



## Editorial

>> Marc Cheves, LS

# THE American Surveyor

A FOOT IN THE PAST... AN EYE TO THE FUTURE

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## Machine Control Redux

I have received a fair amount of response to my July editorial about machine control. Responses included those who agree with me as to the inevitable impact it will have on the future of surveying and those who accuse me of selling out. Notwithstanding those states such as California that require a surveyor's seal for surveys that pertain to civil works, most states confer a surveying license for one thing: boundary surveying. While it is nearly inconceivable that accurate GIS coordinates could supplant the need for a boundary survey, in many jurisdictions these accurate coordinates exist because municipalities require them on subdivision plats. In the future, when RTNs just "work" and no longer require a surveyor's expertise, what's to keep John Q from looking for and setting his own corners? In an era where technology is making it possible for non-surveyors to perform tasks that formerly required a surveyor, this threat is real. Granted, the subdivision plats that contain State Plane Coordinates only exist for the newer subdivisions, so in the older parts of town, boundary surveying as we know it will remain. The property rights of our citizens will demand this. Public pressure, for instance being able to quickly get a survey performed, can also be a threat. We've seen this in the recent attempt in Alabama to relax the licensing laws for rural surveyors.

All is not lost, however. As the legal profession has turned away from boundary survey knowledge, abundant opportunities exist for us to take advantage of our expert knowledge about real property law. Attorneys and title companies are increasingly demanding this skill. Likewise with machine control. Even though the work we do will evolve and change, plenty of opportunities exist for us to apply our skills in measurement and positioning. So, for those who are willing to embrace change and stay ahead of the curve, the future looks very bright.

### New Writers

Space constraints in previous issues prevented me from acknowledging two of our newest writers, Robert Young and John Wilusz.

Young's first article, "GIS? Show Me the Money," appeared in our October 2007 issue and has been hit more than 3,100 times on our website. He graduated with a degree in Agriculture Economics in 1977 and worked for a short time in the field, followed by a sales career with Wild/Leica from 1988 to 1992. After a stint with Southwestern Bell in marketing, training and management, he returned to surveying in 1995 as an SIT in the Dallas area. In 2000, at age 45, he got his Texas license. Watch for a future article titled "People, Products and Profits," in which Young details the many secrets to his success.

Another success story is John Wilusz, whose article "Oh, What Crooked Footsteps We Follow" appeared in our June issue. John obtained a four-year degree in Industrial Technology & Construction in 1986, and spent three years with the Connecticut DOT. He moved to California and began working for the Sonora County Water Agency in 1991. He got his California license in 1994, and in 2002 opened his own surveying and land development business. In 2007 he accepted a position as a water resources engineer for the California Department of Water Resources in Sacramento. John recently became the editor of the *California Surveyor*, the state society publication, which won the 2008 NSPS Excellence in Journalism Award. A musician in his spare time, you can hear tunes from his recent CD "No Parking" on MySpace, or catch him live now and then at the Fox & Goose in Sacramento.

We are very proud to welcome both Robert and John to our team of excellent writers.