

September 17, 2014

Lee Hamre, IRWA, International President

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, Glueck Auf Damen und Herren.

On behalf of IRWA's 10,000 members in 16 countries around the world, I would like to congratulate IKT on your 20th anniversary and applaud your many achievements and significant contributions to the field of global underground infrastructure research and planning.

Almost 5 years ago, one of our IRWA members had a question involving the impact of tree roots that were growing on and around her municipal underground water system. She started searching the internet for information regarding this subject and up popped IKT homepage on her computer screen. She, being a very smart lady, immediately recognized the amazing work IKT was doing as well as the value in a potential collaboration between our two organizations. Over the next few years, she and her husband, another well respected member of IRWA's professional community have worked vigilantly with our very generous contacts here at IKT to make this potential collaboration a reality ... and the rest, as we say in the U.S., is history!

For over 80 years, IRWA members have come together to identify and address the challenges of acquiring real estate for infrastructure projects. This makes IRWA a natural partner for IKT, since we specialize in providing

connections between the many interest in the underground for the purposes of education, collaboration, and networking.

In 2013, IKT and the IRWA embarked on a new memorandum of understanding, and since that time we have accomplished many "firsts" together as we have collaborated to capture and distribute industry best practices: we've published our first co authored white paper/living document and led our first joint series of global webinars on vegetation and the underground; we are here now enjoying our first collaborative IKT international conference and anniversary celebration; in less than two weeks, we will be engaging in our first professional infrastructure engineering exchange as the City of Hagen sends one of their very talented infrastructure engineers to work with the IRWA's very own President elect at City of Shreveport, Louisiana in the United States. Soon, IRWA in cooperation with IKT will announce our first joint global infrastructure certification entitled Managing the Crowded Underground. When achieved, that certification will demonstrate to the world that the holder is able to grasp complicated issues and apply workable solutions to the management of the crowded underground space. What a wonderful beginning we have made.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our incredible hosts here at IKT

Director Roland W. Waniek

Professor Bert Bosseler

Dr. Sissis Kamarianakis

Herr Thomas Brueggemann

And Dr. Peter Lampret who is a member of our working group from the electric community.

Last but not least, I'd like to thank Herr Christoph Bennerscheidt, who is not only our first friend at IKT but also the IRWAs first German member.

We are very grateful for your help, your hospitality and your friendship.

In closing, as we gather together tonight to celebrate this very important anniversary, IKT and IRWA are poised to move our countries closer to a common vision for research, innovation, and collaboration around global underground infrastructure. We can find IKT's value proposition on this business card, which reads IKT: neutral, independent and non profit, or as Professor Bosseler shared with me, the more appropriate translation of the German "for the public benefit". Our IRWA value proposition can be found on this business card which reads IRWA: building a better world together. My colleagues and I would like to once more congratulate IKT on your 20th birthday, and to tell you how excited we are to have the opportunity to work with you over your NEXT 20 years. IKT and IRWA, for the public benefit, building a better world together.