



# editorial



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## Sworn to Protect

This issue contains lots of great stories, ranging from technology applications to regulations to boundary surveying to history to human interest. Because it is overcrowded with traffic, European towns and cities often only have one direction to go to provide parking and lessen gridlock: down. One Italian town is doing just that and 3D models are making it possible. Unlike some who are still hand-sketching or using alidades and plane tables, one archaeologist is using a total station to aid in building a 3D GIS model for his work in Africa. Arkansas surveyor LuAnn Glenn is back, this time with a touching account of a difficult crew member, not enough budget, and a layoff. It's been awhile, but we have another in our Fabric of Surveying America series, this time about Montana. At Intergeo I spoke with Don Carswell of Optech about the fact that terrestrial scanning often leaves shadowed areas in open pit mines, and we have an article about how one company is combining scanning and UAV aerial photo-g to fill in the gaps. Also in this issue is a heads-up about a new FEMA report ostensibly about New Jersey and New York, but which will be applicable nation wide. In Mike Pallamary's column, he gives us an update about how the long-running dispute with the City of San Diego is being resolved. I'm not egotistical enough to believe that our niche publication has that much power, but according to Mike, exposure of the issue to a national audience is what forced the city to respond, that, and continuous pressure.

For those who have been following Chad and Linda Erickson's articles about BLM surveying, the FeedBack column has much to add to the discussion. I thought we were finally close to having a government response, with a retiring BLM employee agreeing to write something, but when we got right down to it, he listened to his peer group and withdrew his offer. The biggest objection from the federal surveyors I have spoken to seems to be offense that we would even broach the subject, but I will do everything within my power to not adhere to the principle of the Emperor Has No Clothes and exercise our First Amendment rights. Stonewalling and wagon-circling will not work.

Which brings me back around to why we are continuing to pursue the BLM topic: without awareness nothing will change. Again, this is not personal. I know many BLM surveyors and consider several of them to be friends. But because of the various Manuals, state statutes, high regard for BLM surveys, and because we view the BLM surveyors as gods, their behavior is held to a much higher standard than private sector surveyors. I am quite sure that virtually all of the BLM surveys are without controversy, but even one incorrect survey is too many, especially if it is accompanied by arrogance and hubris. And because I continue to hear from across the country—there will be more FeedBack in the next issue—that there is more than one instance of bombs being thrown into neighborhoods, we will continue to report on the subject. As surveyors, we are sworn to protect the fabric that makes up the cadastral quilt in our country. Most people don't even stop to consider that their real property constitutes their single biggest investment, but our propensity to sue over even a few inches has shown us how important real property is to our society. ■