

NEWSLETTER

Winds of Change

HOW GIS TECHNOLOGIES ARE **TRANSFORMING THE LAND SURVEYING INDUSTRY**, CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR FIRMS READY AND WILLING TO EVOLVE

By: Gerry Donohue

For more than 2,000 years, land surveying hardly changed at all. In one generation, it has changed completely.

The advent and explosive expansion of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology has rocked the surveying industry. With technological developments certain to accelerate in the coming years, surveyors must adapt to fast-changing market realities or risk being left behind.

“Surveyor justifiably take a lot of pride in their profession,” says Janet Jackson, president of Intersect GIS, a consulting firm that works with surveyors. “But they need to retool and



change their business model or they're going to go broke.”

Complete and Accurate Data

Since its inception, land surveying has been routed in hands-on precision. The equipment has improved over the centuries, from the chains

Continued on Page 3



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It has been said that the only thing that remains constant is change. This saying cannot be more evident than after reading the article in this newsletter about surveying. Within my short tenure in the profession the functions we performed when I first started have changed dramatically. No longer do we use log books, fixed legs, or plane tables. Nowadays we barely break out a tape, plumb bob or a calculator during our daily tasks. The profession is changing and the question is are you?

My trip to San Diego this year to attend the Survey Summit and ESRI user conference was troubling. Over the years of attending this conference I have seen surveyor attendance decline. The GIS market is growing by leaps and bounds while the

Continued on Page 13

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Continued from Page 1

and levels of ancient Egypt to the astrolabes of the Middle Ages.

The theodolite was introduced in the 17th century, evolving by the early 19th century into the transit, which was popularized by railroad engineers heading west. Transit technology entered the electronic age in 1971 with the introduction of the Total Station.

Despite many advances, one constant remained: To achieve survey grade levels of accuracy - plus or minus one centimeter - a crew of trained, properly equipped professionals had to go out to the site and take measurements.

The rapid growth of GIS systems over the past 20 years has fundamentally altered that dynamic. It's suddenly possible to gather measurements using a wide variety of technology-based tools, ranging from a handheld global positioning system (GPS) unit that costs less than \$100 to mobile scanners with price tags topping more than \$1 million.

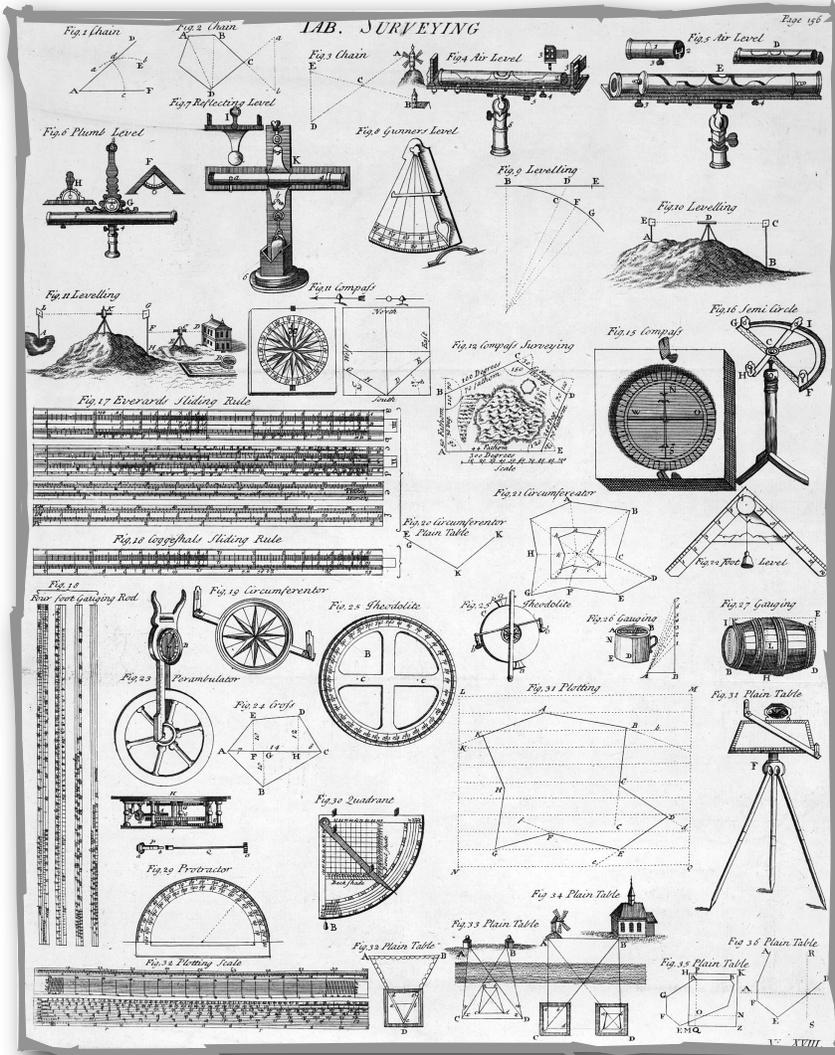
These tools, especially the more budget friendly, aren't as detailed as traditional surveying mechanisms, but they don't need to be, because the biggest growth sector in the field is the mapping of assets. Municipalities and property owners want to know what they have - the number of trees, the condition of the roads, the location of all the Starbucks. "The owners need accurate and complete data," explains Jackson. "But it doesn't need to be precise."

