY Consulting, has significant experience in business process optimization, program management and operational optimization for chemical and heavy industrial client companies. As a certified Six Sigma and Design for Six Sigma Blackbelt and a registered Project Management Professional, Michael has a rich history of facilitating complex industrial relocations, emphasizing business process optimization as a fundamental strategy.



Lee Hamre, SR/WA, R/W-RAC, R/W-URAC, the president of H.C. Peck & Associates, Inc., brings considerable expertise in the relocation field, offering comprehensive services in compliance with the Uniform Relocation Act. Certified by IRWA and a certified instructor for all IRWA URA and Relocation Courses, Lee has provided relocation assistance training and federal compliance audits nationwide. Her leadership in the IRWA as a Past International President (2014 to 2015) underscores her commitment to excellence in relocation practices.

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Railroad Permitting — From the Inside Out

Is railroad permitting derailing your projects? It's time to get you back on track! Learn about the railroad permitting process and the "why" behind the system, to better be able to meet the expectations of the railroad in your permitting submittals. This presentation will kick off with an engaging interactive activity designed to gauge attendees' familiarity with the subject matter — rest assured, there will be no tests!

In the hour to follow, you will be taken through railroad specific terms, requirements, safety standards and documents to give you a comprehensive overview before diving into the permitting process. Participants will then be walked through the permitting process and will have the opportunity to discuss the different types of railroad permits and share insight on the reasons behind the requests.

Finally, we will dive into strategies for meeting railroad expectations and for obtaining submittal approvals in a timely and complete manner to prevent construction delays in the field. Having worked for both sides of the process, the presentation will provide a unique perspective discussing what the railroad may be thinking vs. what you as a requestor may be thinking.

The remaining 30 minutes will be an interactive session for questions and discussion from the group about upcoming and current projects! 🌟



Frances Much, SR/WA, is currently the section manager for Stakeholder Management Solutions in the Northeast at Burns & McDonnell. She has spent her entire 14-year career in the right of way industry beginning her journey as the AVP Real Estate at a railroad; then continuing her career with an engineering firm managing highway and airport acquisitions; bringing her to her current role in electric utilities with Burns & McDonnell where she has been the real estate program lead for the past four and a half years. Frances is an IRWA Chapter 9 past president who has also served on the International Professional Education Committee: Credentialing Subcommittee for two terms.

Big Projects, Big Data

GIS as a Collaboration Tool for ROW Analysis of Major Infrastructure Projects

Picture this: before the bulldozers roll in, there's a whole lot of action going on behind the scenes. We're talking years, maybe even decades, of planning, designing and environmental reviews. And who's leading the charge? Our trusty ROW professionals, the unsung heroes of property analysis and cost estimation.

But wait, it gets juicier! We're not talking about your run-of-the-mill projects here. We're talking "mega projects," where properties affected can range from dozens to hundreds. And guess who's got their hands full studying every nook and cranny of the impact? That's right — our fabulous ROW pros! But fear not, because they've got a secret weapon: Geographic Information Systems (GIS). With this cutting-edge tech in their toolkit, they can swap critical data with engineers, planners and even the local community faster than you can say "construction zone."

Now, let's get down to brass tacks. GIS isn't just about making friends — it's also about saving some serious cash. By helping analysts estimate the cost of property and rights upfront, it's like having a crystal ball for project feasibility. And let's be real, in regions where real estate prices are through the roof, those estimates are worth their weight in gold!

So, join us for a rip-roaring panel discussion where we spill all the tea on how GIS is shaking up the planning game. We've got project owners, designers, environmental planners — you name it! They'll dish out all the details on the perks, challenges and everything in between. This isn't your grandma's discussion — it's a full-on tech extravaganza you won't want to miss! 🌟



BJ Swanner, senior project manager and director at Monument, is a career ROW professional with over 16 of experience preparing ROW impact analyses, relocation studies and cost estimates in support of major capital projects. BJ is also a seasoned GIS professional, leveraging GIS technology to perform analyses, collaborate with other project team members and prepare planning documents throughout the project development process from feasibility to final design and environmental approval.



