

Focal Point

A publication of the Sacramento Chapter
of the California Lands Surveyors Association



August 2024

The next Chapter meeting will be held at Logan's Roadhouse in North Natomas on August 1st.

Come join us for Jonathan Rohrs of CSDS speaking on the Trimble Connect platform to share data between the office and the field (and back again)!

President's Message

Annette Hovorka, PLS
2024 Sacramento Chapter President

August Construction Projects

As we enter August, the profession services become particularly critical. This month is marked by peak construction activities and warm weather, making it an ideal time for surveyors to perform tasks that underpin numerous projects.

Construction in August is hopping. Many projects, from residential developments to large infrastructure undertakings, are in full swing. Land surveys is crucial at this stage, guiding architects, engineers, and builders in creating designs that are both functional and creating compliance with regulations. We remain relevant to processes by identifying potential issues such as boundaries, grading, and existing underground utilities, which help avoid costly delays and regulatory delays.

With the new budget allocations confirmed for many communities, projects get green lights and augmentations in August, providing a significant influx of funds dedicated to development. Proper allocation of these funds towards comprehensive surveying can prevent overspending on unforeseen issues later in the project.

While August generally allows for uninterrupted work, it also can lead to long days. Remember to use the great weather to take a break as well. Balance is welcome any time of the year.

Looking forward to the weather cooling (even slightly), our chapter is looking to move out of doors for our vendor night and night golf events. We are looking forward to seeing many of our chapter members coming to participate.

Annette Hovorka, PLS
2024 Sacramento Chapter President

The **Focal Point** newsletter is a publication of the Sacramento Chapter of the California Land Surveyors Association. Check us out at <https://www.sacramento-clsa.org>

Who's Who in the Sacramento Chapter for 2024:

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You can post job ads in the Focal Point for \$100 and they will run for a maximum of 1 year. And, you can take home one of our attractive slate CLSA coasters for a \$10 donation!

Contact the Focal Point editor at alidade.nv@sbcglobal.net

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Editor's Notes

This month we feature a guest editorial by local area surveyor Justin Cisneros that brings a fresh and important perspective to the topic of map reviews. If this commentary were to lead to a roundtable discussion at some future chapter meeting attended by both public and private land surveyors, that would be quite some event!

Sadly, we have to report another loss from the family of local surveyors with the passing of Don Henderson.

And some nutty news is being reported about recent changes to the rules governing the Colorado Licensing Board. The only acceptable response to this news is: "Seriously!!?"

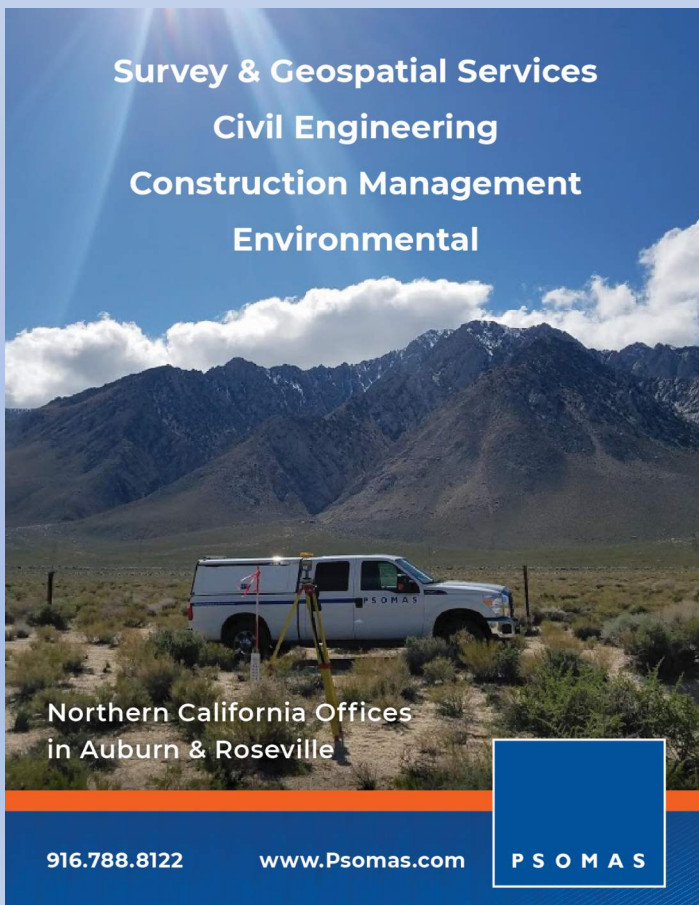
Vendors Night is coming up on September 5th. See you there!

