



SPOTLIGHT ON MEGAN FRANKLIN



Describe your professional career. How did you first become interested in the right of way industry?

In 2008, I was living in Houston working as a credit union teller for nearly 4 years when I got a call from a high school friend's dad who was a crew chief back home in Oklahoma. He offered me not only an amazing job but an opportunity to move home. I absorbed everything I could about running mineral title, and I'm still forever grateful for that experience. I had been working in the Marcellus and Barnett Shales, running title and acquiring leases as a landman for O&G companies for a little over 3 years before I switched to surface. During my time as a landman, I'd been laid off six times due to instability in the industry. Before that job, I didn't even know what the term "laid off" meant, and having an unstable income to that degree wasn't ideal, since I was our only source of income and had fast-growing six-year-old. One day, my uncle called me and said he'd heard I was looking for a job and that I could run title. He asked if I'd ever considered right of way. I told him I knew what the word meant but not what he meant. HA!



He said, “You know those pages you skip over in mineral title?” Yes, sir. “Run those pages.” I thought, I can do that! I applied with Coates Field Service in Oklahoma City, where I was given an opportunity that truly changed my life. I started October 2012 as a ROW agent and quickly progressed due to my constant thirst for knowledge of the industry. I wanted to do any job they would let me learn. My early years were spent reviewing title reports, acquiring easements, change of configurations, encroachment relocation, providing construction support and reclamation services for over 250 miles of Brownfield and over 100 miles Greenfield transmission lines in Oklahoma and Texas. These projects were where I fell in love with ROW. We say it all the time in this industry, but it really is true... EVERY DAY there is something new to learn.

After my time in transmission, I had the opportunity to acquire leases on two wind farms and a solar farm here in Oklahoma. From there, I became a document supervisor for a natural gas pipeline — spanning 303 miles from northwestern West Virginia to southern Virginia. I learned SO much about the FERC process and got to visit the Great Smoky Mountains! After pipelines, I moved to our transportation team as the ROW oversight coordinator, supporting the

Oklahoma Turnpike Authority’s Driving Forward Program. I got to work on this team for 2 years before I moved to be ROW coordinator for a large transmission client requiring its own internal system. This position gave me more of an in-depth experience with writing bid proposals, creating estimate packages, presenting to clients, interview and hiring process, creating standard operating procedures and building databases to meet the needs of the client and our own.

In 2022, I joined Poe and Associates Consulting Engineers as a right of way manager, supporting the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority’s Access Oklahoma Program as well as serving as a ROW agent for Municipal, County and ODOT projects.

How did you hear about IRWA and how long have you been with the Association?

I have been an active IRWA member of Chapter 33 since 2017. My first employer in the industry supported and encouraged IRWA education. They began sending me to classes in order to obtain the credentials necessary for particular projects. Years later, I’m thankful and proud to say I work for another great company who also supports not only our educational development but the Chapter as well.





What are some leadership positions you've held within the Association?

I began my IRWA leadership journey in 2019 when I began serving as the Chapter Nominations & Elections chair continuing this position through May of 2022. I was first elected to the Chapter 33 Executive Board in 2022 as Chapter secretary. Since then, I have consecutively served on the Board and in 2023, was elected as Chapter vice president. In 2024, I was elected as Chapter president and am currently serving my term. I most definitely look forward to continuing my involvement with IRWA.

You are currently Chapter 33's president. How has the experience been so far?

Serving as president of Chapter 33 has been an incredibly rewarding experience so far. It's provided me with the opportunity to work alongside passionate professionals who are dedicated to advancing the right of way industry through education and collaboration. I've seen firsthand the positive impact that continuous learning and knowledge sharing can have on the success of our members. It's been an honor to help guide the organization's mission, while fostering a community of growth and innovation within the right of way profession.

How have your previous leadership positions and/or prior experience prepared you for this role?

My previous leadership roles have allowed me to build expertise in managing complex projects and leading diverse teams. I've learned the importance of collaboration and communication and ensuring that all are aligned toward common goals. These experiences have sharpened my ability to identify opportunities for growth and innovation while maintaining a strong focus on impact. As a result, I am well-prepared to drive the mission of IRWA forward and create lasting change through infrastructure development.

Can you share one of your favorite IRWA memories?

Oh gosh it's really hard to pick just one! I'm thankful for the friendships I've made attending Region Forums and the annual conferences, but I think one of the most entertaining was at the 2019 Annual International Education Conference in Portland, Oregon. Andrew Thomas-Rogers and I had a little time between education sessions and decided to go ride the Portland Aerial Tram via scooter. I don't know if you've ever attempted to ride a scooter while using GPS, but it proved to be quite tricky, ha! We had inadvertently entered Highway 10 instead of the side street. The look on Andrew's face as I looked back at him was priceless as we both tried to get those scooters up as fast as they would go and get to the next exit STAT! We eventually made it to the tram, which was a LOVELY ride before Andrew led us back to the conference. I'll never forget it!



What is the best piece of advice you've ever received?

"Always focus on building relationships first, and the deals will follow."

It highlights the issue of trust and the factor of communication when it comes to the ROW process. It is not just about striking the best terms when negotiating with landowners, property owners, etc. It involves sowing the seeds of understanding and building healthy relationships. When you respect people and their land, chances are that the negotiations will be successful and without strife in the future.

Taking the time to listen, empathize and communicate helps create an environment where everyone feels valued, which ultimately makes the process more efficient and less combative. This approach has been invaluable in creating long-term partnerships, maintaining positive reputations and achieving successful acquisitions while minimizing disruptions.

One last question to end this interview on a fun note: if you could have lunch with anyone from history or fiction, who would it be and why?

John Denver. He had a deep love for the natural world and that was directly reflected in his music. I'd love to hear his perspective on how nature influenced his music and the creative process behind his songs. 🌟

Member Spotlight is a wonderful place to introduce yourself or to celebrate a fellow member's contributions to the IRWA. For more information or to submit a member for consideration, please contact Vivian Nguyen at nguyen@irwaonline.org.