Craig Justesen, R/W-RAC, executive officer — real estate at LA Metro, has over 25 years of experience in the ROW profession and is currently responsible for directing, managing and overseeing the development and implementation of departmental strategies, procedures, programs and projects related to real estate aspects of LA Metro's capital improvement projects.



Debra Einstein Leight, managing director of environmental planning at ICF, brings more than 23 years of extensive experience in California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance and document preparation, as well as California planning experience as both a public sector planner and private sector environmental project manager.



Doreen Zhao, AICP, west regional planning manager at STV, Inc., is a transportation and environmental planner who has led the planning efforts on a variety of transportation projects, including LRT, BRT and high-speed passenger rail corridors. She has also supported coordination with federal and state agencies throughout various permitting environmental processes, as well as supported stakeholder outreach efforts.



The Great

Eminent Domain

Debate

Come join the 3rd Annual Battle Royale Debate between two teams composed of an eminent domain law attorney and appraiser as they are placed in forced pro or con positions and debate issues of:

- Eminent domain law concepts
- Valuation and what is or should be compensable?
- Industry-specific concerns
- Just for fun: the occasional pop culture conundrum!

These topics will include real world case studies with questionable judgements and some theoretical debate.

For two years in a row, the western U.S. team, led by Scott Davis, Esq., out of Texas, has managed a narrow win of the coveted trophies. This year, once again, Andrew Sorba, SR/WA, will be the team's valuation expert.

The fancy uniforms and dance moves weren't enough to sway the crowd the few points they needed to win last year, but come find out if the eastern U.S.-based team, led by Dave Arnold, Esq., SR/WA, out of Virginia and his valuation expert David Burgoyne, SR/WA, from Michigan can pull out a win on the home court of the their opposition on the West Coast!

Enjoy this fun and education session featuring audience participation with live polling where YOU choose our winning teams for each topic! 🎉



Scott Davis, Esq., is a founding shareholder of Hicks Davis Wynn, P.C. in Houston, TX. He represents condemning authorities in oil and gas, energy, and public utility industries. Scott was named a Super Lawyer "Texas Rising Star," Texas Monthly, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017. He is a CLIMB Certified Instructor and currently serves as the International Real Estate Law Committee Chair.

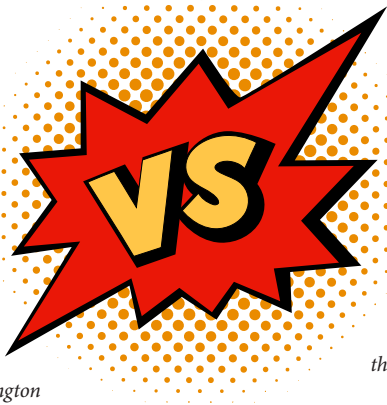
David L. Arnold, Esq., SR/WA, is CEO of Pender & Coward, a 130-year-old law firm based in Virginia Beach, Virginia. He is an eminent domain counsel exclusively representing condemning authorities. David is a CLIMB Certified Instructor and currently serves as International General Counsel. He also co-hosts the "Infrastructure Junkies" podcast.



Defending Champions



Andrew Sorba, SR/WA, R/W-AC, SRA, AI-RRS, is an independent fee appraiser specializing in ROW appraisal and review appraisal for not as long as David Burgoyne. He holds certified general licenses in Washington and Oregon and is a PEAK Certified Instructor for IRWA. Andrew serves as the Region 7 secretary, vice chair of the International Valuation Committee and is a member of IPEC's Credentialing Subcommittee.



The Challengers

David Burgoyne, SR/WA, R/W-AC, ASA, is an independent fee appraiser specializing in ROW appraisal and review appraisal for more than 39 years. A resident of southeast Michigan, he is certified general in multiple states, a PEAK and CLIMB Certified Instructor and an AQB Certified USPAP Instructor.



Moderator




Fred Easton, Jr., PLS, SR/WA, R/W-AMC, is a senior land surveyor in Colorado for Farnsworth Group, Inc., a 140+ years old design firm. Fred is a CLIMB Certified Instructor, served as a past president of Chapter 6, past chair Region 9 and is currently the International President of IRWA. Fred has won many awards, including IRWA's top annual award, the Frank C. Balfour Professional of the Year Award.





