



Get to Know Tim Drennan, CAE

Insights from IRWA's Executive Director

Last year, Tim Drennan, CAE, was promoted to executive director. With over 14 years of nonprofit and volunteer association management experience, Tim has been integral in promoting IRWA's purpose, mission and strategic plan. We invited Tim to give insight on his role and responsibilities in addition to sharing more about himself so readers can get to know him better.

BY VIVIAN NGUYEN

Many of our members are familiar with you and what you've done for IRWA, but some may not know your professional background. Could you give us an overview?

After graduating from Texas Tech University, I spent time teaching English as a second language in South Korea. Afterwards, I returned to Texas, where I was an account executive for an advertising agency in San Antonio, TX, before jumping into the nonprofit world at Big Brothers Big Sisters — I became their volunteer recruitment manager for over six years. In August of 2013, I joined IRWA as the manager of field operations and was later promoted to director of field operations before stepping into my current role as executive director.

What are your primary responsibilities as executive director?

I will work with staff and our Association leaders to ensure IRWA staff and operations are aligned to support the mission and objectives of IRWA.



You've been with IRWA for eight years. How has your history with the Association helped with the transition into your current role?

I like to say I started my career with IRWA as a “Chapter guy” and that my previous position as director of field operations allowed me to become familiar with our members and their needs. I believe those interactions and relationships with our members, as well as the past eight years working closely with staff, have helped me shift more smoothly into my role as executive director.

As executive director, what goals are top of mind for the Association?

Education and networking are important to our members. The Association has six strategic objectives to support those priorities, and my goal is to align staff with the initiatives to support those objectives.

What does the relationship between yourself as executive director and the International Executive Committee look like?

In one word — partnership. The IRWA is a member-led organization that is supported by great staff. Partnering to ensure the leaders of the Association and staff are aligned is critical in achieving the goals and objectives set forth by the Strategic Plan.

What sets IRWA apart from other associations?

I have heard our members describe IRWA as a family, and I agree. There is truly something special about the way our members support each other during challenging times and celebrate each other's achievements.

What are some of your goals for membership?

In addition to the 3 percent net increase in membership, one of my goals is to ensure that members will always have the same great support from staff, as well as access to the high-quality training and the increasing member benefits that the Association provides. I will also be focusing on staff training; each staff member plays a critical role in providing membership value and promoting an excellent membership experience within IRWA. Understanding their roles as staff is critical to achieving the key objectives of the Association.



What's the best advice you've ever received?

Listen more! Anyone who knows me knows that being silent can be a challenge for me, but I have found listening more and speaking less can usually help get most things accomplished quicker.

Tell us something surprising that members may not know about you.

Growing up in west Texas, I was involved in Future Farmers of America and was the proud owner of two under-performing show pigs.

What do you consider to be your biggest accomplishments to date?

Professionally, I would consider earning the Certified Association Executive (CAE) certification from the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) as one of my biggest accomplishments. The CAE has given me a great deal of insight into the wide, diverse range of associations across the nation and the unique ways in which they operate. Learning about different organizations has helped me understand that while IRWA is one of the many associations, our membership is what makes us truly stand apart from the rest.

Lastly, is there anything you'd like to say to our members?

I am truly humbled by the opportunity to continue serving the Association in this new role, and I look forward to doing my part to help develop staff to support our members. If there is ever anything I can do to support our members I am here to help. In fact, feel free to call me on my cell anytime at 310.433.9672. 📞