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IRWA
CALIFORNIA INLAND EMPIRE
CHAPTER 57

# …On the Move

**August/September 2025**
**Volume 9, Issue 1**

# President's Message

*From Ramie Dawit, Chapter 57 President*

*To our Chapter 57 IRWA Members…*

Hello, my fellow Chapter 57 members. I hope this message finds you all well. Me? Just getting back to the routine of it all. Summer has ended and kids are back to school! And I'm geared up and ready for my term as Chapter President.

This year, we had the International Education Conference in beautiful Virginia Beach. It was well attended with lots of seminars and courses offered. Paul Mim Mack, our chapter treasurer shares more details about the event further down. Scroll below to check out some highlights that Paul is sharing with us. Our next international education conference will be in Omaha, Nebraska, June 26-29. I hope to see you all there!

Please make sure to come out to our luncheons and listen in on the various topics we have selected for you. We host them every other month, with the exception of skipping 1 month around the holidays. Luncheons are September, November, February, April & June. Our September luncheon will be quite interesting. We have Hector Casillas from RCTC and Bernadette Duran-Brown from Nossaman speaking on How AI is Impacting ROW. Not sure about you all but I am so ready to hear how AI is impacting our industry.

Lastly, we will be working to offer more courses through our chapter this year. We are looking to see what courses our members are most in need of so that we can focus on those. To do that, we will be sending out a survey to all our members. I ask you all to please take a moment and make your selections. Courses may be in person or virtual. Also, for those not aware, the chapter reimburses for the last course you take right before your SRWA. So, let's get er' don folks!! ☺

All the best,
Ramie Dawit, RWP
Chapter 57 President 25/26

## Membership Luncheon >>>

***September 24, 2025***
***11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.***

***Speakers:***
***Bernadette Duran-Brown, Esq., Partner***
***Nossaman LLP***
***&***
***Hector Casillas, SR/WA, ROW Manager***
***Riverside County Transportation Commission***

***Topic:***
***How AI is Impacting Right of Way***

***Victoria Club***
***2521 Arroyo Drive***
***Riverside, CA 92506***

## IRWA Courses – Regional 1

*C900 Principles of Real Estate Engineering, 9/10/25, Virtual Class (Ch. 44)*

*C901 Engineering Plan Development & Application, 9/18/25, Virtual Class (Ch. 44)*

*C400 Principles of Real Estate Appraisal, 9/22/25, Virtual Class*

*C413 Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions (Yellow Book), 9/24/25, Virtual Class*

*C205 Bargaining Negotiations, 9/24/25, Virtual Class*

*C303 Project Management (Initiate to Close) and the Consultant Hiring Process, 9/25/25, Virtual Class, (Ch. 44)*

Additional courses are listed on IRWA's website at www.irwaonline.org

Are you interested in taking a free class? Contact any of the Board members, to find out how you can become a coordinator.

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### IRWA Mission Statement

*The International Right of Way Association will be the worldwide leader for innovation and excellence in the acquisition and management of right of way and public use.*


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International Right of Way Association
CHAPTER 57, INLAND EMPIRE
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# Leaders Who Never Lose Their Way

## *The importance of integrity in leadership*

*By Yasmin L. Stump, Esq.*

One of my favorite television shows is CNBC's "American Greed." For those who are unfamiliar with the television show, it is narrated by veteran actor Stacy Keach, known for portraying private detective Mike Hammer in the small screen's "Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer." Each episode of "American Greed" features one or more wildly successful leaders who have lost their way and caused great harm to others in pursuit of the almighty dollar or their diabolical agendas. These individuals who have fallen from grace include entrepreneurs, physicians, pharmacists, politicians and unfortunately more than one member of my esteemed profession — the law. A couple of notorious attorneys who have been featured on "American Greed" include Tom Girardi, the ex-husband of "The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills" cast member Erika Jayne, Alex Murdaugh, a one-time attorney from a long pedigree of barristers in Hampton, South Carolina, and William Conour, a personal injury lawyer from my hometown of Carmel, Indiana. These attorneys were criminally convicted, disbarred and are serving time in prison. Not surprisingly, the bar has the reputation of having in its midst "ambulance chasers," shysters and those who are unscrupulous. After more than 35 years, I have had the unfortunate experience of working with some of them and have become jaded by accepting their existence in my profession.