The lack of precision was a big factor in the surveying industry's initial resistance to GIS. Many surveying experts perceived it as a separate field.

"Surveyor's misunderstood the purpose of GIS," says Marcus Reedy, director of surveying and geomatics at David Evans & Associates in Portland, Ore. "They got hung up on the accuracy and didn't recognize how they could use it."

Surveyors apse felt "threatened" by all the attention given to GIS, says Ammon Bush, senior manager for geomatics at Shumaker

Continued Next Page



Massachusetts Association Of Land Surveyors + Civil Engineers

Continued From Previous Page

Consulting, Engineering, and Land Surveying in Binghamton, N.Y. Looking to protect their market share, many surveyors hunkered down behind their state licenses. Critics tried to restrict what GIS could be used for and who could use it, but the technology continued to gain steam. Today, there is growing pressure in some state to allow GIS professionals to work in areas that currently require a surveyor's license.

Computing Precision + Power

Surveyors continue to resist GIS at their own peril. Not only is the accuracy differential between GIS and surveying equipment rapidly narrowing, but the technology is saturating the market.

Some say it's a matter of time before GIS equipment achieves survey-grade precision.

Providers are already testing the technology's limits. GeoAutomation, a Belgian firm that produces a mobile-scanning system, employs a van equipped with 14 cameras. The van moves down the road at 55 miles per hour. Each camera takes 28 images per second.

"We specialize in very high accuracy positioning, especially in urban areas, where

there is often limited GPS reception," says Tony Saleh, COO of GeoAutomation, which has a North American office in Montréal. "In many applications, we can guarantee accuracy to within one inch."

While plus or minus one inch isn't precise enough, Saleh draws a parallel to aerial photogrammetry. "Ten years ago, they could deliver accuracy up to three feet. Then it was two feet, then one foot. Today it's six inches. We believe the same progression will happen with mobile mapping technology."

Bush says the technology may soon advance alt level where the general public will have access to affordable equipment with survey-grade precision.

At the same time, computing technology has made possible the storage and rapid analysis of nearly incomprehensible amounts of data. Where a survey crew produces data a point at a time, GIS generates terabytes.

Surveying and Mapping, Inc., and ACEC Member Firm based in Austin, Texas, won an Honor Award in the 2012 ACEC Engineering Excellence Awards for its mobile Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) mapping of a seven-block area in downtown Austin, which project organizers say was conducted in a

Continued Next Page



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Massachusetts Association Of Land Surveyors + Civil Engineers

Continued From Previous Page

fraction of the time of conventional surveying methods.

