



Karine Leblanc, Tim Wentz, Kevin Baldwin

Las Vegas—a city that conjures up late nights, all things big, culinary experiences, and socialization. The 2017 ASHRAE Winter Conference is no exception to this image and as my Uber pulled into the Caesars Palace parking lot, my anticipation and excitement for what was to come took over and brought a smile to my face. I walked into the lobby to check in and could sense an ASHRAE event was about to start. Maybe it was the genial atmosphere that surrounded the lobby or the noticeable engineer dress style of the crowd that allowed my reptilian brain to recognize a week of ASHRAE greatness was about to take place.

I was fortunate to attend my first ASHRAE Winter Conference and first Society meeting because of the Leadership Development through Regional Support (LeaDRS) program. Prior to the Winter Conference, I have attended Sacramento Valley Chapter meetings for the last seven years, Chapter Board meetings for the last four and half years, and have attended three Chapter Regional Conferences (CRC).



Caesars Palace

While attending the Winter Conference, I shadowed our Director Regional Chair (DRC), Karine Leblanc, as she participated in meetings and committees involving various acronyms to describe their purpose. Between meetings, she would answer my questions and provide valuable insight on the ins and outs of ASHRAE. Her candor and expertise about all things ASHRAE helped me discover more about the business

of the organization and the amazing volunteers that help make it run. I also saw just how amazing Region X is. The people in our Region won a student design competition, were given technical awards, made Fellow, presented at tech sessions, and chaired committees. This Region rocks!

As I moved from meetings and events, the 3,300+ attendees I encountered had a passion for ASHRAE and a sense of pride and comradery that was infectious. Attendees greeted each other as if they were family and the meetings and socials felt more like a reunion, than formal business meetings. During a business lunch I had the chance to sit with an experienced ASHRAE member who is the director of engineering at a major HVAC manufacturing facility. He explained that networking at ASHRAE events has created relationships that have allowed him to call another ASHRAE members for honest technical or business advice even if they happen to work for a direct competitor. Over the seven days I was able see how the team of volunteers run this grassroots organization to further HVAC&R and improve our wellbeing.



Board of Directors

As my time concluded and I packed up to head back to my family, I realized how vital volunteering in the ASHRAE organization is not only to the organization itself, but also to me. It has opened up doors that have helped improve business networks in my company. It has helped further develop skills that may be taught in an MBA programs such as communication, marketing, time management, and problem solving. I have met people from our local, national, and international chapters that provided me with new perspectives. I now have a better understanding of how ASHRAE works and where my interests can be used most effectively.

Re-entry to the work world post Las Vegas can sometimes be jarring to the system not only because of the fast paced days and late nights, but also because of the overwhelming amount of information and experiences that need to be processed. Since being back, I have been able to make use of new contacts and connections made at the Winter Conference and apply key strategies as I plan the upcoming CRC. I am grateful for the opportunity provided by LeADRS and Karine Leblanc as well as the sense of connectedness and socialization that I was able to experience at this year's Winter Conference. Thank you.



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