Advocacy

Aided in the lobbying efforts that led to passage of the first state gas tax increase in nearly 30 years, which was strategically indexed to avoid future debate, and also created a funding mechanism to support passage of a $45 billion overall State Capital Bill, $33 billion of which was earmarked for transportation.

The State Journal-Register published IRTBA President & CEO Mike Sturino's OpEd on the Transportation Funding Protection Act, which further educates members of the motoring public about the importance of the Transportation Funding Protection Act, which will ensure future funds collected from transportation fees and revenues will no longer be diverted to non-transportation related projects.

Pushed for a Call to Action by members to reach out to their U.S. Senators during recess to set up official meetings, jobsite tours, or attend town halls to advocate the importance of acting now to prevent the cycle of delay and uncertainty that has plagued previous federal reauthorization bills and support America's Transportation Infrastructure Act (ATIA) with highway user fee revenue.

Illinois Road Builders’ Political Action Committee (PAC) hosted a fundraiser to support candidates during the 2020 campaign cycle who assisted our efforts to advance and promote the transportation design and construction industry and will be used to contribute to those legislators on both sides of the aisle who have a proven track record as transportation advocates.
Advocacy (continued)

IRTBA was instrumental in connecting the incoming Gubernatorial Administration with Tollway staff on the issue of the importance of allowing the advertising of bids to move forward as scheduled to ensure a steady stream of work flowing for IRTBA members.

Tracked 302 pieces of legislation (170 House bills, 110 Senate bills, and 22 other resolutions and executive appointments) during the spring and fall legislative sessions. IRTBA Headquarters staff and leadership lobbied Springfield five times and Washington four times.

Met with Senator President Jon Cullerton and Senator Laura Fine to discuss HB 2838, a bill holding General Contractors (GCs) liable for the payment of wages and benefits to employees of a subcontractor (even when the GC has paid the subcontractor in full). John Bryan (Geneva Construction) represented IRTBA at this meeting. HB 2838 is currently stalled and IRTBA will be following this bill in the spring session.

Sent letters to all new members of the State House and State Senate offering IRTBA’s expertise in their official duties. Also sent thank you letters to all State House and Senate members who voted “yes” for the indexed gas tax and Rebuild Illinois Capital Bill, issuing industry’s gratitude for their tough vote and for their support of transportation infrastructure programs.

IRTBA President Mike Sturino in January met with all newly-elected members of U.S. Congress (or their proxies).

Met with new Federal Highway Administration Administrator Nicole Nason on multiple occasions. Some issues discussed included the possibility of a $2 trillion federal infrastructure deal.

IRTBA leaders held a Chicago Mayoral Candidate Forum to discuss candidate’s top priorities, if elected, including discussions about transportation industry issues.

IRTBA lobbied in favor of amendments to the Contract Prompt Payment Act (Senate Bill 1636), which applies to private construction projects and allows retainage to be withheld at a rate of 10 percent for the first half of the construction project, but is to be reduced to five percent once the project is 50 percent complete.
Advocacy (continued)

Strongly advocated for heightened penalties for violators of Scott’s Law due to construction work site near-misses and fatalities, in addition to an increase in State Trooper fatalities. Governor J.B. Pritzker this year signed a package of legislation to strengthen penalties for life-threatening violations on roadways in an effort to protect law enforcement officers, first responders, and road workers. A great success for improved safety in work zones!

IRTBA Chairman Mark Barkowski, Chair-Elect John Kapovich, and President Mike Sturino met with Congressman Jesús "Chuy" García and House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) to discuss the state’s new Rebuild Illinois capital program, the importance of regulatory relief and streamlining, and the need for federal funds for programs like CREATE.

IRTBA Chairman Mark Barkowski and IRTBA leaders attended the inauguration of Governor J.B. Pritzker and other constitutional officers in Springfield.

IRTBA President & CEO Mike Sturino and Board member David Lorig (Lorig Construction) were appointed to Governor J.B. Pritzker’s Restoring Illinois’ Infrastructure Transition Committee. IRTBA President Mike Sturino was also nominated to serve on newly-elected Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot’s Transportation and Infrastructure Transition Committee.