Given my exposure to the less than honorable at times, one would think that I would not embrace watching them in my precious spare time. But those featured in this television show fascinate me because they are typically highly intelligent, charismatic and successful but wholly abandon their sense of morality. I wonder what these individuals could have accomplished if they had used their intelligence, charm and influence for the common good. It is such a waste, but I do appreciate that righteousness prevails ultimately, and the corrupt are caught and punished. You know what they say about karma. At the core, all of the subjects in "American Greed" lost their integrity — or perhaps they never possessed it.

In Indeed's March 2025 online blog entry "What is Integrity? Definition, Attributes and Examples," integrity is described as "a personality trait that involves having strong principles and using a strict code of ethics to guide your actions." In simpler terms, it is "doing the right thing even when no one is watching," as noted by Jessica Koehler, Ph.D., in her April 2023 online article "The Integral Role of Integrity." Integrity is guided by that voice inside of us, our conscience, which points us in the right direction. True integrity is how we act when we know we won't get caught doing something we shouldn't. An example exemplifying integrity or the lack thereof involves a story about walking down the street behind someone who drops a $20 bill and doesn't realize it. The choices available are to do nothing, pick up the bill and keep it or give it to the person who dropped it. The person with integrity picks up the money and gives it to its rightful owner. The individual devoid of integrity picks up the bill, keeps it and feels no remorse in doing so.

**Integrity starts at the top**

The significance of integrity in leadership is discussed in Day 10 of The Leadership Mission's online 100 Day Leadership Journey, the entry titled "The Importance of Integrity." "Integrity is the cornerstone of leadership. It's the quality that builds trust, earns respect, and

Continues on Page 5

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## *We'd love to hear from you!*

Would you like the Chapter to host a luncheon on your favorite topic? Do you know anyone who would like to speak at an upcoming luncheon? If so, please contact Timothy Green, President-Elect, at (951) 787-7141, or via email at tgreen@rctc.org.

## *Have comments or suggestions for the newsletter?*

We value your opinion and welcome your input! If you have any comments or recommendations for the newsletter, please contact Sheryn Smay, SR/WA, Newsletter Chair, at (951) 826-5343 or via email at ssmay@riversideca.gov.

***Did you know? >>>***

## *Fun Real Estate Trivia*

The debt-to-income (DTI) ratio is a core affordability metric for homebuyers. The DTI can be calculated in two ways: 1) Back end = total monthly debt payments/gross monthly income, or 2) Front-end = monthly housing costs/gross monthly income.

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display integrity in several ways, according to the August 2022 geeksforgeeks.org article "Integrity: Importance and Challenges." The leaders' behavior that exhibits integrity includes keeping their word, being reliable, expressing gratitude to those who have assisted them, respecting others in all situations, being a voice for those who cannot defend themselves and taking accountability. Although all these actions are integral to integrity, in my opinion, the ability to take responsibility for one's actions is critical.

**Integrity at its tipping point**

Ultimately, no matter the example a leader may exemplify, some team members may not follow his or her model of integrity, likely because their antisocial personalities prevent them from doing so. My experience has been that, fortunately, few team members fall in this category, and certainly, most people are not tempted to wholly abandon their moral code in the exaggerated fashion that "American Greed" subjects do.

But there is a level at which a professional's integrity can be tested. It is a tipping point. A team member can become overwhelmed or distracted and make a mistake. Sometimes these mistakes are extremely costly or embarrassing. At this point, a team member's integrity is tested. Will he or she attempt to cover up the mistake or blame it on someone or something else if it is discovered? Or will he or she take accountability for it? In all organizations, impediments to integrity abound. According to Leadership Mission's Day 10 entry, some challenges to integrity include "pressure to compromise, fear of consequences and complex situations." As leaders, not only do we need to exemplify integrity, we need to be vigilant about those situations in which our team members' integrity is tested and ensure that we cultivate a culture that not only supports, but demands, integrity be followed when team members confront challenges.

**Devastating consequences for ethical abandonment**

Professions within the right of way industry protect the public from the crooked by mandating that those within its vocations follow proscribed rules of ethical conduct and provide serious consequences for a professional's failure to do so. For instance, attorneys must follow the rules of professional conduct in the states where they are licensed to practice law, and real estate appraisers are required to adhere to the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice. IRWA promotes integrity in the industry through its credentials and SR/WA designation, and the expectation that its members will abide by its Code of Ethics.

