

IRWA Chapter 1

Q1 - Newsletter

SEPTEMBER

President's WELCOME

A new year of growing our history...



Welcome to our new year, FY2025/2026. We look forward to continuing our Chapter's historical commitment to education and increasing social connection through professional seminars and productive luncheon learnings.

Chapter One members come from all the Right of Way disciplines and members work for some of the most active public transportation authorities and departments, water and school districts, public works agencies, utility companies, railroads, law firms and private consultants in So Cal. Your new Board reflects this unparalleled wealth of experience and expertise, and our aim is that participation in our educational seminars, classes and networking events will always be a highly valuable and rewarding experience.

So, let me begin by introducing ourselves...

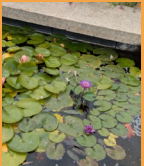
President, Julie Del Rivo Assistant Chief Counsel, Caltrans. I have been practicing eminent domain and other related real property and environmental law matters for 24 years. I have been working for the last 5-years to accelerate the start of high-speed rail infrastructure, handling litigation and advice and counsel matters for Caltrans as it relates to the California High Speed Rail and the Brightline West projects. Of course, these projects and other highway projects bring both new problems and legacy problems to cure. Such challenges keep me focused on serving the public by committing to a thriving and connected California.

I am a So Cal native, and love spending time hiking in our beautiful outdoor spaces with friends and family, including my three grown children.

I can be reached at julie.delrivo@dot.ca.gov.

"If you don't invest in yourself, how can you expect others to invest in you?" Cheryl DeMucci, SR/WA, R/W-RAC

Continue reading in this issue for Cheryl's take on leadership...



2025 EVENTS SCHEDULE

Don't miss out!

September 25th 11:30AM

Chapter 1 Lunch

at Almansor Court

700 S. Almansor Street, Alhambra, CA

December 10th 11:30AM

Tri Chapter Luncheon

at the Huntington Library, Art

Museum, and Botanical Gardens

Chapter 1 is this year's host. This event will include an admission to the gardens, good through the end of the day.

Other Related Events...

September 9th 11:30AM

Chapter 67 Lunch

**Holiday Inn – John Wayne
Airport**

September 24th 11:45AM

Chapter 57 Lunch

Victoria Club

Oct/Nov – TBD

MESSAGES FROM YOUR EXEC BOARD

Continuing to get to know us...



Neidy Pinuelas, President Elect and a member of the IRWA since 2014, where she was actively involved in Chapter 57 and previously held the position of Relocation Chair, Education Chair, and Professional Development 1st Year, 2nd Year, and 3rd Year Chair. She then joined Chapter 1 serving as the Asset Management Chair from 2020-2022, as the Professional Development Chair from 2022-2023, as the Secretary from 2023-2024, and as Treasurer from 2024-2025.

Neidy received her designation as a Senior Right of Way Professional (SRWA) in 2016 through IRWA, in 2015 she received a certification in Relocation Assistance (R/W-RAC), and in 2022 she received a certification in Uniform Act (R/W-URAC).

Neidy began her right of way career in State service in 1997, at Caltrans, working in many disciplines as a Right of Way Agent. In 2018, Neidy accepted a promotion and transferred to District 7-Los Angeles and Ventura Counties as a Senior Right of Way Agent over the SR710 Property Management Rental section where she oversaw a Right of Way team responsible for property management of improved residential, commercial, industrial, and vacant land held for the SR710 corridors. In 2021, Neidy accepted a temporary promotional assignment in HQ Division of Right of Way and Land Services as the Local Assistance/Right of Way Liaison Coordinator and in 2022 accepted a position in HQ Division of Local Assistance, Office of Local Right of Way where she currently serves as Office Chief. Her purview includes ensuring consistency in policy and guidance among the various sections of Caltrans Local Assistance Procedures Manual and Local Assistance Program Guidelines specific to Caltrans Right of Way oversight of Federal-aid highway projects administered by Local Public Agencies and for the management, efficiency, and effectiveness of all Right of Way activities on local administered projects, in accordance with all applicable federal and state regulations, policies, practices and procedures.

Neidy is a 2012 graduate of the University of Phoenix (BS) and was inducted in the National Society of Leadership and Success in 2020. Neidy feels fortunate to have earned a certificate for Right of Way Leader/Manager Certificate (Level III) at Caltrans in 2021. Neidy has lived in Los Angeles County for most of her young adult life before moving to the Inland Empire with her family. She has two adult children and three granddaughters.

Neidy can be reached at neidy.pinuelas@dot.ca.gov





Alana Edwards, Treasurer.

