Ask Not What Your Profession Can Do for You...

An Informal communique from the NSPS President

Marc Cheves, thank you for suggesting this venue for the NSPS president to share thoughts and observations. I’m sure many of my personal observations will find their way into this space. I do not consider this space the place for formal reporting from NSPS. Look to the NSPS website or your e-mail inbox for that. Rather, I hope to share my attitude and my personal perceptions with a hope that you will gain a little insight and that I may gain welcome feedback and advice.

Recent years have been exciting for NSPS and for surveying and mapping. In my own roles as a plebeian, a professional, a member of local, state, and national organizations, and officer of same, I’ve seen what has the appearance of big changes in the practice of surveying. As a speaker, consultant, and instructor, I’ve seen and explained how little the practice of surveying has changed over time. What a dichotomy!

The things that have changed are, for the most part, mere details. Our new tools operate with either finer detail or over much larger spans. Some merely imitate what older ones did more quickly. One irony is how often the increased speed is compensated by our proclivity to add “eye candy” to our work.

The past year as president-elect I was given a charge to stimulate our committee activity. As anyone who has held a leadership role knows, any fraternal or professional association of more than a few people can only work as well as the productivity of its committees allow. With that in mind we streamlined the NSPS committees with an eye to accountability and ease of reporting. Those who volunteered for committee work are the real source of energy for NSPS. I had hoped for a little more activity than we’ve seen thus far. I trust that will improve with time and acclimation.

NSPS provides many services to its members and information to others. Visit the NSPS website (www.nsps.us.com) and browse the menus. There you will find Programs, Advocacy, Education, Public Relations, Resources, Foundation, E-store and Future of Surveying. NSPS is and has been at the forefront of improving the future of the surveying profession. There is the venerable TrigStar competition and its scholarships. This year we exhibited at the national Association of School Counselors convention to reach almost 2,000 school counselors. The NSPS Foundation manages several surveying scholarships for NSPS and other benefactors. NSPS now hosts the Forum for the Future of Surveying, a program initiated by the NCEES to study causes and remedies to the perceived reduction in the supply of future surveyors because of a drop on those applying for licenses.

NSPS is governed by a Board of Directors. The BoD is composed of delegates from each jurisdiction that participates in the NSPS Joint Membership program. Delegates from other affiliates participate without voting privileges. The BoD meets semi-annually. (As this is written, I am preparing for the mid-term conference in Arizona.) During the interim, the BoD charges the Executive Committee with decision making authority until the BoD meets again and approves actions of the ExComm. The ExComm is made up of the elected officers and four delegates appointed from and by the BoD. Day-to-day administration is handled quite efficiently by the NSPS staff of four employees. I can assure you that your interests as a member of NSPS are taken very seriously and treated with great care by those involved. The closer one gets to the action the greater one is impressed with the dedication of those serving you and the surveying profession. If you are not involved, consider volunteering, and/or financially contributing to your organization.

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Tony Cavell is President of NSPS, a consulting surveyor, and works day-to-day at the Louisiana State University Center for Geoinformatics.