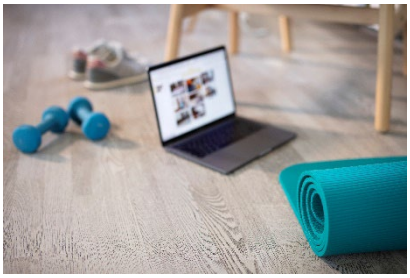
The Association's credentials and designation assure the public, and particularly those in the right of way industry, that individuals holding credentials and the SR/WA designation will act ethically and with integrity. The Association further promotes integrity through its International Ethics Committee, to which ethical complaints can be made against IRWA members who abandon their integrity. The International Ethics Committee ensures that each complaint is thoroughly investigated, and a Committee member renders an opinion on whether an ethical breach has occurred. If it has, then the penalty for the violation is determined. If an IRWA member is found to have defied the Association's Code of Ethics, then he or she has the right to appeal the decision. This process transpires in the strictest of confidentiality until a final decision is made.

In a perfect world, everyone would always act with integrity, and codes of ethics would be unnecessary. Sadly, though, we live in an imperfect world, and sometimes professionals depart from following their moral compasses. Several years ago, I fostered a younger right of way colleague, through introduction to more influential industry members and recommending him to clients and others in need of his services. He was affable, and his career path blazed. Then one day, he went astray. He accepted questionable assignments and produced flawed and reckless work product. His integrity vanished. Ultimately, complaints were alleged against him, corroborated and sanctions were imposed.

"In a perfect world, everyone would always act with integrity, and codes of ethics would be unnecessary."

This story is tragic and deeply disturbs me. This colleague left carnage in the wake of his abandoned integrity. He lost not only a significant portion of his livelihood but also devasted his reputation. The nexus between professional reputation and integrity is symbiotic. In its October 2023 online article "Why Integrity is the Most Important Principle," the Fedeli Group explains, "One's reputation is an invaluable assert, and integrity is a significant factor in shaping it." When I first embarked on my career as an attorney, a more experienced practitioner imparted some sage advice, which I remember often. "All you have as an attorney is your reputation. Jealously guard it." The Fedeli Group adds, "It takes a lifetime to develop [your reputation], but it can be damaged in a short period of time." Ultimately, no matter what profession you are in within the right of way industry — attorney, real estate appraiser, broker, engineer or surveyor — your professional reputation is established by your integrity. Don't just guard it, but as a leader, ensure that you indelibly impress upon your team that integrity is essential for a right of way professional.

*Yasmin L. Stump, Esq. currently serves as IRWA International General Counsel and Parliamentarian. She is also an IRWA Chapter 10 past president. Yasmin is the president and founder of Yasmin L. Stump Law Group, PC in Indiana and has practiced in real estate transactions and litigation, as well as been a member of the right of way industry, for more than 35 years. She has more than 40 years of leadership experience with business and nonprofit organizations and is authoring this column, Leadership.*



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INTERNATIONAL RIGHT OF WAY ASSOCIATION

# Member Spotlight!!

Hello my fellow Chapter 57 members!

In this issue, I am happy to have
*Patricia V. Villa, SR/WA,*
in our "Member Spotlight!!"

Pat became a member of IRWA around 2015 and has since earned her Senior Right of Way Agent designation. She currently serves on the PDC as the Second Chair.

Since becoming a member, Pat says her career has benefited from "connections with other professionals in transportation, utilities, and government agencies. Through collaborations and networking with other professionals, [she] has been able to stay current with regulations and has access to courses, workshops, and webinars about new industry standards."

What Pat likes most about being a member is "having access to resources such as publications, industry insights, and case studies that keep [her] updated on best practices. Additionally, it is great that [she] has access to education and training courses that help enhance [her] professional aptitude."

When asked, what has been her biggest professional achievement? Pat says her "biggest professional achievement has been to maintain multiple cases and see them through from the beginning to closing, while bringing large revenue to the City [of Riverside]."

"My future goals and/or aspirations for my career are to deepen my expertise in specific areas," says Pat. Specifically, in eminent domain as she wants to be the "go to" resource person. Pat "aspires to have a work-life balance that will allow her to have time for personal growth and family."

Working during the COVID-19 pandemic was Pat's biggest career challenge. Pat felt isolated. She "had limited in-person interactions (internal and external), health and safety concerns, delay in projects and timelines due to supply chain disruptions such as construction materials. I agree. It was difficult for all of us. The world is still trying to find its new normal.

A fun fact about Pat is she enjoys working on home improvement projects.

"Pray, hope, and don't worry. Worry is useless. God is merciful and will hear your prayer." – St. Padre Pio
Pat is inspired by these quotes because simply, they make sense.

Pat's advice to new members is to "be patient with yourselves and be ready for contact changes."