She has been a member of the IRWA since 2005 and has previously held various positions on the Board, including Secretary, Educational Chair, and Pipeline Chair. In September 2007, Alana relocated to Long Beach, California, to join BP/ARCO, where she successfully worked for thirteen years as a Senior Right of Way Agent. For the past four years, she has been employed at Southern California Gas Company as a Senior Right of Way Specialist.

With 28 years of experience in the oil and gas energy sector, Alana has cultivated robust management and negotiation skills, which are essential for securing the land required for the construction, operation, and maintenance of pipeline facilities. Her extensive negotiation experience encompasses a diverse range of agreements, including fee acquisitions, leases, licenses, permits, franchises, easements, encroachments, appraisals, and reimbursement agreements. Furthermore, she possesses comprehensive knowledge of current industry standards regarding technology, production, and operations.

Alana can be reached at AEward1@socalgas.com

YOUR EXEC BOARD, continuing to get to know us...

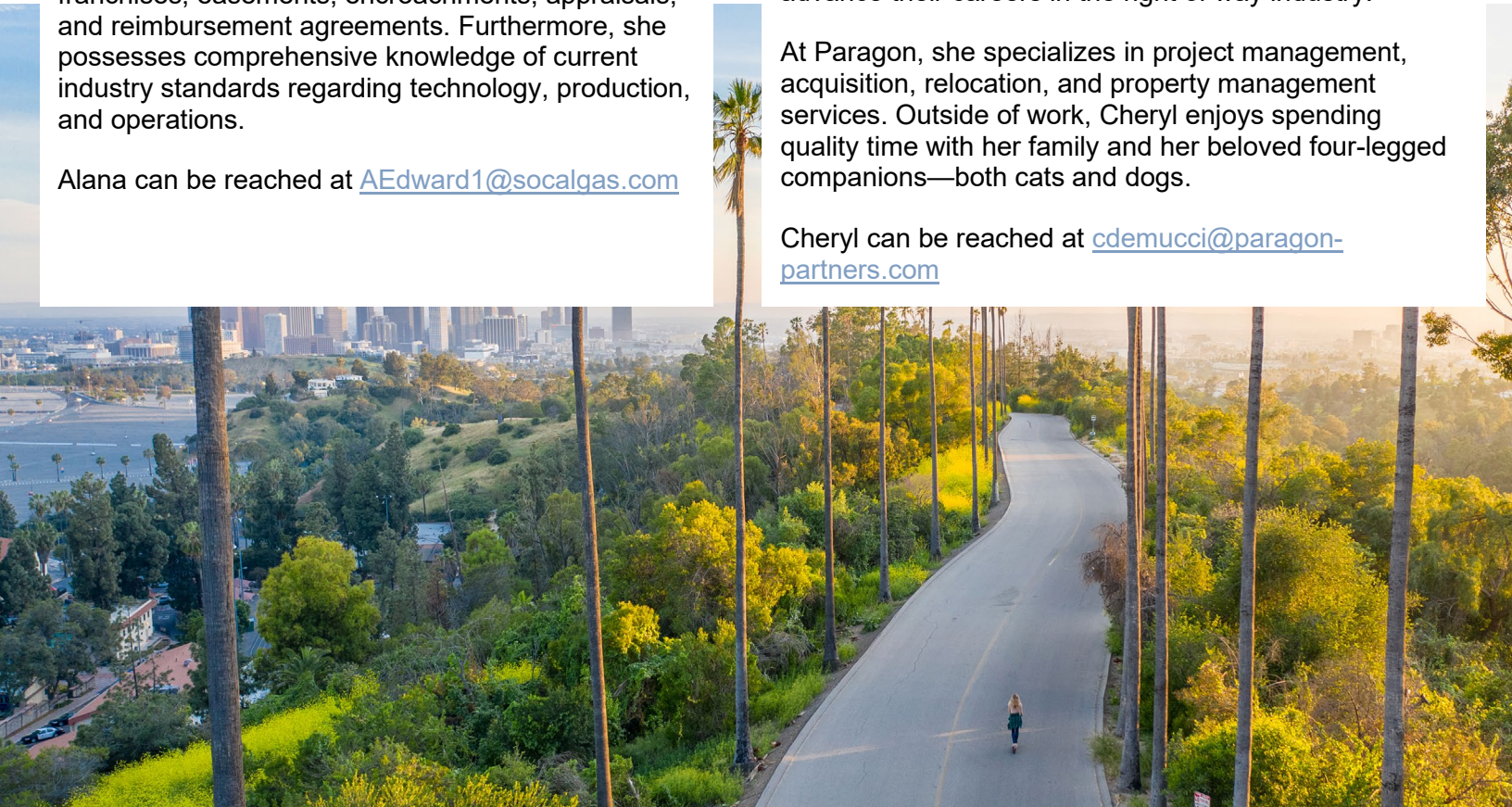


Cheryl DeMucci, Secretary

She is Vice President at Paragon Partners Consultants, Inc. and has been an active member of IRWA Chapter 1 for over 20 years. She began her involvement as the Luncheon Chair, a role that gave her the opportunity to connect with nearly every member of the chapter. As a former Professional Development Chair, Cheryl has mentored and supported many professionals seeking to advance their careers in the right of way industry.

