

Welcome 2021! Even though 2020 was a long year with more downs than ups for most, we are poised for a strong and successful 2021. As we enter the New Year Chapter 4 continues to move forward, adapt, and evolve as an association. Above all my goal is to continue to facilitate and encourage members to remain connected, credentialed, and involved with our association.

### **Holiday Party Success**

The Virtual Holiday Party in December was a big hit. Even though we were not able to meet in person, the virtual platform “Remo” gave our members the opportunity to sit at virtual “tables” and move around the “room”. The unique layout enabled us to have more relaxed and personal conversations with members. In person networking is something that has been sorely missed in 2020, and Remo reminded us how important and valuable that personal connection is. We would like to extend a big THANK YOU to Miller Nash | Graham & Dunn for their generously hosting our virtual Holiday Party on Remo.

### **Virtual Zoom Board and Chapter Meetings Continue**

Chapter 4 holds our monthly Executive Board Meetings virtually over Zoom and will continue doing so for the foreseeable future. By using Zoom the Board continues to conduct business from the convenience of our home, mobile offices, or wherever it may be. Unfortunately, we had to make the difficult decision to cancel our meeting at the Tulalip Resort in April. We always look forward to the annual meeting at Tulalip but due to the pandemic the Chapter will instead host this virtual board meeting over Zoom. Speaking of board meetings, I wanted to remind you that everyone is welcome to attend the Executive Board Meetings. We are seeking volunteers to help with Social, Professional Development, and Young Professional committees. We also have speaking opportunities available for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. If you are considering becoming involved in the Chapter I encourage you to contact myself or any of the board members to learn more.

Our monthly Virtual Chapter Meetings continue to be a great success. With over 40 people registering to the most recent meeting in January, we are making great progress returning to “normal” attendance at meetings. Kyle McKeon, Local Programs Interim-Director and David Narvaez, Local Agency Coordinator NW Region, presented the Right of Way Local Programs Update to our group. We cannot thank Kyle and David enough for their always informative and engaging presentations.

If you missed January’s meeting make sure to mark your calendar for the next meeting on Wednesday, February 10. We have the privilege of hearing a unique presentation titled: “Acquisition from the Corporate Perspective” presented by Eileen Baker. Stay tuned for more information and make sure you register for this upcoming presentation!

### **Chapter and International Awards**

Now that we made it into January, we are finally in *Awards Season!* Chapter 4 Project of the Year submissions are now open and will be accepted through February 28. If you recently worked on a unique, interesting, challenging, or any well-executed project we want to hear about it! You can find the Project of the Year nomination form available on Chapter 4's website: <https://irwachapter4.org/Awards>. If you have any questions you can contact our NESAs Chair, Nicole Bisset.

Every year at our Annual International Education Conference, we have the opportunity to recognize some of the industry's finest individuals, companies and IRWA chapters who have contributed to advancing the right of way profession. Please take the time to think of individuals, companies, and chapters that have stood out in the past year and deserve recognition by nominating them for an award. **Please note the February 1 deadline is quickly approaching!** As a reminder the following are the award categories available for submission:

*Frank C. Balfour Professional of the Year*

1. *Howard Armstrong Instructor of the Year*

*Employer of the Year (more than 20 and less than 20 employees)*

*Government Employer of the Year*

*Chapter Newsletter of the Year*

*Chapter Website of the Year*

*Young Professional of the Year*

*SARPA Scholarship - University Student Scholarship*

Forms can be found here: <https://www.irwaonline.org/about-us/awards/>

The deadline for submissions is February 1st!

As we continue to face unprecedented challenges and changes to our daily lives, I want to remind everyone to take care of your mental and physical health. To perform at the highest levels, we need to nurture our body and mind. Take a break from work time to time, call a friend or family member, go for a walk, listen to music, enjoy the outdoors when the weather permits. I encourage everyone to start 2021 strong with healthy and sustainable habits!

Warmest Regards,

Jesse Ray, SR/WA

Chapter 4 – President