As I’m sure most of you can relate to, it is hard to believe that 2019 has come and gone as fast as it has. As I look back and reflect on this past year, the word that comes to mind that describes 2019 is “challenging”. Though the Indiana Section was able to continue providing opportunities for our membership to fellowship, the ITE Indiana Section experienced some challenges and unique circumstances in 2019:

The ITE Indiana Section dues were transitioned to ITE Headquarters and membership became a one-time organization membership fee instead of an option to be a local member or national member. This caused the membership dues to increase which, even though new members were provided a new membership for free, for the short term caused our membership numbers to diminish as they got aclimated to the new system.

The membership of ITE was extremely busy this past year in their full time jobs. Obviously this has been a good thing for our industry. However, at the same time, attendance at our technical sessions seemed to diminish which I believe was due partly to the busyness of our industry here in Indiana.

Lastly, the Indiana Section hosted this year’s Great Lakes District Meeting which in itself was a great opportunity to showcase downtown Indianapolis, have some great technical sessions, and meet some of ITE’s National Leadership. Because we hosted this particular event, our Annual Summer All-Day Technical Event was cancelled this year. Even though the Indiana Section Board experienced these challenges, the year ended up being very successful in terms of activities and finances. This is a tribute to our board staying the course, our corporate sponsors maintaining their support, and our membership realizing the benefits of ITE as an organization.

A few highlights from this past year:

- Re-establishment of a social committee being led by Amir, LePhong, and Anne. Look for more social opportunities in 2020!
- A very successful Scholarship Golf Outing this past September where we realized an additional $2400 that will go towards our scholarship fund.
- We had one of our largest pools of scholarship applicants which made choosing our three winners very difficult.
- We hosted several student chapter dinners/functions, including a pizza dinner at Valparaiso University, a formal dinner at Purdue University, a breakfast at Indiana State, and a pizza dinner at Trine University.
- We started a monthly newsletter to help better inform you of ITE activities and news.

As we come to a close, I just want to humbly say thank you to the Indiana Section Board who was just fantastic, engaged, creative, and supportive throughout the entire year. Thanks to all our corporate sponsors for your financial support and allowing your staff to attend our ITE functions. And lastly, thanks to all of our membership for continuing to engage and support the effort of ITE here in Indiana and nationally.

Thank You and Best Wishes,

Richard Zielinski, PE
2019 Indiana ITE Indiana Section President

As we look forward, 2020 should complete the changes that have already been in progress. This will include the transition from the current Great Lakes District to the “new” Great Lakes District, where the Illinois, Wisconsin, and North Central (Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota) Sections will move from the Midwestern District to our District at the end of 2020. We'll bridge the transition by attending the District Annual Meeting in Chicago in 2020, which will be a joint meeting with the current Midwestern District. Then, starting in 2021, the “new” Great Lakes District will be official with a new governance structure. Secondly, the Indiana Section charter and by-laws are in the process of being finalized and will be adopted during early 2020. This will not involve major changes, mostly updating the areas that deal with District Board representation. Both of these changes will help standardize the member experience by aligning the Indiana Section and Great Lakes District with the rest of the ITE International structure.

As a reminder, here are the benefits of being an ITE member:

- ITE Journal – published monthly in hard copy and electronically
- SpotITE electronic newsletter – distributed bi-weekly electronically
- ITE Talks Transportation Podcast – available monthly
- ITE Social Media – distributed daily on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube
- ITE Community discussion forums – available on demand at www.ite.org, exclusive to ITE members
- International, District, Section Meetings – discounts available to ITE members
- ITE Technical Council participation – available exclusively to ITE members
- ITE technical products – 33% discounts available to ITE members
- ITE Library – available exclusively to ITE members at www.ite.org
- Professional Development webinars and training – 33% discounts available to ITE members
- Leadership ITE – available exclusively to ITE members
- Matson/Hammond Mentoring Program – available exclusively to ITE members
- PDH tracking – available exclusively to ITE members

At the heart of the OnewTE effort has been an examination of the membership experience – how ITE can enhance this experience, increase consistency, better meet member expectations, attract new members, and effectively support our leaders, volunteers, and members across all levels of ITE.

The initial OnewTE efforts have nearly been completed. To date, some of the largest changes that have impacted the Indiana Section include streamlined dues, collecting international, district, and local dues at once; broadened membership guidelines to include more professionals in the transportation field outside of engineers; and increased communication from ITE leadership via District and Section meetings.
With the dawn of a new decade on the horizon, we’re stopping to ponder what it will hold for your Indiana ITE Section. 2020 signifies a new decade, a leap year, and supposedly perfect vision. We’d like to be visionary with your Section but can’t do it without your input, so as incoming President I’d like to hear from you. What do you envision for your Section’s future? What would you like to see and get out of your Section? We realize Section events are competing with ever-increasing demands on your time, so we want to make it worth your while to step away from the office.

We want to continue to do the great things previous Boards have accomplished, including scholarships for Civil Engineering students, and support and outreach to university CE programs throughout the state. We’d also like to branch out and encourage even younger students through STEM-related activities and family-friendly Section events.

I’ve been a member of ITE for awhile now and have seen membership and event attendance steadily decline over the years for myriad reasons, so I’d like to switch things up a bit. Let’s see if we can bring more life into the Section - bring in new faces and bring back others we haven’t seen in awhile. Even though human nature tends to resist change, I think we need a bit of positive change at the Section level to complement the change we’ve already seen with the ONE ITE initiative.

I’d like to see us bring more networking to Section events, making them more personable, as well as bringing in new people. The power and benefit of ITE is our collective experience and knowledge, which I believe we should be sharing as we continue to build our niche in the transportation community in Indiana. Let’s sit down for a discussion of current events in our industry instead of just watching another PowerPoint.

With my role at Indiana LTAP (Local Technical Assistance Program) supporting local agencies, I’d like to bring in more local agency personnel to our membership and events. We’ve had great turnouts in the last couple years when we’ve gone to local agencies and highlighted some of their projects. I plan to continue those. And since a significant part of our IN transportation community are not engineers, I’d like to encourage planners, street/highway agency personnel, contractors, vendors, and other industry personnel to attend our events. To that end, for certain events in 2020, members will be able to bring a guest for free.

Lastly, be on the lookout for a survey. I’d like to hear from you about what you would like out of ITE and how best to keep your organization moving forward. With your guidance, your 2020 Board can approach 2020 with a clear vision of what’s to come for Indiana ITE.