Tribal Land Acknowledgement for ROW Professionals — The Frontlines of Place-Based Relationships



We all struggle to make land acknowledgement more meaningful and inclusive. They have become sensitive, controversial and worse — arbiters of conflict and litigation with tribes.

But there's good news... whether you're brand new to land acknowledgments, or you've done more than you can count, you'll take transformative tools from this workshop.

Yes, ROW professionals must navigate complex cultural and historical factors — all addressing Indigenous ties to land. But we can turn to evolved techniques to align with new best practices. Actually, these are very old best practices!

But it's easy to forget when we observe the recent controversies and conflicts around land acknowledgments. If we listen to critics closely, though, we'll discover transformative insights...

The good news you'll find in this course: multi-tribal perspectives and real-world examples highlight a transformative, adaptable method. The rewards of more authentic, relationship-based land acknowledgement are unique for everyone. But we all benefit by evolving beyond simply drafting a "correct" statement.

We move from seeing acknowledgment as a box to check, toward a more relationship-based, tribe-centered process. This is where the big insights arise!

In this session, we'll revisit the challenging process of land acknowledgement with a new system. These hands-on efforts begin with a location significant to your work and relationships with tribes.

This 90-minute, hands-on workshop is participant driven — requiring access to the internet to use basic, easy research tools (free, open-source and without subscription). Participants will gain a unique process to research and develop a draft tribal land acknowledgement; identify and respond to common controversies; and transform the process into a relationship-focused, action-based effort.

We'll progress through a three-phase process harnessing free, open-source research tools enriched by a variety of multi-tribal perspectives.

Come prepared with a laptop, notepad and Wi-Fi. We promise you'll leave with valuable tools for your work!

Through interactive lecture, progressive research and reflection, we'll expand our awareness of tribal and ancestral connections to place and space. We'll then realize what a land acknowledgement should and should not look like.

Participants will apply the 5R® approach to this essential method that has become a go-to for tribal relations practitioners. We will cover:

- (R1) Assessment—Nations, Peoples, Language & Treaties
- (R2) Addressing Critics & Positionality
- (R3) Expanding POE through Draft Diplomacy
- (R4) & (R5) Relational Evolution Time, Trust, Actions & Commitments

This workshop delivers innovative techniques to transform a tribal land acknowledgement. We shift from words into an action-oriented relational medium. Using a simple process and adaptable tools, we'll evolve beyond the flawed conventional approach.

Along the way, you'll gain innovative technological tools, as well as old-fashioned relational insights to transform your process. This experience will be different for everyone, but we promise it will enhance your valuable work with tribes. 🌟



Robert Harper, JD, MA, MA, founder of Seventh Sovereign, America's leading provider of IRWA award-winning professional tribal relations trainings. Free monthly in-depth insights: www.seventhsovereign.com/briefs

Environmental Justice & Equity

Framework for Long-Term Relocation Benefits and Inclusive Transportation Outcomes



From rhetoric to reality! TranSystems is presenting strategies that evolve from a policy to consider Environmental Justice (EJ) in transportation projects to practices that support displaced residents and the communities left behind. Join this session to learn how EJ is presented as an enhanced level of relocation assistance services to ensure that residents are heard, their experiences are valued and their contributions shape the outcome of policy and projects to the benefit of everyone.

Session attendees will learn to reimagine environmental justice services and develop comprehensive frameworks for vibrant and inclusive right of way processes which enhance successful project delivery. The presentation will include:

- How It Started vs. How It's Going: An Ongoing Journey of Change
- Meaningful and Deliberate Engagement: More than Just Checking a Box
- Benefits of Public and Private Partnerships
- The Cost of Doing Business: Do the Dollars Make Sense?
- Q&A discussion for sharing experiences, challenges and successes



Brian Everett, president, TranSystems real estate division, has been involved in every aspect of right of way for nearly 40 years. Based on his broad-based experience in program and project management for public works, community development, school districts, and transportation projects, the real estate division has been at the forefront of developing EJ components for a wide variety of projects.



