



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**Robert D. Card,**  
RBEC, RRC, RWC, REWC  
President



**A**s I write to you this month from my cold and wet corner of the planet, my thoughts are drifting toward late March when we will gather for the 2020 IIBEC Convention and Trade Show. I invite you to join me this year as we return to the Marriott Marquis Houston and George R. Brown Convention Center, which should provide more favorable weather for us northern folk (an agreeable change). The hotel is an excellent place to spend a few days, providing superb amenities, including a rooftop infinity pool and a Texas-shaped lazy river, a full-service spa, a fitness center, and six restaurants and bars.

Our 2018 convention at this location set new records for participation, and it is expected that we will exceed those figures again this year. The sponsorship and convention exhibitor numbers have surpassed last year's, and product demonstrations were sold out by last November.

As appropriate for a new decade, 2020 will be a year of significant change, including full immersion in our IIBEC brand and introduction of IIBEC CEO Brian Pallasch and several new staff members.

Golfers will again enjoy the challenge of Wildcat Golf Club for the President-Elect's Golf Tournament on Friday, and an opportunity to cheer (or heckle) President-Elect Scott Hinesley in action.

Three full days of technical education are scheduled, presenting a great opportunity to fulfill continuing education requirements for registrations at one event. Auxiliary education offerings include a comprehensive legal issues overview and a historic preservation program that will become an IIBEC education course.

The two-day trade show will provide numerous opportunities for interaction with

industry influencers and decision makers.

The schedule also includes an abundance of networking events, region meetings, the annual Meeting of the Members, and an Awards Luncheon where newly minted registrants, outstanding IIBEC chapters, and exceptional IIBEC volunteers are recognized (\*your\* name in lights!).

Our keynote speaker, A.B. Stoddard, is an editor and columnist with political news site and polling data aggregator RealClearPolitics, as well as a frequent contributor and guest host for numerous shows as a non-partisan political commentator. Ms. Stoddard offers detailed and smart political and electoral analyses, fitting for a year of election tumult sure to challenge us all.

The annual Foundation auction is also a part of the program, and this year's event will present considerable opportunity for donors and bidders alike to support the essential work of the Foundations. Submit your donations now, and leave a little extra space in your luggage to take home your loot.

The convention app is completely new this year, and it includes an interactive floor map and the ability to scribe notes and schedule meetings—all from the convenient surface of your favorite handheld digital device. The app is available for download from your favorite app site (search for: "IIBEC convention").

After nearly two decades of regularly attending IIBEC's (and other organizations') conventions, I am continually amazed by the unmatched quality of this event that our crew of volunteers and staff present each year. I encourage you to take time to personally thank members of the Convention Committee and staff when you see them in Houston next month.

Cheers!