



Editorial

>> Marc Cheves, LS

THE American Surveyor

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

www.amerisurv.com

Volume 5, No. 3 March 2008
© Cheves Media LLC

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

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Dan Beardslee, LS | Wendy Lathrop, LS |
| Dale Beeks | Thomas Liuzzo, LS |
| Joseph Bell, LS | Jeff Lock |
| Joe Betit, LS | Dan Martin |
| Shawn Billings, LS | John Matonich, LS |
| J. Anthony Cavell, LS | Thomas G. Merrill, LS |
| Cathy B. Costarides, LS | Jerry Penry, LS |
| C. Barton Crattie, LS | Al Pepling, LS |
| Paul Cuomo, 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 | 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

The American Surveyor (ISSN 1548-2669) is published January, February, March, April, May, June, July/August, September, October, November and December by Cheves Media LLC. Editorial mailing address: 905 W. 7th St., #331, Frederick, MD 21701. Tel: (301) 620-0784.

The American Surveyor is a publication of Cheves Media LLC, 905 W. 7th St., #331, Frederick, MD. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without the express written permission of the publisher. Opinions and statements made by the writers and contributors do not necessarily express the views of Cheves Media LLC.

Subscriptions prices in the U.S.: Free for qualified professionals. Canada: 1 year \$56.00 US; international subscriptions \$72.00 per year (Airmail), U.S. funds prepaid. Back issues (subject to sufficient stock) are available for \$4.95 + S/H.

New subscription inquiries and all other address changes should be sent to *The American Surveyor*, P.O. Box 4162, Frederick, MD 21705-4162. Fax: 301-695-1538. Subscribe online @ www.amerisurv.com

Made in the United States of America



Proud Member of:



The Need for Speed

Hard-wired into human nature is a fascination for speed—we like to go fast. In our March 2007 issue I wrote about FARO, a German laser company that had recently entered the U.S. market with their laser scanner. We visited their factory in Stuttgart, and along the way, took advantage of the opportunity to do some legal high-speed driving (140mph) on the Autobahn.



In February of 2008, FARO capitalized on “speed” by staging a press event at the Richard Petty Driving Experience at Disney World in Orlando. The star of the show was FARO’s latest scanner, the Photon. In their “drive” for accuracy, reliability and repeatability, FARO chases every micron. The \$198 million company is doing quite well. FARO experienced 25 percent growth in 2007, and anticipates the same in 2008.

The new Photon has several improvements: faster scans with 200 percent better positional accuracy, 300 percent less “noise”, and an improved color overlay that uses a high-rez digital camera, all resulting in crisper scans with greater clarity. FARO has improved the optics, angle encoders, and underlying electronics. The electronic improvement yields twice the power at the same eye-safeness, and 1.4 times the range in sunlight. New to the Photon is its iPod controller, wireless capability and a six-hour battery that fits under the tribrach.

Aside from the Photon, another “direct relationship” that played out at the press conference was one between my hands and the steering wheel of a 600hp NASCAR vehicle! Strapped in from the head down, the Richard Petty Driving Experience allows you to get behind the wheel and follow a pace car driven by a professional driver. The object is to stay three car lengths behind him. If you can manage that, he continually picks up speed. Those who don’t feel up to driving alone can opt for a ride-along with a professional driver. The ride-alongs hit speeds of 140-145mph, while the drive alone option is generally 20-25mph slower. Sure enough, my best lap was just short of 120mph. When I exited the vehicle my hands were shaking, not from fear, but from the extreme concentration required to maintain the measured distance behind the pro (and my desire to not hit the wall). Unlike the smooth-running car we had driven on the Autobahn, the NASCAR vehicles are not as easy to drive. I came away with a new measure of respect for the skill of the NASCAR drivers who draft each others bumpers at nearly 200mph.

Yes, we like to go fast. Our need for speed spurs the growth of new technology. While this issue features technology that would make our predecessors’ heads spin, we also kick back to the days when surveyors wore spurs. Sit back, slow down, and enjoy! 