This has been a brief look into Pat's life. It's been great getting to know more about Pat and finding the beauty on the outside is on the inside too. 😊

Signing off for now,
Sheryn Smay, SR/WA
Chapter 57 Newsletter Chair

*Did you enjoy the last venue? We would appreciate any feedback you'd like to give. Please reach out to any Board member.*


IRWA Chapter 57
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Newsletter Chair

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*IRWA Chapter 57 June 4, 2025*
*Awards Luncheon*

As you can see by these pictures, it was a great time to be had by all at the June luncheon. We have a picture of the speakers, Eric Schneider and Andrew Saghian, with Christine Santolucito in the top left corner. Below that picture is a picture of the first Duncan Bush IRWA Real Estate Appraisal Memorial Scholarship recipients: Jonathan Ontiveros, Matthew Sunderland, and Noble W. Tucker, R/W-AC. The third picture down on the left is of Ashley Turner, SR/WA, and Kim Bibolet, SR/WA, R/W-NAC. Ashley earned her Senior Right-of-Way designation. Congrats! The last picture on the left is of Darcy Mendoza, SR/WA-GN, R/W-NAC, and Peggy Barnes. Peggy is the proud recipient of the Distinguished Service Award given by the chapter president. Well-deserved. The two pictures in the center of the page are of Darcy, who received the Sustained Member award, and Ramie Dawit/RWA-TN, who received the Professional of the Year award. Darcy has been a member of IRWA for over five years, and Ramie is our current chapter president. Both women work diligently for the chapter, giving it their all. The picture in the top right corner is of Paul Mim Mack. Paul received the award for New Member Service and has already become a valued member of the chapter's board as the new treasurer. Speaking of which, the next picture down shows our new president, Ramie, president-elect, Timothy Green, and treasurer, Paul. The last picture is of the staff at Epic Land Solutions for winning the award for Large Employer of the Year (over 10 ROW employees).

Congratulations to the winners. You are the best!!

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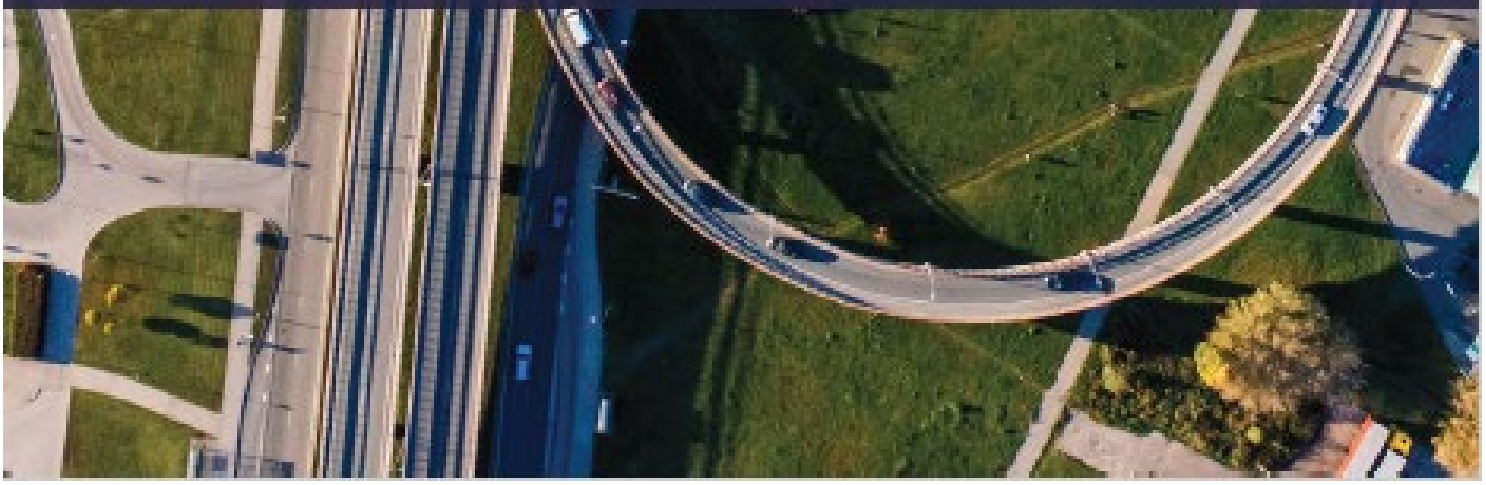
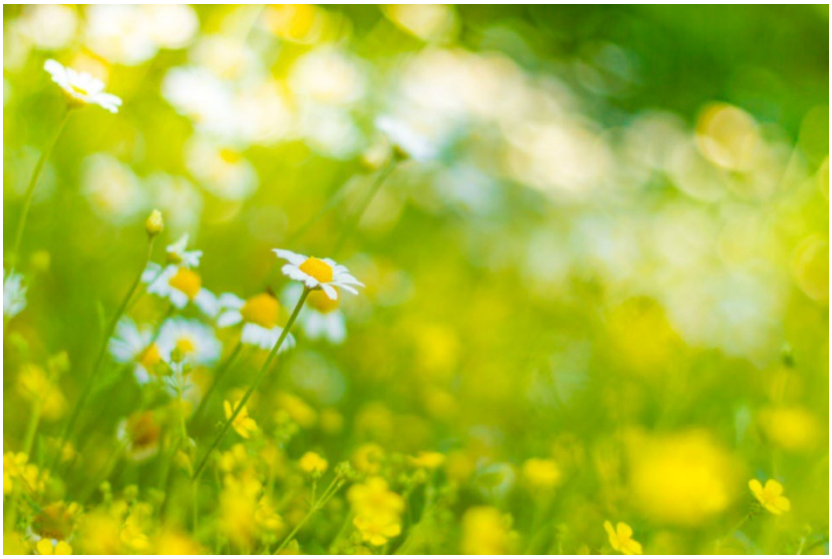


