



Changing Seasons

The forecast ahead

BY JUDY JONES, SR/WA

Last month, I had the privilege of inviting the International Governing Council (IGC) to beautiful Gulf Shores, Alabama, for an in-person IGC meeting. I was so delighted to see the smiling faces enjoying “my” sunshine and sugar-white sand beaches. If you have never been on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, I highly recommend you do. If you ask any member of the IGC, I’m sure they would agree! However, as much as we all wanted to enjoy the stunning scenery forever, we had business to take care of. Our very productive meeting served as the first of a three-part leadership development program. We discovered a lot about each other and how we work together. I’m looking forward to our next step as we continue on this journey to make IRWA better.

I am so excited to report we will be bringing back the “Federal Agency Update” at the Annual International Education Conference in Denver. We have begun meeting with FHWA and had the privilege of being introduced at one of their meetings, which composed of members of 17 different federal agencies. FHWA and HUD have both made commitments to participate, and others are forthcoming. At the Region 6 Fall Forum in Pearl, Mississippi, Director of Real Estate Services at FHWA Nicholas (Nic) Thornton made a presentation during the symposium. Nic acknowledged the recent collaboration with IRWA and announced the upcoming Federal Agency Update. A lot of planning is happening behind the scenes in preparation of this event. We have also started collaborating with other organizations and working on several memorandums of understanding that we will soon be reporting to you.

Having recently returned from the Region 4 Fall Forum in beautiful Manchester, New Hampshire, I must say that the fall foliage is just what you have heard: breathtaking. The yellow, orange, red and all shades in between could be seen for miles.



A symposium was held the day before the forum with the topic of project management. Project management has been an ongoing discussion within our organization, and we are working to bring a project management education component to light real soon. I am so thankful to have had the chance to visit New England, an area of this country I have never seen before.

Speaking of being thankful, as I write this, Thanksgiving is just around the corner. It is an annual national holiday in the United States and Canada that celebrates the harvest and other blessings of the past year. Although the holiday is celebrated on different days, it still sets aside a day for everyone to enjoy family, friends and everything around us we should be thankful for. It’s also a time to be thankful for those that are no longer with us, but will forever be in our hearts. So much of what I have to be thankful for is within this IRWA family. Writing this is hard right now, as my every day thoughts are with the family of someone near and dear to me, and to so many of you, who recently lost her battle with cancer. However, I am thankful and blessed she was placed in my life.

To each of you, I wish you a beautiful holiday season. Spend time with those you love, cherish each moment and remember the reason for the season! Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas! 🍂