McKim & Creed, a Wilmington, N.C.-based surveying and engineering firm, recently embarked on a pilot project using airborne LIDAR technology, which produces highly accurate measurements with sophisticated laser pulses.

"The equipment has become so good that we can get a couple-of-centimeter accuracy flying at 60 knots," says Tim Cawood, senior vice president at McKim & Creed and former chairman of ACEC's Council of Professional Surveyors. "If we're doing a flood plain survey, we can cover a hundred miles a day or more."

As the LiDAR scans the floor plain, it generates massive amounts of incidental data, such as width of roads, location of transmission lines, or wetlands boundaries, which creates tremendous additional value at little if any additional cost. McKim & Creed still employs more than 20 survey crews, but Cawood says

the primary focus in the surveying industry has moved from the on-site collection of data to its management, analysis and presentation.

"Instead of having surveyors out in the field, GIS technology brings the field into the office in a virtual world," says Cawood. "The prism pole is now a mouse."



Industry Consolidation

For many surveyors, the transition from the field to the office has been difficult. "A lot of these guys got into the business because they like being in the field. They like the trucks and the equipment," says Jackson. "They don't want to spend their days in front of a computer."

Most surveying firms are small, local operations - 70 percent don't operate outside a 100-mile radius of their office - and their ownership is graying. "The average surveyor today is 58 years old," says Brent Jones, global marketing manager for survey/cadastre/engineering at Esri, which manufactures GIS software. "That's not a time when you want to spend \$100,000 or more to transform your business for a new market."

"Or more" is the operative phrase. One of GeoAutomation's mobile camera vans cost more than \$600,000; an airborne LIDAR setup

Continued Next Page

Continued From Previous Page

can add up to more than \$1 million.

While such large investments can set a firm apart from its competition, expenditures will soon be the price of admission. "Within 10 years, mobile scanning will be as common as GPS is today," says John Matonich, president and CEO of Rowe Professional Services in Flint, Michigan. Though these systems will become more affordable in time, other better, faster, more precise and more expensive technologies will compete to take their place.

Hardware is important. But to use these technologies effectively firms also must understand the software that helps navigate collected data. And that means training. "We already have a highly skilled staff," says Mantonich, "but we have to invest in some pretty sophisticated training to stay abreast of the demands and needs of some of our clients."

The New Land Surveying Firm

These changes will likely shake the foundation of the surveying industry for years to come. The adoption of new technologies will likely lead to consolidation, with large firms boasting regional, national and even international reach. In turn, small firms, long the backbone of the surveying

industry, will become increasingly marginalized.

Large companies have the financial muscle to invest in new technologies and training, and many are positioned within the broader marketplace to reap the benefits of those investments.

"Transmission line mapping has been mandated for North America," says McKim & Creed's Cawood.

"The owners of the utilities will hire companies to do low-altitude LiDAR. That's going to be more than \$1 billion in mapping." Cawood says that low-altitude LiDAR will likely become the standard for mapping the nation's huge transportation infrastructure network.

With larger firms moving to dominate the hot asset-management market, small surveying firms will find themselves in competition for legal and boundary work, which currently accounts for a shrinking 20 percent of the overall surveying market.

The number of survey crews in the field is expected to drop dramatically. Not only do mobile-scanning and other remote-sensing technologies reduce, even eliminate, the

need for human measurement across huge swaths of land, but the addition of GIS technology to on-site measurement equipment allows firms to field smaller crews.

But that doesn't mean business will disappear. Successful survey firms will transition from collecting data to organizing, managing and analyzing it. The value these

bring to the market lies in their ability to collect data from a wide variety of sources, organize and analyze it, and deliver it to clients.

"With the growth of GIS, the opportunity for surveying firms is unbelievable," says Esri's Jones. "Surveyors know data. They know precision. They have the expertise. They can use their experience to manage the data, making sure it's always there and always right."

Says David Evans' Reedy, "We're definitely in the investment and growth mode for these new technologies; fully integrating GIS is our survey business. The market is only going to get bigger, and we want to be in a position to take advantage of that."



