



Editorial

>> Marc Cheves, LS

Diversifying

As this issue goes to press I am wrapping up another cross-country road trip, our third this year. This time, I've traveled through fifteen states, stopping along the way to meet with companies and surveyors to interview them and learn their stories. You'll read more about them in our upcoming issues. I'm encouraged by what I'm hearing across the country: while not overloaded, surveyors I've spoken with tell me that they still have some work. While it hasn't removed the pain of downsizing, this is much improved from the beginning of the year.

One of my stops was my home town of Oklahoma City. Like many Midwestern towns, business owners in the once-bustling downtown area either moved to outlying shopping malls or closed their doors altogether. Downtown Oklahoma City was also hit particularly hard by the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in 1995. In addition to the striking memorial that was constructed to welcome visitors and honor the 168 Oklahomans who lost their lives, the town fathers also designed plans to bring people back downtown at night. Bricktown was created and each time I've visited this vibrant section has had more and more activity. The residents of OKC, understanding that investment was needed, have even voted tax increases to fund infrastructure construction. The private sector has responded as well and now, block after block of new restaurants and attractions, including a minor league ballpark, are a beehive of activity. Oklahoma City was even successful in luring an NBA team—the Seattle Sonics—now the Oklahoma City Thunder.

While there I had the distinct pleasure of visiting with and interviewing Mr. John Keating, the man who gave me my start in surveying back in 1963, and the rest of the folks at Topographic, Inc. Begun in 1958, the company has created a large regional reputation in the oil and gas industry. Due to nature of the oil industry, which is driven by the price of oil, Topographic has diversified over the years. While never heavily involved in land development surveying, the company has been using ESRI software since 1993 (back then GIS was called AM/FM). An early adopter of GPS, Topographic has transformed the way it does its positioning work. I look forward to sharing their story in a future issue.



Likewise, we here at the magazine are busy diversifying our offerings. Our online company, Spatial Media, now includes five different websites. In Asheville, North Carolina we recently met up with our editor Randy Noland of machinecontrolonline.com, and associate editor Paul Hahn, another industry veteran. With its stellar lineup of contributing writers, MCo is off and running and generating excitement about a vital part of the new economy. A large part of the website is devoted to how surveyors can fit into machine control. Another example of this is Part 2 of Ken Crawford's modeling series in this issue.

We hope you'll enjoy this issue with articles about companies from Utah to Toronto, both the result of previous road trips. Our desire is to continue to innovate and bring you quality, unbiased and connected publications—in print and online—about geospatial activities. Everywhere I go, I am humbled by the outpouring of compliments we receive about the magazine. Surveyor to surveyor, I thank you for your continued support!

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PUBLISHER Allen E. Cheves
allen.cheves@chevesmedia.com

EDITOR Marc S. Cheves, LS
marc.cheves@chevesmedia.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR Joel Leininger, LS
ASSISTANT EDITOR Jacalyn Cheves
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER Jason Metsa

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Dale Beeks | Jeff Lock |
| Joseph Bell, LS | Dan Martin |
| Joe Betit, LS | John Matonich, LS |
| Shawn Billings, LS | Jerry Penry, LS |
| J. Anthony Cavell, LS | Al Pepling, LS |
| C. Barton Crattie, LS | Walt Robillard, Esq., LS |
| James J. Demma, Esq., LS | Fred Roeder, LS |
| Dr. Richard L. Elgin, LS, PE | Gavin Schrock, LS |
| Fred Henstridge, LS | Angus W. Stocking, LS |
| Chuck Karayan, LS | Patrick Toscano, LS |
| Gary Kent, LS | John Wilusz, LS, PE |
| Wendy Lathrop, LS | Robert Young, LS |
| Thomas Liuzzo, LS | Rj Zimmer, LS |

The staff and contributing writers may be reached via the online Message Center at amerisurv.com

GRAPHIC DESIGN LTD Creative, LLC
WEBMASTER Joel Cheves
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE Richard Bremer
CIRCULATION Mirta Ryker

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