
Growing into the New Year: Tierra's Right of Way Division Hires 14 New Staff Members

With plenty of new projects planned through 2015, Tierra's Right of Way Division is on a roll. We've taken on a great deal of new work this year, and to help us continue to expand our reach in Arizona and beyond, we've hired 14 new right of way staff members who are already making a big impact!



Amy Tracey, Senior Right of Way Agent, joined Tierra in May and brings nine years of experience in right of way negotiations, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regulations and procedures, project and contract management, and Uniform Act compliance. Ms. Tracey has worked extensively with public agencies in the past, including as a consultant to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, FHWA, and the New Jersey Department of Transportation. At Tierra, she is currently responsible for negotiating right of way acquisitions, performing complex relocations for multiple agency projects, developing process and policy improvements, mentoring staff on relocation activities, providing quality control for all relocation activities, and reviewing and approving all relocation determinations and claims prepared by Tierra's staff. Ms. Tracey is based in our Tucson headquarters.

Tierra's own **Mike Steele, M.A.**, formerly a Senior Planner in our Environmental Planning and Cultural Resources Division, has transitioned into a new role as a **Relocation Advisor** with Tierra's Right of Way Division. Mr. Steele is a 10-year employee of Tierra. His expertise in planning and zoning, in addition to his 15 years of experience as both Planning Director and Director of Community Development for the City of Yuma, make him a valuable addition to Tierra's right of way team. In his new position, Mr. Steele completes complex relocations on multiple Agency projects, assists with process and policy improvements, and coordinates the development and approval of cure plans for partial acquisition properties. Mr. Steele is based in our Tucson headquarters.



Kevin Hendon, Right of Way Agent, is a right of way professional with over 25 years of experience. A veteran of the oil and gas industry, Mr. Hendon's extensive experience includes overseeing and coordinating field and in-house operations, contract negotiation, and resolving all kinds of right of way issues, including site acquisitions; natural gas pipeline easements; lease negotiations; compressor, valve, and meter site negotiations; permitting and zoning issues; easements; damage settlements; and completing feasibility studies. In his new role with Tierra, Mr. Hendon completes negotiations for complex right of way acquisitions, performs relocation activities for multiple agency

projects, develops process and policy improvements, mentors staff for acquisition and negotiation activities, provides quality control for all acquisition activities, and reviews and approves all acquisition settlements prepared by Tierra's staff. Mr. Hendon is based in our Tucson headquarters.

Elisabett Vargas, Right of Way Agent, has more than 10 years of experience working in the right of way and real estate acquisitions industry. Prior to joining Tierra, she was employed with SWVP Management in Tucson, where she performed administrative and support activities that kept the land development office and business park association functioning efficiently. Ms. Vargas possesses personable communication skills and expertise in developing and maintaining team and client relationships. She is skilled at resolving challenges and emergencies with flexibility and a positive attitude. A bilingual negotiator, Ms. Vargas conducts negotiations for real estate acquisitions and provides relocation assistance at Tierra. Ms. Vargas is based in our Tucson headquarters.



James "Jimmy" Brown, Right of Way Agent, has worked for Tierra on an as-needed basis for over 10 years. He first worked for us in New Mexico on our first ENMR telecommunications project. Later, he worked as a contract Right of Way Agent for Tierra's Las Vegas office, performing work mainly with Southwest Gas. Most recently, Mr. Brown worked on the Washington Rural Access Project, a 1,400-mile fiber-optic project that spanned the state of Washington. Mr. Brown started with our Tucson Right of Way Division at the end of September and will be joining the Phoenix team in January.

Our Tucson headquarters isn't the only branch with new faces! Tierra's Phoenix team recently hired **Alicia Urquidez**, a five-year veteran of the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), as our newest Phoenix-area **Right of Way Agent**. At ADOT, Ms. Urquidez handled most of the right of way acquisitions on publicly owned land, including Bureau of Land Management and Arizona State Land. Prior to joining ADOT, Alicia worked for a right of way firm with a national presence. She is an effective and personable communicator, allowing her to easily negotiate and liaise with numerous personality types—even the most sensitive landowners or agency leads—to achieve the desired project goals and ensure a smooth transition. Ms. Urquidez's role with Tierra includes both acquisition assignments and providing relocation assistance.





Also joining the Phoenix team is **Rhiannon Zuleger**. Prior to getting her real estate license, Rhiannon worked as an Administrative Assistant before transitioning into sales and support in the food brokerage and tourism industry. Since 2003, she has actively sold real estate and provided support for other Agents. Her husband, Tommy, is a former Tierra employee. She is new to the industry but will soon be talking shop with Tommy over dinner! We look forward to training Ms. Zuleger in acquisition and relocation and believe that she will become a great team member in Phoenix.

Starting very soon, **Susan Lane** will also join the Phoenix office. With a background in sales, marketing, and human resources, Ms. Lane began her career in the right of way industry in 2013, when she started performing acquisitions as a contract Right of Way Agent for Southern California Edison. She is moving back to Phoenix to be closer to family, including her son, who is attending Arizona State University. Tierra's Phoenix office will provide her with training on relocation assistance and she will soon be a versatile Right of Way Agent with experience in both acquisition and relocation.



Tierra's right of way team in Washington State is also expanding. **Paula Ferreira-Smith, RW-RAC, Right of Way Agent**, is our newest hire in the Pacific Northwest. She brings 19 years of experience in right of way acquisitions and relocation to our team. A specialist in performing residential and commercial relocations, Ms. Ferreira-Smith has performed complex acquisitions and relocations for transportation, utilities, and transmission power line projects in Washington, Alaska, New Mexico, and Texas. She is Right of Way Relocation Assistance–certified (RW-RAC) by the International Right of Way Association and will be instrumental in

helping Tierra serve our growing client base in Washington. She has hit the ground running, and we are glad to have her!

Staffing Support Hires

Tierra's staffing support program offers public agencies and other clients right of way staffing solutions for their project needs. Tierra was recently challenged by ADOT to fill five contract staff positions in their Right of Way Division. Tierra completed this challenge, filling all five positions. These contract staff agents work at offices at ADOT and are supervised by ADOT as if they were ADOT employees. **Annette Valverde** worked for Tierra many years ago and we are glad to have her back. **Steve Salazar** worked for Coconino County prior to becoming a contract employee for Tierra and managed our team on several projects. **Dennis Haley** recently retired from the City of Scottsdale's Real Estate Division. **Don Solon** was the Real Estate Manager for the City of Phoenix prior to his retirement there a few years ago. **Harold Murray** has worked as a right of way

consultant for several years. We welcome these professionals to Tierra and look forward to working with them over the coming years.

And We're Still Growing!

With the addition of 14 staff members, our payroll has grown significantly, but we still need more Right of Way Agents to handle upcoming project workloads in Arizona! If you know of someone in the industry looking for long-term employment or someone that has excellent people skills and a diverse background, **please have them contact Mack Dickerson, Vice President of Right of Way Operations**, at mdickerson@tierra-row.com.