



Editorial

>> Marc Cheves, PS



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The CST Program

In our July/August 2007 issue, we had a great article about the Certified Surveyor Program (CST) administered by NSPS. Unlike the rest of the world, and with the exception of 30–35 states, the U.S. is the only country that doesn't require university degrees for licensure as a surveyor. There are certainly both sides to this issue, and for most states, licensure in this country only applies to boundary surveying, but the fact remains that employers need a method to evaluate prospective employees for technician tasks. Enter CST. With the four-tier program, a certain level of competence can be assured for employers. It can also be used by field people who are precluded from obtaining a license due to the degree requirement or who don't wish to pursue a degree.

User Experience

In this issue we have an article about the experiences of the degree program at Vincennes University in Indiana. Each survey program must be accredited and Art Haase, the Dean of Technology and Professor of Surveying at Vincennes has this to say: "It has become quite apparent that in higher education the focus is on our process of assessment. Our accreditation agencies are questioning our assessment activities and our methods of obtaining objective and comparative data. The CST examination has provided an assessment instrument which meets the expectations of the institution and our accreditation agencies. Vincennes University's Surveying Program has used the CST national exam since 1991. Within this program's first two years students are given both Level I & II. These examinations provide the student with both the experience of taking a national examination and providing the department with national comparison data."

NSPS Viewpoint

Curt Sumner, the executive director of NSPS, had this to say about utilizing CST as an evaluation tool for students, as well as an institutional assessment instrument for courses in surveying: "An important benefit of using CST for the evaluation of students is that there is no application fee (which is otherwise required) for students who take the exams. This benefit alone warrants taking a look at the use of CST in survey programs. More can be learned about the CST program by visiting www.nsp.us.com."

A Case History

According to Joseph M Stokes Jr., PSM, City Surveyor, City of Orlando Survey Services, the department began encouraging its entire staff to obtain certification in 1999. At that time the program was recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor as a part of the National Apprenticeship Program. Stokes says: "Certification provides credentials and career ladders for staff; it identifies those who have achieved specific technical competency and instills pride in their accomplishment. It provides our program the ability to promote the fact that our staff is highly skilled and knowledgeable in our profession. After 3 years of promoting the CST program as a voluntary program including bonus pay incentives we had only limited success. In 2002 the program became official. The Bureau of Personnel Management added the requirement for CST certification and or licensure by the State of Florida as a Professional Surveyor and Mapper for all positions within the City of Orlando Surveying Services Program therefore, becoming an immediate requirement for position advancement within our program. Provisions were made to help each employee obtain their certification. Local colleges were offering surveying classes that were tailored for CST preparation. As our CST program was developing the City also encouraged our consulting professional surveying and mapping firms to adopt the program. This requirement has served as a catalyst for the CST program in Central Florida. Adoption of the CST program has served the City of Orlando Surveying and Mapping program well for nearly 10 years." 