At Paragon, she specializes in project management, acquisition, relocation, and property management services. Outside of work, Cheryl enjoys spending quality time with her family and her beloved four-legged companions—both cats and dogs.

Cheryl can be reached at cdemucci@paragon-partners.com



Leading with
Purpose

Leadership

I want to share what I've learned about leadership throughout my career. I enjoy exploring what makes leaders successful, and I'm always interested in expert perspectives. Let me know if there are specific topics you'd like me to research.

By: Cheryl DeMucci, SR/WA, R/W-RAC

Congratulations, you've been promoted to a leadership position. What comes next?

Becoming a better leader requires intentional growth, and you must take the initiative to start this process. Utilize mentors, books, and podcasts to aid your development. However, the responsibility for your growth lies with you. Identify your strengths and focus your time and effort on enhancing them, rather than trying to improve your weaknesses.

To effectively grow, create your own mentorship plan by reading books, listening to relevant podcasts, preparing a personal growth plan, and actively engaging in those areas. Remember, practice is essential for growth.

****Personal Growth Plans**** – Clearly define what you want to improve. Then, allocate your time and energy towards those goals to achieve a higher return.

Stay consistent. Once you discover your strengths, maintain that consistency as it will lead to noticeable results. Consistency compounds; small efforts made daily can lead to significant achievements over time.

If you don't invest in yourself, how can you expect others to invest in you? While personal drive is important, having a team is invaluable. Find a community where you can share ideas, discuss your projects, and seek feedback. While having a mentor is beneficial, sometimes we need input from multiple mentors throughout our lives.

Reflect on what you need to learn and how you can grow. Leadership expert John Maxwell emphasizes that consistency is a fundamental principle for achieving meaningful, lasting change. He often states, "Motivation gets you going, but discipline keeps you growing," and that "small disciplines, repeated consistently every day, lead to great achievements gained slowly over time." Maxwell highlights that consistency builds momentum and compounds over time, fostering excellence rather than relying on short bursts of intensity.

2025 Fall Happy Hour Survey

by Sarah Riggs, RWA,

I am pleased to be the new Chair for Young Professionals. We're looking to meet up in October/November and I've compiled a list of happy hours in the Los Angeles area by neighborhoods. I'd like your input before scheduling one of these. Please submit your response to me Sriggs@paragon-partners.com. See my trendy yet budget conscious ideas:

Downtown LA (DTLA)

Perch (Rooftop) – French-inspired, romantic, and great for groups with multi-level outdoor space. Happy hour 4–6 pm.

Broken Shaker – Chic rooftop pool bar at Freehand LA. Expect \$12 cocktails, \$8 tacos, and \$12 carne-asada fries during 3–6 pm (Mon–Thu)—perfect for early sunset meets.

Mezcalero DTLA – Laid-back rooftop-style patio with deep mezcal selection and incredible value: drafts around \$4 and bottles at \$3, with snacks and house margaritas from 3–7 pm.

South Bay (Hermosa & Manhattan Beach)

The Mermaid – Picture-perfect for sunsets: beachside seating, rotating "Drink of the Week" at \$5, \$4 beers/wines, plus \$5–\$7 food during 3–7 pm daily.

Top Deck of Hennessy's – Elevated views on The Strand, structured for seated groups. Offers \$5 select drinks and food (like ahi tacos and sliders) during 4–7 pm weekdays

Four Daughters Kitchen – Warm, cozy, perfect for daily socializing. Enjoy \$5 house wine, sangria, appetizers, and half-off drafts every day from 4–7 pm.

Westside (Santa Monica & Venice)

Bodega Wine Bar (Santa Monica) – Unpretentious and perfect for groups who love wine. Happy hour features \$6 wines, \$4 beers, \$6 soju cocktails, and \$6 appetizers daily 5–7 pm.

FIG at Five (Fairmont Miramar, Santa Monica) – Elegant yet accessible—50% off most food and drinks during 5–6 pm daily.

Hama Sushi (Venice) – Casual patio with surf videos and inexpensive sushi starters (\$2–6). Drinks are discounted by \$1, and happy hour runs 4–7 pm daily.

Kassi (Hotel Erwin Rooftop, Venice) – Recently reopened with lush Greek-inspired décor, Pacific views, and lounge seating for ~Great for group style nights, with cocktails and Eastern Mediterranean bites.