With the growth of GIS, the opportunity for surveying firms is unbelievable

The FIG Young Surveyors Network (YSN) provides a great opportunity for young surveyors to join together, network and become involved with other young surveying professionals around the world.

A Young Surveyor is defined by FIG as a person 35 years old or younger or within 10 years of graduation with a Bachelors or Masters degree in surveying/geomatics.

The YSN was established as FIG Commission 1 (Professional Standards and Practice) Working Group 1.2 Young Surveyors at the FIG Congress in Munich in 2006. In 2009 it became the FIG Young Surveyors Network and currently has the status of a Commission-level body within FIG (International Federation of Surveyors).

The Purpose of YSN is to:

- To improve the number of young professionals participating within the FIG.
- To help young professionals in the beginning of their careers with contacts.
- To increase co-operation between the commissions and the students and young professionals network.

The first Young Surveyors Conference was held in conjunction with the 2012 FIG Working Week in Rome, Italy. Over 120 young surveyors from over 40 countries participated. The next YS Conference will be held at the 2014 FIG Congress in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The YSN is a great resource for not only networking and becoming friends and colleagues with other young surveyors from around the world but also provides information on opportunities for internships, scholarships, study and training opportunities and jobs around the world.

In September the YSN was involved in the IV International Training Course in Topography for Young Surveyors held in Madrid, Spain. This two-week annual course covers all things related to surveying including traditional surveying techniques, GIS, photogrammetry/remote sensing and laser scanning using the latest in technology. The course is taught in English. Fifty young surveyors are invited to attend and participate. The only cost is the airfare to the venue. All other costs (accommodations, meals, training, etc.) are covered. Details about the 2012 program can be found at www.fig.net/news/news_2012/training_course_topography.htm. In 2012 the 50 young surveyors came from 17 different countries. In 2013 it is anticipated that two American young surveyors will be invited to attend and participate. A truly great opportunity!

The YSN is also involved in many worthwhile endeavors including the UN-Habitat/FIG Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) and Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) and the FIG African Task Force where young surveyors can become involved and help make a difference in improving conditions in developing countries.

The YSN has a very active presence on Facebook (FIG Young Surveyors) and LinkedIn (FIG Young Surveyors Network) and you are invited and encouraged to join in with hundreds of young surveyors from around the world already participating.

The future of surveying is in your hands and the FIG Young Surveyors Network is a wonderful resource and tool to encourage and support your success.

More information, including the latest YSN newsletter can be found at: www.fig.net/ys. For more information or questions the YSN email address is: fig.youngsurveyors@gmail.com.



YOUNG SURVEYORS



Friday, November 22, 2013

A Watershed Moment: Changes to FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program – FIRM Mapping and Elevation Certificates

Richard Zingarelli

NFIP Program Coordinator, Massachusetts DCR

Dean Savramis (invited)

Mitigation Division Director, FEMA Region I

Robert DeSaulniers (invited)

Flood Insurance Specialist, FEMA Region I

**Holiday Inn Mansfield/Foxborough, 31 Hampshire Street, Mansfield, MA
8:00 AM Registration; 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM Seminar**

\$190 BSCES & MALSCE Members; * \$250 Non-Members

**Members of CALS, MSLS, NHLSA, NYSAPLS, RIFMA, RIPLS and VSLS can attend for the member rate*

FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is currently undergoing dramatic changes. Major upgrades to the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) have already been implemented and more changes are coming. Insurance premiums are rising dramatically to more accurately reflect actual flooding risks. Massachusetts, with its miles of coast and major rivers and streams, is constantly dealing with the threat of flooding. The seminar will focus on the changes to the maps, NFIP, elevation certificates, and online submissions.

Registration Deadline: Friday, November 15, 2013

Information/Registration: Register to attend this meeting and pay by credit card online at <http://bit.ly/FEMAworkshop112213>. To register online for an event at the member rate you must login using your assigned username and password. If you do not know your member login information call 617/227-5551. You can also register for this event by mail or email. To do so, download and complete an Event Registration Form available at [http://www.bsces.org/bsces/file/BSCSEEventRegForm\(1\).pdf](http://www.bsces.org/bsces/file/BSCSEEventRegForm(1).pdf) and follow the submission instructions. Space for this program is limited to 80 attendees so register early! Cancellations received after Friday, November 15th and no-shows will be billed.