IRTBA Chairman Mark Barkowski issued the association’s unequivocal support of the Lincoln Yards proposal, which will transform a former industrial site into a new riverfront community and create over 10,000 construction jobs and new opportunities for Chicago’s trade industry. The project proposal includes over one-mile of new river walk, an extension of the 606 bike trail, two new vehicular bridges, new roadways, improvements to existing roadways, and major transit improvements.

IRTBA lobbied Springfield against HB 2127 and SB 1326, which would have required professional services firms that do business in excess of $100,000 with the state to use computer monitoring software to track billable hours. Thanks to industry pushing back on this bad-for business bill, these bills were never heard in committee.
Deputy Governor Christian Mitchell served as the Keynote Speaker at IRTBA’s Planning & Design Conference, providing members with insights into the making of the largest State Capital Bill in Illinois history – Rebuild Illinois.

Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs received rave reviews as IRTBA’s 34th Annual Convention Keynote Speaker in February. He provided attendees with relevant and timely information about the proposed Illinois budget, the status of a state Capital Bill (which at the time, had not been introduced), a potential Tollway sale, and the impact of the Treasurer's office on state finances.

IRTBA continued to lead the push to prevent the diversion of transportation funds that fall under the protections of the Lockbox/Safe Roads Constitutional Amendment with additional legal action against Cook County.

Hosted an epic May General Membership Meeting – a whopping 369 people attended to be educated on the timely topic, Focus on Chicago: Transportation in the Lightfoot Administration.

Featured eight FREE Road Builder University Webinars on the topics of the Illinois Tollway: Partnering for Growth (P4G) program; Changing a Distracted Driving Culture, Tollway’s Work Zone Safety Enhancements and Best Practices; a tech-savvy webinar on Drones & Safety, a two-part series on Ethics – Ethics & Agencies and Ethics & Anti-Trust a webinar on the Legalization of Recreational Cannabis and its impact on the industry and firms with drug free workplaces; and Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Compliance.

Hosted a full-day Work Zone Safety Committee Seminar entitle, Train the Trainer. Topics included an overview on silica exposure & respiratory protection; employer liability associated with workplace safety, utility damage prevention, Tollway incident management, and an overview on workers’ compensation return to work programs.
Former IRTBA Board member **Steve Davis**, of The Will Group, was nominated to the Illinois Tollway’s Board of Directors. **David Andalcio**, CEO of IRTBA member firm **Wynndalco Enterprises** was appointed to a five-year term on the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Board of Directors.

Launched the largest ever class of the Emerging Leadership Program to date for the 2019-20 course year. This is, in part, due to the extreme popularity and success of the program, but also thanks to enhancements to Road Builder headquarters office space to allow for larger, classroom-style learning for this program and other live seminar events.

Showcased new members via a new method – during General Membership Meeting introductions. This new process heightened awareness about new firms who joined and improved these new members’ visibility at these specific events. Also promoted new members with company information, logos, and contact information via “New Member Features” published in our Friday Facts eNewsletter, which is distributed to 2,200 members of industry, agency representatives, and legislators.

Encouraged members to attend open houses to advocate for, or submit supportive comments for projects and causes that would benefit member firm businesses, including CMAP’s **ON TO 2050** plan, the Mile-Long Bridge Project on the Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294), multiple Interstate 80 Public Open Houses, the I&M Canal Trail Feasibility Study, revisions to IDOT’s Hot Mix Asphalt specifications, CREATE’s 75th Street Corridor Public Open House, multiple public hearings to advocate for the Will County Local Motor Fuels Tax, IDOT’s Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and its proposed amendments, as well as comments for newly-proposed state highway projects, and the Illinois Tollway’s updates to their standard drawings, base sheets, manuals and supplemental specifications.
Business Improvement (continued)

IRTBA’s Golf Outing this year sold out in record-time – 5 days! A testament to just how valuable this networking event is to our members.

