



## **The Value of Regionalizing ICIS User Conferences**

**By Barry Logan, ICIS Executive Director**

In September 2011, ICIS held its inaugural User Conference in Sidney. At that time, ICIS coordinated the event with the MISA conference in order to accommodate those members who needed to travel from various parts of the province. At the time the event was considered to be relatively successful. Certainly, the goal was to leverage that success in order to grow attendance and value.

In 2012, plans were established to schedule a second centralized conference. However, ICIS Operations later concluded that in order to extend the reach of ICIS, it was more prudent to take the show on the road and regionalize the User Conferences. This change in direction was ratified by the ICIS Board of Directors and plans were solidified to hold five events in 2013 in Kelowna, Ft. St. John, Burnaby, Central Saanich and Nanaimo.

Needless to say, regionalizing the user conferences greatly improved the ability to attract more ICIS members that are more proximate to each conference location. This measurement on its own justified the decision to continue with the regionalized structure in 2014. This year, ICIS has completed three events further highlighted in this newsletter with four more planned for Fall 2014.

The value of regionalization goes far beyond increased attendance numbers. In fact, high value is realized via the different personas that each event takes on during the event itself. I find it very interesting that even though each event starts with an identical agenda, the outcome and interaction are all completely individual. At each event, interaction is encouraged with a focus for collaborating on each agenda item. What is of extremely high interest in Kamloops may not be seen as a priority in Prince George while only the participants in Ft St. John see a completely different initiative as important. Yet another endeavor may strike a chord in all regions. It is very important that the messaging is delivered accurately and meaningfully and by the authority whenever possible to initiate the collaborative process with all member segments. Earning the attention of the participants leads to dialogue and feedback that can only be realized in this type of setting. This feedback forms the intelligence that is gathered from each conference that is pooled yielding a database of information to be used for further assessing, determining and scoping of each ICIS initiative. Obviously, more interaction leads to richer data.

This data truly represents a provincial view in aggregate with regional priorities. This outcome reflects the real value of regionalizing the ICIS User Conferences.

As always, thank you for your ongoing support of ICIS and if not already, then I look forward to meeting you on your turf at an upcoming ICIS User Conference.