This presentation provides 6.5 Professional Development Contact Hours (PDH) and 6 CFM® Continuing Education Credits (CECs).

What every lawyer should know

(OR AT LEAST WE HOPE THEY DO!)

The American Bar Association Section of Times than Not)" by Hermanson. Other Real Property, Trust and Estate Law, has subjects covered include certifications, codes, published a third edition of "Land Surveys, A Guide for Lawyers and Other Professionals." (The 2nd edn. was published in 2000). The editor is Mitchell G. Williams, an attorney practicing in New York City. Williams is also a licensed surveyor and a member of NSPS/ACSM. The Guide is comprised of articles by twelve authors well-known to the surveying profession including such New England locals as Knud E. Hermanson, Harlon Onsrud, Donald A. Wilson and Robert W. Foster, and is divided into two parts.



Other subjects covered include certifications, codes, title insurance, expert testimony, boundary disputes, surveyor's knowledge of the law, definition of surveying services, surveying in multiple jurisdictions, land descriptions, records research, easements, uncertainties in boundary locations, aerial photography, the National Flood Insurance Program, licensure, ethics, surveyor liability and an American history of early surveying.

Part 1, Land Surveys; An Introduction is further divided into three chapters. "What Every Lawyer Should Know About Title Surveys;" "What to Look for When Examining a Survey Map;" and "Advanced Survey Examination Issues," are by Williams and Onsrud, Lee Hixon PLS, and Richard F. Bales Esq. Chicago Title Insurance Company, respectively.

Surveyors in private practice work constantly with attorneys, some of whom are often poorly informed on the role of the surveyor and his/her responsibilities. In fact many surveyors get their work directly or indirectly by referral from attorneys. The Guide is a reference that should be on the bookshelf of every attorney whose practice involves issues relating to land, land titles and land use. The Guide can be a useful gift from a surveyor to that attorney he/she works with so often.

Part 2, Certifications and Codes of Practice is divided into another 24 chapters from Chapter 4, a discussion on the ALTA/ACSM Land Title Survey Standards by Bales and Gary R. Kent, PLS to Chapter 27, "When is a Rod Not 16.5 Feet? (More

It goes without saying that the Guide should be on every surveyor's bookshelf, as well. It can be ordered from: American Bar Association, Publication Orders, P.O. Box 10892, Chicago, IL, 60610-0892.

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UPDATE ON LANGUAGE OF HOUSE BILL H1859

SECTION 39. Said section 81X of said chapter 41, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out the fourth paragraph and inserting in place thereof the following paragraphs:-

Perimeter Plans: Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this section, the register of deeds shall accept for recording, and the land court shall accept with a petition for registration or confirmation of title, any plan bearing a professional opinion by a registered professional land surveyor that the property lines shown are the lines dividing existing ownerships, and the lines of streets and ways shown are those of public or private streets or ways already established, and that no new lines for division of existing ownership or for new ways are shown.

Lot Line Changes: The register of deeds and the land court shall accept for recording or registration any plan showing a change in the line of any lot, tract, or parcel bearing a professional opinion by a registered professional land surveyor and a certificate by the person or board charged with the enforcement of the zoning ordinance or by-law of the city or town that the property lines shown: do not create an additional building lot; do not create, add to, or alter the lines of a street or way; do not render an existing legal lot or structure illegal; do not render an existing nonconforming lot or structure more nonconforming; and are not subject to alternative local rules and regulations for minor subdivisions under section 81P of this chapter. The recording of such plan shall not relieve any owner from compliance with the provisions of the Subdivision Control Law or of any other applicable provision of law.