Several IRTBA members were among the winners of "Best Project" and "Awards of Merit" for Engineering News Record (ENR) Midwest’s 35 Best Projects for 2019, including AECOM, Burns & McDonnell, Epstein, F.H. Paschen, HNTB Corp., Kiewit Infrastructure, and Stanley Consultants. Additionally, "Awards of Merit" were given to members Stanley Consultants and Walsh Construction Co. II, LLC (two awards issued). IRTBA President & CEO Mike Sturino was among a group of distinguished judges that reviewed over 100 project submissions to select the winners.

Joined CFMA Chicago to educate members at an Annual Economic Update program, which included educating members on issues affecting the economy and a look ahead at how the economic growth and commercial construction in the Midwest will be impacted by the current fiscal state and new governing policies in Illinois, as well as policy changes in Washington.

Communication

IRTBA leaders and members participated in a vital “thank you” campaign for state senators and representatives who voted in favor of the indexed gas tax increases and passed the largest Illinois State Capital bill ever, Rebuild Illinois. Members hosted and attended Friend of Infrastructure mini-award ceremonies with legislators within their districts and at jobsites to present awards and have photo opportunities to honor and commemorate their commitments to transportation infrastructure. A massive number of meetings occurred and IRTBA advocates and volunteers came out to support events for the following legislators: House Leader Jim Durkin, House Majority Leader Greg Harris, Reps. Tom Bennett, Kelly Burke, Deb Conroy, Will Davis, John D’Amico, LaToya Greenwood, Barbara Hernandez, Stephanie Kifowit, Camille Lilly, Mike Marron, Marty Moylan, Anne Stava-Murray, Sue Scherer, Joe Sosnowski, Karina Villa, Maurice West, Lance Yednock, and Sam Yingling, as well as Assistant Senate Majority Leader Jay Hoffman and Sens. Jason Barickman, Christopher Belt, John F. Curran, Don DeWitte, Ann Gillespie, Don Harmon, Mattie Hunter, Andy Manar, Sue Rezin, Steve Stadelman, and Dave Syverson to express gratitude for voting for the gas tax increase and Rebuild Illinois Capital Bill.
Joined a coalition called *Citizens to Fund Safe Transportation* which supports advertising for legislators who promote transportation investment.

**Incoming P&D Board Chairman Kevin Fitzpatrick** went on the *Sunday Spin* show on WGN Radio to discuss infrastructure.

Pushed out six calls to action the need for immediate capital investment, most notably, drumming up public support for a proposed statewide Capital Bill, which would increase transportation fees and increase funding by $2 billion annually.

Prior to the passage of the *Rebuild Illinois* Capital Bill, **IRTBA Chairman Mark Barkowski** participated in a press conference in Springfield to unveil new language to HB 3233, which would provide $2.4 billion in sustainable, annual funding for Illinois’ roads, bridges, and transit systems. Chairman Barkowski noted the transportation design and construction industry’s support of a long-awaited, long-term funding solution to finance much-needed infrastructure improvements. **IRTBA leaders Julie Chamberlin (Berger Excavating), Rashod Johnson (Ardmore Roderick), and John Kapovich (S&J Construction)** were also present.

**IRTBA CEO Mike Sturino** penned a solid OpEd in the July 9 issue of *Crain’s Chicago Business* on *Fulfilling Chicago’s Transportation Destiny*, as a part of its “Hopes for Chicago” series, looking at Mayor Lightfoot’s first 100 days and what the city’s hopes for her are. *Crain’s* invitation for the IRTBA to contribute to this series underscores the high regard with which the Association is held in key media, business and political circles.

**IRTBA Past Chair Dave Rock** appeared in May on *Fox 32 News* to discuss how Illinois is short-changing road construction a minimum of $700-$800 million every year, noting that the industry has offered up some solutions in terms of how to pay for it, and urging time is of the essence to get it done (at the time, a Capital Bill had not yet been proposed).

Published an update on the U.S. Senate’s Fiscal Year 2020 Transportation Appropriations bill that, if enacted, would provide over $65 billion for highway, transit, and airport capital spending.

