



NTSA PRESIDENT JAMES ROBB REFLECTS ON I/ITSEC 2018

What a great year! We had over 16,300 attendees go through the doors with growth in all attendance categories. Government participation was extremely strong, growing to over 300 attendees, including an all-star roster of distinguished visitors. Our international participation totaled over 1,830 from 60 countries, an increase of ten, demonstrating the expanding reach I/ITSEC has across the globe.

The conference program was densely packed with high quality tutorials, papers and special events. Our emphasis on Innovations in Learning and Artificial Intelligence was extremely well received. We successfully introduced the “Launch Pad” special event that brought cutting edge technology demonstrations to the I/ITSEC show floor. We also hosted Operation Coalition Warrior, a network integration project on the show floor sponsored by NATO and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

The Congressional event was a dynamic discussion of issues impacting the industry, with insights from Congressman Bobby Scott of Virginia, Stephanie Murphy of Florida, John Rutherford of Florida and Jack Bergman of Michigan. The need for the modeling and simulation industry to provide cost effective solutions was a constant theme. We appreciate congressional support for I/ITSEC and will continue to work with them during the next year to develop the M&S legislative agenda.

The opening ceremonies were fantastic, with extremely strong keynotes from Admiral Chris Grady from the U.S. Navy Fleet Forces Command and Stan Deal, President and CEO of Boeing Global Services. Both inspired the crowd with hard hitting points and out of the box thinking. The Flag/General Officer and SES panel that followed was a great discussion of service and NATO challenges and opportunities. Our thanks to all for taking the time to be with us.

I have been hosting a roundtable of universities attending I/ITSEC for the last three years and the group has grown from 5 in 2015 to over 65 this year. We will continue to emphasize our dedication to workforce development through our partnership with the Advanced Distributed Learning initiative and increased engagement of the academic community. We increased funding for all I/ITSEC STEM programs this year and are fully dedicated to getting highly qualified technical professionals into the training and simulation workforce. We doubled our Scholarship awards, giving out 7 Ph.D. and 2 Master’s awards to the leaders of the future.

We had a significant number of distinguished visitors, with many attending for several days. They recognize that I/ITSEC provides an amazing opportunity to collaborate within their own organizations as well as across the entire modeling and simulation community. Numerous government groups are now holding leadership meetings onsite, in order to take advantage of the large number of stakeholders present each year.

I wanted to share my deep appreciation to the Conference Committee and the other 350 volunteers that plan and execute the conference and exhibition. I/ITSEC is as much a community as it is an event and your dedication and efforts are central to our success. A special thanks to Debbie Langelier and Shannon Burch for executing their new I/ITSEC leadership roles flawlessly. We will say goodbye in January to Patrick Rowe, who is leaving to become the new Executive Director of SISO, the Simulation Interoperability Standards Organization.

I wish all of you a Merry Christmas, Happy Holiday and a prosperous New Year. Recharge the batteries and get ready to start planning I/ITSEC 2019 in January.