MALSCE AND THE NSPS 100% MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM



Recently, MALSCE has voted to join the 100% membership program offered by the National Society of Professional Surveyors (NSPS). This means that, starting on July 1, 2013, all state-resident, registered (PLS) members of MALSCE will automatically become full members of the national land

surveyor's' organization, NSPS. On a voluntary basis, MALSCE's Associate and Life members will also be able to join NSPS at the greatly reduced rate of \$40 per year. Normally, NSPS dues cost \$225 per year but under the 100% membership program, the dues will only be \$40. At the moment, the \$40 dues will be added to the regular MALSCE dues. However, there may be some adjustment to the dues structure to reduce this impact. MALSCE members who are currently NSPS members will only have to pay one half of the current NSPS

annual dues to cover their membership until July 1, 2013.

As you may know, NSPS has recently emerged from protracted organizational negotiations with legal modifications leading to ACSM being merged into NSPS. NSPS has realized that, if they are going to increase their standing with Congress and other national organizations, they need to vastly increase their membership within the U.S. surveying profession. From their affiliate representatives, the current 100% membership

Continued Next Page

Massachusetts Association Of Land Surveyors + Civil Engineers

School of Engineering Technology
Surveying Engineering Technology
Carlton Brown, *Ph.D., P.L.S., P.E.*
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July 25, 2013

Re: Surveying Engineering Technology (SVT) scholarship and equipment Foundation accounts

Dear Supporters of Surveying Engineering Technology:

While normally a form letter is a short-cut to writing individual letters, in this case it has a unique defined purpose. We all have financial limits to donating, and for most of you SVT is one of many organizations being donated to. Some of you are organizations, some of you are working professionals, and some of you are happily retired. The amount of donation does not affect the sincerity of your donation. I thus treat the total of your donations as one very generous sum.

In April 2013 we awarded 11 \$700 scholarships which are typical of previous years. Note we try to fund as many students as possible in their academic careers. Thus generally students do not receive scholarships multiple times as our rule is "spread the wealth". With this year's awards we have funded 95% of our current students at least once with a Foundation scholarship. This excludes students that are fully funded such as our Aramco supported students.

In addition to scholarships, we have endowment funds providing \$9,275 for equipment and laboratory support this year. Note we have created a modern teaching facility, optimized the GPS base station operation, and purchased photogrammetric work stations with previous income from this endowment.

Please be aware of how deeply grateful the SVT faculty and students are for this level of support. Our program may be small by University standards, but our support is outstanding compared to many larger programs. Needless to say we would be honored to receive more contributions if that is ever possible as we exist off income driven from our principal.

Thanks again for your continued support of SVT.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Raymond Hintz'.

Raymond Hintz, P.L.S.
Professor & Coordinator
Raymond.Hintz@umit.maine.edu

MAINE'S LAND GRANT AND SEA GRANT UNIVERSITY
A Member of the University of Maine System

October, 2013 page 11

Continued From Previous Page

concept emerged and has been offered to all state associations. As of February 2013, sixteen states have adopted the program, seven are currently reviewing the agreement prior to adoption, and another ten have responded positively. The ground swell of enthusiasm for the 100% membership program will undoubtedly lead the majority (if not all) of the state affiliates joining the program.

As members of NSPS, we will all enjoy a variety of member benefits, not the least of which is a broad, group insurance program. Policies can be obtained for general business, individual health and life, professional liability, and group health (<http://www.arm-i.com/Pdf/BusinessInsurance.pdf>). (www.mmicinsurance.com/NSPS)

By being part of the national association, MALSCCE will be represented at the national level on important issues affecting the Land Surveying profession. NSPS, through their geospatial public affairs consulting firm, provides lobbying services to advocate on issues like LightSquared, railroad monumentation, FEMA changes, and professional registration. Members will also be kept informed of actions in Congress and by

Federal agencies affecting members' business and professional practice. NSPS administers various national programs related to land surveying including the Trig*Star program for high school students, the Certified Survey Technician (CST) program, the certified hydrographer, and fellowship and scholarship programs. Members also receive online subscriptions to the ACSM Bulletin and the Surveying and Land Information Systems (SaLIS) Journal and government affairs newsletter

updates via email. Additional savings come through significant discounts on professional books, reduced fees for conference registrations, continuing education programs, and workshops.