IRTBA CEO Mike Sturino appeared on WBBM radio discussing the dire circumstances of some of Illinois’ bridges.

Informed members about several new cabinet and agency board and leadership appointments during the transition of Governor Pritzker’s Administration.
Additional calls to action that preceded the now-passed state Capital Bill, which aided in expressing the urgent need for additional transportation dollars for projects in dire situations, including multiple bridge failures on Lake Shore Drive, Eisenhower Expressway, Des Plaines River Bridge in Joliet, I-80 over Route 53 in Joliet, and the Jefferson Barracks Bridge on Interstate 255 going westbound from Illinois into Missouri, in the vicinity of St. Louis.

Supported the Interstate 80 Coalition both financially and with staff and industry leadership committee representation.

Calls to action were also issued to gather grassroots support in opposition of bills that would harm member businesses, including a bill that would massively expand trucking prevailing wage, a bill regarding fly ash which would have caused the price of concrete to dramatically increase, and opposition for a bill that would make prime contractors liable for subcontractor employee wages.

IRTBA issued a report of the Pritzker Administration’s first month, including synopses of meetings where discussions included plans to garner support for a significant new infrastructure program, their commitment to maintain momentum on the Move Illinois program, the advisement of industry to appoint new leadership to ensure a strong construction season and keep the agencies moving in the right direction.

IRTBA had nine members participating in our #GoOrange4Safety social media campaign this year. Dozens of photos were shared by member firms Ciorba Group, Corkill Insurance, Gallagher Asphalt, Hampton, Lenzini and Renwick, HNTB, K-Five Construction, OMEGA, Tri-State Asphalt, WSP USA, and even Governor J.B. Pritzker participated this year!

IRTBA provided several updates exclusively to members via our Friday Facts eNewsletter on IDOT’s Multi-Year Program (MYP).

IRTBA tracked a flurry of legislation that had the potential to impact IRTBA member firms. Information on significant legislation was published for member consumption in our Friday Facts eNewsletter and on our Bills on the Radar website forum.

Updated members on the Tollway Board shake up, major administration changes within FHWA; new key leadership appointments at IDOT, Tollway, CDOT, City of Chicago government; big leadership changes in the Illinois House and Senate – including new reps on the House and Senate transportation committees; new faces on the federal Transportation & Infrastructure Committee; big upsets in Chicago Aldermanic elections, as well as critical updates to survey worker litigation; NLRB Proposed Rule to Change its Joint Employer Standard; a new Illinois Tollway eProcurement system; Promoted Regional Transportation meetings, hosted by the Illinois Senate Joint Capital Subcommittees to ensure positive input was given by members of the transportation design and construction industry about several potential major improvement projects.
Diversity

Held multiple meetings on diversity and inclusion with Federal Highway Administration Administrator Nicole Nason, Deputy Governor Christian Mitchell, Tollway Executive Director Jose Alvarez, and IDOT Acting Secretary Omer Osman.

IRTBA’s Equal Opportunity Committee Work Force Diversity Task Force collected data from members’ U.S. Department of Labor Monthly Employment Utilization Forms to measure our progress as an industry and continually strive to promote workforce inclusion and meet our diversity goals. The reports showed IRTBA’s workforce is more diverse than the Chicagoland region’s work force demographics in the Hispanic and African American categories. The report concluded that 59.61 percent of the hours worked were by Caucasians (compared to 72.34 percent in Chicagoland); 33.39 percent of hours worked by Hispanics (compared to 19.57 percent in Chicagoland); 5.58 percent of hours worked by African Americans (compared to 4.48 percent in Chicagoland); and 1.06 percent of hours worked by Asian/Native Americans (compared to 2.56 percent in Chicagoland).

