

feedback

Rebuttal to John Stock Back Story

To the *American Surveyor*:

I feel a strong need to address several points raised by John Stock in his recent article, “The Back Story” (March/April 2016 issue). In this article, he provides a viewpoint about NCEES and its role within the surveying and engineering professions and asserts that our organization has “way too much power.”

NCEES—the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying—is a nonprofit organization made up of the state and territorial licensing boards that govern the professions of engineering and surveying in the United States. These licensing boards exist to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of the public. They created NCEES almost 100 years ago to help in this effort when they saw a need for a national council to help improve uniformity of laws from state to state and to promote licensure mobility. Since then, NCEES member boards have governed NCEES by coming together each year at an annual meeting to discuss licensure issues, vote on model language that they can use when enacting legislation, and vote on policies related to exams and NCEES services.

NCEES is a “powerful” organization in that its 70 member boards control the licensure process for both professions. This power is used to ensure that only competent individuals are allowed to offer or provide their services to the general public. NCEES devotes many resources to outreach activities each year to promote the value of licensure. However, it is left to the professional engineering and surveying societies to promote and encourage individuals to enter the fields of engineering or surveying and to support their professions by being advocates for progressive change.

Mr. Stock mentions attending an NCEES annual meeting 30 years ago when he was president of NSPS. NCEES does invite leadership from more than 30 engineering and surveying societies to attend our annual

meetings so that we can have dialogue about mutual concerns within the professions. NCEES works with and appreciates the support of all of these professional societies in developing the licensure exams and providing comments regarding the NCEES *Model Laws* and *Model Rules*, but no one society has greater influence in terms of the mission and vision of NCEES.

NSPS is one of the many professional societies that supports and works with NCEES and for which we have partnered with on a number of initiatives. If there is the opinion that NSPS has been “ambushed” by NCEES or that the surveying profession is not being fairly represented by NCEES or its member boards, then those concerns need to be clearly expressed and addressed. The mission for our respective organizations may not be identical, but our aim for only competent individuals to become licensed is common. We need to ensure that we are all working to achieve that common goal and that we maintain effective means of communications to support the efforts of all related organizations.

Surveying does have a significant voice within NCEES itself. Of the 70 NCEES member boards, 14 are surveying only, 27 are joint engineering/surveying boards, and 16 are multiprofessional (most include both engineering and surveying). Only 13 boards are related to engineering only. Every board gets a vote at the annual meeting. In addition, the influence of the surveying profession within NCEES is clearly evidenced by the fact that four of the eight members of the current NCEES board of directors are licensed surveyors.

NCEES is concerned about the dwindling number of individuals who are pursuing careers in surveying, particularly boundary property surveys. Its most recent efforts to address this include the creation of the Future of Surveying Task Force and a surveying stakeholders’ group. The Council’s motivation for these actions is based on a concern about how the public is going to be impacted by the decrease in the number of

surveyors. Mr. Stock implies that NCEES’ motive might be financial. In truth, NCEES revenue from surveying-related services such as exams and study guides is a small part of our overall revenue. The amount of money that NCEES expends on creating the surveying exams and all other matters related to the surveying profession is actually disproportionately greater than the funds expended on the engineering profession.

Finally, to answer Mr. Stock’s question, “So what is behind the curtain?” he need only have asked. NCEES is very transparent in all of its activities and initiatives. Two of our most recent publications—the 2015 annual report and 2015 *Squared* (our year in numbers)—provide details about our examinations, pass rates, outreach efforts, finances, and key licensure initiatives. Both are available online at ncees.org/annual-report, and I encourage you to explore them.

Jerry T. Carter

NCEES Chief Executive Officer

Cursive Writing

Coming from the “old school” of hand-lettering on survey plats, construction plans, and topographic mapping! After my retirement from 45 years of surveying and mapping, I applied this training and experience to my tutoring of first and second grade boys and girls during 2004 to 2008 at the Hopkins Elementary School in Sherwood, Oregon. While the OASIS tutoring program covered many areas, each tutor had the freedom to customize their sessions to their assigned students. I included the alphabet, spelling and hand writing utilizing the “D’Nealian” style of lettering which once mastered is easily transferred to cursive writing.

Then tutoring intellectual and developmental disabled adults ages 20 to 40 for GED and basic life skills through our community college during 2010 to 2014 I again used the “D’Nealian” handwriting style for several of my tutees. One adult in his late 30’s learned the alphabet and numeral, and how to print and sign his name using this hand writing style.

So I agree with Ed Hulseberg, CPE . . . the educational system is failing our students while being enamored with the current technology. And, what will students do when the power fails, or the battery on their tablet/cell phone dies? I believe there is value in using your hands and mind in solving manual calculations and resolving geometry and trig problems.

Henry L. Berg, PLS (Retired)
Sweet Home, Oregon

Firestorm—Revisited

On our recent trip through Nebraska we stumbled upon the Webster County Historical Museum in Red Cloud. As usual the relics and dioramas were all about Cowboys, Indians and farming methods; as usual the six year period between opening for entry and receipt of patent, which in this case was in the 1870's, had been completely forgotten. The last resort for survey research at museums is to thumb through old letters, journals and Historical Society publications. In the book, Webster County, Nebraska, Visions of the Past we found the following jewel:



CHAD & LINDA ERICKSON

Kansas Prairie Fire, spring 2016.

In marking out their claims, the 1870 setters miscalculated the location of the original survey lines so that their locations were sixty rods south and east of where they should have been. It was not until spring of 1871 when a prairie fire exposed the original corner stones, that the error was found. Silas Garber, for example thought he was claiming the high plateau on which the city of Red Cloud was later built, not the low river

bottom land, which at that time was marshy and considered undesirable.

Chad & Linda Erickson

Got some feedback?

Contact us via www.amerisurv.com, or send a letter to: The American Surveyor, P.O. Box 4162, Frederick, MD 21705-4162. We reserve the right to edit letters for clarity and length. ■

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