Steven Garner has been the District Administrator (DA) for the Canadian District of ITE (CITE) since 2015. The position was initially described to him as being responsible for taking care of the District’s website and maintaining a filing system and contact lists. However, it has very much evolved into so much more. He tells ITE Journal he appreciates the variety and flexibility of the position. “One of the great things about doing this work is that it is so varied and I’m able to apply many facets of my skills and experience to making things run smoothly,” he says, “whether that be providing IT support and implementing solutions, advising on processes, reviewing contracts, or providing a liability risk assessment, it’s been well suited to someone with my background.”

Garner’s professional background is in geographic information systems (GIS), specifically in local government. From this focus, he gained experience not only in GIS but also in municipal operations (because, he explains, GIS touches pretty much all of them) as well as in information technology. In addition to GIS-specific work, he also served in a role as an IT coordinator in municipal government.

Throughout his working life, Garner has lent his level one accounting training and professional perspective as a member of many non-profit organization boards. These roles have provided him with insight on the myriad financial and legal aspects of running a non-profit. The variety of missions and experiences have been very gratifying for Garner, who cites his most rewarding work in this regard was on the board of the Central Saanich Police in British Columbia, Canada. “I served as the board sponsor of the strategic plan at the time and was an instrumental contributor in coming up with the new motto that now appears on the force’s crest—‘Strength through Community.’ That motto also relates so well to ITE.”

Garner’s adventurous and pioneering spirit is evident to all who have crossed paths with him. So it’s not surprising that he doesn’t credit degrees or certificates or any kind of formal training when talking about what led him to CITE. “What really prepared me for work as a District Administrator was my venture into purchasing and running a small marine supply retail store in the village where I live. You really are a true jack of all trades when you are running something like this. You learn to solve problems as you go,” he notes. “I really feel for small local enterprises like this, especially in the current climate. It’s a hard slog and I wish more people would support their local business, which are often the lifeblood of our communities.”

One of Garner’s proudest accomplishments as the Canadian DA is steering the organization into incorporation as a national non-profit organization. At the time, the organization did not fully comprehend the benefits (or the risks) of not incorpo-
rating. Under Garner’s direction, not only did incorporation put in place a protective legal framework for the organization, but he believes it helps to legitimize all that they do.

Garner takes great pride in what he does and who he serves, but he is not officially a member. “Interestingly, it is only recently—based on changes to the ITE bylaws—that I would qualify for membership. Having said that, being an ITE member, in my mind, has one key and overarching benefit: that is the community built around the organization. I have met so many great people doing great work through ITE. It’s the community that really matters, and ITE is a good one!”

CITE is indeed a strong community and clearly in good hands with Steven Garner’s consistent behind-the-scenes work. Yet perhaps one of the keys to his success is achieving balance while pursuing his many interests, whether that’s on the land, on the sea, or in the sky. His academic career began in visual fine arts, and he still breaks out the paints and easel or grabs his camera to experiment with photography. As an avid sailor, you can find him with his wife Shelley and their puppy Luna, an Icelandic Sheepdog, heading out to enjoy the beautiful waters around Southern Vancouver Island. He also enjoys flying and is three-quarters of the way to completing his private pilot’s licence. Although, things are at a standstill with COVID-19, he looks forward to completing the requirements as soon as he’s able. In the meantime, this renaissance man reflects on the attitude that helped him succeed. “Do things willingly to help people and don’t think about what’s in it for you. The sooner you can do this, the faster you will surround yourself with good people and success.”

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Getting to Know ITE’s Canadian District

Sections
- Atlantic District
- Canadian District
- Manitoba Section
- National Capital Section
- Northern Alberta Section
- Quebec Section
- Saskatchewan Section
- Southern Alberta Section
- Lethbridge Chapter
- Southwestern Ontario Section
- Toronto Section
- Vancouver Island Section

Members
- 2,031 members

Student Chapters: 16

District Board Leadership
- President – Julia Salvini, P.Eng. (M)
- Vice-President – Ryan Vanderputten, M.Eng., P.Eng. (F)
- Secretary-Treasurer – Pedram Izadpanah, Ph.D., P.Eng. (M)
- Past-President – Edward Soldo, P.Eng., FITE (F)
- International Director – Jen Malzer, MSc., P.Eng. (F)

Did You Know?
- A new initiative called excite was formed to help people get involved in CITE and develop in their profession. excite is for emerging members, whether they are a student or recent grad, early in their career, or just getting involved in CITE.
- CITE was named the 2020 District Innovation Award winner by ITE. 2019 marked a significant year in CITE’s efforts to support Sections, streamline operations, and enhance its Annual Conference while continuing regular programming for members. These initiatives have been undertaken to provide the best member experience and facilitate the work of CITE’s Section volunteers.

Historical Perspective
- The first ITE Annual Meeting held in Canada took place in Ottawa, Ontario in 1976.
- The Canadian District began as a Section and was formed in 1951.
- Leo E. Laviolette became the first Canadian to serve as ITE International President in 1982.

The CITE newsletter Transportation Talk has been in circulation since 1979 and is published electronically on a quarterly basis.