IRTBA leaders and members were appointed to serve on the Senate Diversity Task Force for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises Minority Business Enterprises/Women Business Enterprises. Even more of an honor, all nine industry representatives were filled by IRTBA member firms, including Chairman-Elect John Kapovich (S&J Construction), Guillermo Garcia (GSG Consultants), Jennifer Krug McNaughton (K-Five Construction), Dan Meckes (Crawford, Murphy & Tilly), Aaron Ozinga (Ozinga Materials), Mary Person (F.H. Paschen), Leslie Sawyer (Environmental Design International), Harvind Singh (Singh & Associates), and John Trotta (WSP USA).
Diversity (continued)

Publicized and issued congratulations to IRTBA members Anne Wilson (Bigane Paving) and Anne Cotter (Cotter Consulting) for being featured in Crain’s Chicago Business’ list of 2019 Notable Women Executives Over 50.

Promoted USDOT’s announcement of an extension on the guidance review for the DBE Utilization Plan.

Publicized and encouraged members to apply for a $15 million grant funding opportunity to support growth, job creation, increase capacity, boost revenues, and promote expansion of minority businesses.

Advertised several special events expanding business opportunities for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises, including IDOT’s Today’s Challenge Tomorrow’s Reward (TCTR) conference, IDOT’s Highway Construction Careers Training Program (HCCTP), multiple Tollway Move Illinois Quarterly (MIQ) meetings, and Metra’s Vendor Fair -- all of which provide training, skill-improvement opportunities, and/or networking opportunities to assure the increased participation of minority groups, disadvantaged persons, and women in all phases of the highway construction industry and promote diversity and inclusion.

**Road Builder Charities** supported Tuskegee NEXT’s Red Tail Ball 2019, which honors the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen. Tuskegee NEXT transforms lives of at-risk youth with aviation education and career path opportunities.

Published a story in the Friday Facts eNewsletter written by U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth to educate Veteran-Owned Business firms about new federal assistance programs.

Promoted a diversity success story from John Burns Construction Company (JBCC) regarding their “Women Up” program to help increase female participation in the transportation industry work force and to help women advance into leadership roles in the industry.

Publicized information regarding the changes to the state Business Enterprise Program (BEP), which included providing a list of businesses owned by minorities, women and persons with disabilities that the contractor has used in the current or prior fiscal year; removing the Council’s ability to charge a fee for the waiver request; and the changes regarding penalties.

Featured a diversity success story from S.T.A.T.E. Testing regarding their partnership with A Safe Haven foundation to provide a week-long training program opportunity for 20 individuals to have a career in the transportation industry as materials technicians and help advance and promote interest in transportation-related career path.
IRTBA’s Sustainability Council held their 11th Annual Meeting, featuring a review of innovative company practices by the 2018 Sustainability Champion Award winner, Christopher B. Burke Engineering. The event featured education tracks on Clean Construction Demolition Debris (CCDD), a CAM-AM Panel, including sub-committee chairs for HMA, Pavement Preservation and PCC, and presentations by IDOT & Tollway on Agency Innovations & Visions for the Future.

IRTBA participated in a Clean-Fill Coalition this year, which is a clearinghouse and leader on all Clean Construction & Demolition Debris matters. The coalition filed an amici brief in Illinois’ Supreme Court case regarding CCDD and the coalition prevailed in the case.

Informed members about “One Federal Decision” guidance for states making National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews on transportation projects and the collaborative effort to reduce unnecessary project delays.

Kept industry up to date on the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) reports proposed IEPA Amendments to Air Pollution Control Permit Program and comment period.

Promoted member participation in the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency’s (IEPA) proposed amendments to Public Participation in the Air Pollution Control Permit Program (35 IAC 252; 43 Ill Reg 7028) concerning public hearings, comments, and other measures related to Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) permits for new, or significantly modified, air pollution sources in non-attainment areas that have not met federal Clean Air Act standards.

For the first time ever, IRTBA issued hard copy and digital certificates to help Sustainability Council members market their environmental stewardship and membership to the Sustainability Council. Several members capitalized on the free marketing opportunity and posted their certificates and the benefits of SC membership on their website home pages and social media channels.

Members toured 2019 Sustainability Champion Award winner, Christopher B. Burke Engineering Ltd., in Rosemont to check out their sustainability initiatives – including their parking lot garden!