MALSCCE believes the 100% NSPS membership program will yield a stronger national land surveyors' voice and greatly enhances the benefits package for our members.

For more information on NSPS and member benefits go to: www.nsps.us.com

EGR 410 BOUNDARY LAW

Online Asynchronous Text Based Course

15 Weeks, 3 Credits, Spring Semester

Charter Oak State College, CT
www.charteroak.edu

Textbook: *Evidence and Procedures for Boundary Location, 6th Ed., Robillard et al*

This course is not an FS review course but an in depth class on boundary law in both public lands and metes and bounds states. It has proven helpful in mastering boundary law issues for the FS examination.

Instructors: Jay Doody PLS & PE (CT) and Jason Racette PLS (CT, MA, ME) who has 12 years of experience with BLM.

For more information contact Jay Doody at jjdoody@snet.net

Continued from Page 1

Surveyors role seems to be headed to only Boundary work. This is really a self inflicted wound as both ESRI and the GIS community have tried to encourage surveyors to become involved, especially in the land base control layers. The only group that hears their requests for help are the USGS folks. I know that everyone is concerned that working in GIS does not meet survey related accuracies. So what! If there is such a huge market for accuracy to the closest foot why are surveyors being such poor businessmen? Besides I bet your insurance agent would welcome the change of guaranteeing your work to the closest foot instead of the closest quarter of an inch!

Unfortunately there is one issue that remains the same and does not seem to change. The organization MALSCCE is struggling to maintain enough surveyors to keep the organization going. Instead of being part of the organization, when the dues invoice goes out, all we hear is what is MALSCCE doing for me. MALSCCE is you and what you make of it! Volunteering is not going to steel all your free time, in fact the time you spend is minimal. The commonenarity and information you gain far out ways your time invested. Please make a difference and be an active member of the organization.

I am happy to report that over the last year we have stopped the bleeding in both

members and dollars and this year we are making a minor upswing. It has been challenging to maintain the same level of services as membership fell by 50% during the recession. We hope you understand we have done the best we can with your dues dollars. Our support team at TECET has done an exemplary job supporting us even as we have had to substantially cut their budget. As we grow we will be able to add back what we have lost and ask for your patience. Joining with NSPS will no doubt add value to your membership. Your help will make a huge difference. Let me dismiss one notion that MALSCCE is not a "good old boys club". MALSCCE is what you make of it. With your participation MALSCCE will have a bright future!

UPDATES ON THE BOARD OF REGISTRATION

The regulations have not yet gone to the printer.

Here's what they are working on in the Division of Professional Licensure:

Aug. 29 – Board of Registration approved revisions to 250 CMR based on public comments and recommendations from the 250 CMR committee.

Now: Forms are being completed by Division of Professional Licensure staff: For Small Business impact, and other required forms

Goal: by September 13: submit revision and forms to the Secretary of State's office

If the Secretary of State is set with these revisions (still has chapter title/ contents issue), then the Secretary of State could publish the official regulations effective September 27.

If the Secretary of State is able to make them effective September 27, then the plan is to provide them on the web on September 30 or October 1.



Save The Date!



The MALSCCE convention is undergoing a change of seasons!

This annual event, which has historically been held in early fall, will be held in March 2014 during the current fiscal year. The 2014 convention, which will be hosted by the MALSCCE Central MA Chapter, is still in the planning stages.

This day and a half program will feature a vendor exhibit, general and two-track concurrent sessions, Professional Land Surveyor and Surveyor-In-Training Refresher courses, and plenty of down time for networking with your peers.

Look for future emails with additional program information, as well as information on how you can exhibit and advertise during this event.



2014 MALSCCE CONVENTION

Friday, March 7, and
Saturday, March 8, 2014

DoubleTree by Hilton
Hotel Leominster formerly
Four Points Sheraton

99 Erdman Way,
Leominster, MA 01453

Hosted by MALSCCE's
Central MA Chapter