## UPCOMING EVENTS

Chapter 57 Membership Luncheon
Victoria Club
September 24, 2025



## IRWA 71st Annual International Education Conference
Virginia Beach, June 1-4, 2025

From June 2nd through June 4th, 2025, the IRWA held its 71st Annual International Education Conference in beautiful Virginia Beach, Virginia. Darcy Mendoza and I attended on behalf of Chapter 57, proudly representing our chapter's interests at our region caucus and the Board of Directors' Meeting. Rain and wind greeted our arrival on Saturday afternoon but quickly turned to beautiful sunshine. The conference was well attended and provided an opportunity to meet and network with fellow members from around the world and, most importantly, to attend many informative educational sessions covering nearly every topic in the right-of-way industry. I'm proud to report that Ray Mehler, of Chapter 1, was awarded the Balfour Professional of the Year award and was elected as the next Secretary of the IRWA in a highly competitive election. Congratulations, Ray! We're very proud of Ray and fortunate to have such dedicated leadership within our region. Additionally, I'm pleased to report that Chapter 57 donated $500 to the Right of Way International Education Fund (RWIEF). Lastly, contact me if you are interested in receiving a summary of some key educational sessions attended by me and two of my RCTC colleagues.

Paul Mim Mack
Senior Management Analyst – ROW
RCTC

# INTERNATIONAL RIGHT OF WAY ASSOCIATION
## CHAPTER 57

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|---|---|
| President | Ramie Dawit, RWA-TN |
| President-Elect | Timothy Green |
| Treasurer | Paul Mim Mack |
| Secretary | Jessica Andresen |
| | |
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| 2024-25<br>Parliamentarian and Advisor to the Board | Darcy Mendoza, SR/WA-GN, R/W-NAC |
| | |
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| Past President 2022-23 | Hector Casillas, SR/WA |
| Past President 2021-22 | Matt Nusenow, P.E. |
| Special Advisor | Peggy Barnes |
| | |
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| Education Co-Chair | Vacant |
| Education Co-Chair | Vacant |
| Membership | Griffin Wayne |
| Nominations and Elections | Robbie Hechanova, RW-RAC |
| Professional Development (1st Year) | Kim Bibolet, SR/WA, R/W-NAC |
| Professional Development (2nd Year) | Pat Villa, SR/WA |
| Professional Development (3rd Year) | John Chaconas, SR/WA |
| | |
| **Chapter Committees** | |
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| Events | Darcy Mendoza, SR/WA-GN, R/W-NAC |
| Legal Issues | Mark Easter, Esq. |
| Newsletter | Sheryn Smay, SR/WA |
| Young Professional (YP) | Ashley Turner |
| | |
| **Industry Committees** | |
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| Electric & Utilities | Vacant |
| Environment | Matt Nusenow, P.E. |
| Oil & Gas Pipeline | Vacant |
| Public Agencies | John Chaconas, SR/WA |
| Relocation | Vacant |
| Survey | William Estepa, PLS |
| Transportation | Vacant |
| Valuation Co-Chair | Randall Blaesi, ASA, MRICS |
| Valuation Co-Chair | Christine Santolucito, R/W-AC |