Annette Muhammad, program director of EJ, brings 20 years of practice in equitable and inclusive community engagement and policy enactment. Knowing firsthand that successful strategies are often created outside the box, she leads EJ initiatives in Houston and assists with nationwide EJ efforts.



Ray Armstrong, SR/WA, director at TranSystems, possesses a broad understanding of the role EJ plays in the project delivery process and the necessity of workable, real-world solutions to difficult problems. He drives the results of some of the firm's most challenging, multi-disciplinary projects.



Andrew P. Nierenberg, appraisal manager at TranSystems, is a former deputy district director of right of way for the State of California Department of Transportation, District 7. With over 38 years of experience in state government managing the appraisal and acquisition of right of way, Andrew brings a unique perspective to EJ.



Vanessa Ringgold, SR/WA, R/W-RAC, senior project manager at TranSystems, specializes in property acquisition and relocation for public agencies. She has expertise in right of way, relocation assistance as well as EJ and an impressive track record of relationship management across many sectors, including redevelopment and housing.



Jeff Taylor, senior agent at TranSystems, is a relocation expert and senior community advocacy liaison. With 20 years of relocation assistance experience, Jeff leads in connecting with homeowners and tenants and is a key liaison in EJ and community equity on the TxDOT NHHIP 3rd Ward project.



SPEARHEADING SUCCESS:

Early Stakeholder Engagement in Infrastructure Projects

In industries such as construction, energy and infrastructure development, stakeholder relations and permitting play important roles in determining the success or failure of a project. These two elements are fundamentally linked, forming the foundation upon which a project can succeed or fail. Let's dive deeper into why stakeholder relations and permitting are essential for project success.

Stakeholder Relations: Building a Foundation of Trust and Communication

Stakeholders can make or break a project with their support or opposition. Establishing and maintaining a strong foundation of communication and trust early on or even before a project starts is crucial. A project that has worked to actively obtain a “social license to build” is more likely to receive permit approvals and avoid delays. Conversely, overlooking or ignoring key stakeholders can result in resistance, regulatory hurdles and reputational damage, jeopardizing the project's success.

Effective stakeholder relations involve transparent communication, active and continued engagement, and compromise. It requires project managers to identify, understand and prioritize stakeholder concerns and expectations. Stakeholders should understand the project team is committed to establishing lasting roots within the community, rather than completing the project and then leaving. By proactively addressing their needs and involving them in the planning and execution phases, project managers can build trust, goodwill and create a supportive project environment.

Permitting: Navigating Regulatory Barriers

Securing the local, state and federal permits required for the project demonstrates a project's commitment to environmental stewardship, public safety and regulatory compliance. It helps mitigate risks associated with legal suits, fines, penalties and project delays, which keeps the project on track and viable.

The permitting process often involves cooperation with various stakeholders, including government officials, environmental agencies, community groups and indigenous communities. Engaging these stakeholders in meaningful dialogue can uncover potential challenges, identify mitigation measures and create collaborative solutions that balance project objectives with stakeholder expectations.



Tying Together Stakeholder Relations and Permitting

While stakeholder relations focus on building trust, strong communication and aligning interests, permitting emphasizes legal and regulatory compliance, along with risk mitigation. Stakeholder feedback can inform the permitting process, while regulatory requirements can guide stakeholder engagement strategies.

In conclusion, stakeholder relations and permitting are integral components of project success. By prioritizing transparent communication, proactive engagement, regulatory compliance and collaborative problem-solving, projects can pave the way for successful execution. ⚙️



Kaylee Langrell has been in a stakeholder relations manager role since March of 2022 in which she concentrates on engaging with public agencies to disseminate information to the public, provide project updates, and advocate for project favorability. Kaylee graduated from the University of Central Arkansas in 2018 with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science.



George Peterson, PE, leads system development efforts enhancing company workflows and facilitating interdisciplinary communication and works closely with TurnKey's Stakeholder Relations team to help coordinate and track permit submission and outreach efforts. George earned his B.S. in Civil and Environmental Engineering from the University of Maine and obtained his Maine Professional Engineering License in 2021.