Listen at the August 1 meeting for some discussion on PPC's.

We may get a brief report on the Sacramento City College Survey Program at that meeting, too.

PS - There was no July meeting which explains why there are no meeting minutes this month.

-Ed.



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Map Checking or Survey Police

Guest Editorial by Justin Cisneros, PLS 9539

I have vivid memories of being drawn to maps. From drawing treasure maps as a child, collecting “quad maps” for adventures in high school, to creating maps as an adult. In one fashion or another, I have always had maps in my life. As a land surveyor I have had the privilege of working with maps in the private and public sector. The professional experiences I have gained have provided insight to the thoughts, and sometimes arguments, from both sides of the surveying profession.

I started my career in surveying as a draftsman. Like many before me, I worked under the responsible charge of licensed surveyors and molded my drafting style and professional opinions to those of my mentors. Being fortunate to have worked under multiple surveyors, these professional opinions varied. Especially when it came to the map checking process. Through the years, I started to realize that one sentiment resonated among them all. The map check process was tedious, expensive, and often felt intrusive. After earning my license and submitting maps of my own, I began to have a better understanding of the complaints I had heard so often. In fact, I found myself repeating many of the arguments I had heard in the past... “I am a licensed professional and this is my survey.”, “Of course I paid attention to junior/senior rights.”, and “yes, I am sure there is not a monument at that location.” In a short period of time, I built an opinion of map checkers and the entire process. Unfortunately, it was not always a very positive opinion.

As time passed and my career developed, I found myself working for government agencies, and eventually map checking. When I started map checking I desperately tried to remember all the frustration that I felt in the past and made every attempt to keep my review comments to a minimum. However, as time has continued to pass, I have learned that there are occasions that call for much more than basic “technical correctness” comments.

As surveyors, we have all spent countless hours and tons of energy to become licensed professionals. Many of us have read the same text, attended the same seminars, and have taken the same tests. So why would the opinions of another surveyor carry more weight because of their job description? As the submitting surveyor, we are the authority of the map being submitted, we have the most intimate relationship with the project. We understand what has happened in the past, how the current survey was executed, and what information we are ultimately trying to provide to the future.

On top of this, as the licensed professional stamping and signing the map, the responsibility falls on our shoulders. We are the ones to carry the burden (and liability). So why would we change our map based on the opinions of an entity without any skin in the game? What makes the opinion of a governing body more relevant than that of the submitting surveyor?

As a private sector surveyor there are many factors that control our projects and maps. We must have an expert knowledge of how to collect data and apply this information to a boundary determination. We must also be experts in creating maps that correctly represent the survey that we made. This, in conjunction with a license, creates the opportunity to be the authority on our projects. It also creates the requirement for us to accurately and completely document our work so that our surveys can be retraced. Unfortunately, this does not always happen.

At the risk of stirring up a civics debate, one must remember why the government exists... to serve and protect the public. As a licensed land surveyor, one of our prime functions is to protect and safeguard the public. This idea is so important that it is set in state statute. So, it is not a far reach to conclude that the role of a licensed land surveyor, working for a government agency, exaggerates this philosophy. Specifically, as it pertains to map checking.

Map Checking...

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Like private sector surveyors, the public sector surveyor must have a firm understanding of the principles, procedures and laws that dictate our profession. Additionally, they must have a strong knowledge of state statute and local ordinance. However, unlike the private sector surveyor, this skill set must be adapted to provide a form of oversight to the industry. The primary role of the agency surveyor is to ensure conformance to the law, the secondary role is to create a level of quality control within the industry. And here in lies the struggle.

Many of us have had the “pleasure” of submitting maps for review. Some of these experiences are relatively painless while others are a test of patience and fortitude. Some agency review is simple, almost pleasurable, and others dance on the edge of government overreach. This creates frustration for the submitting surveyors and creates an animosity towards agency surveyors.

Part of the map checking struggle is created by conflicting opinions of two licensed professionals. What makes the opinion of one surveyor better than another? Are the experiences of one surveyor better than that of another? The answer may not be consistent, but yes, maybe. Seasoned private sector surveyors that have executed thousands of surveys may have more insight to creating quality maps. Conversely, veteran agency surveyors have reviewed thousands of maps and have the benefit of being exposed to a variety of mapping projects. Both have something to bring to the table.

Whether we want to admit it or not, there are bad actors in our profession. At some point in our careers, we are going to come across a surveyor that clearly skipped ethics class. Substandard, potentially illegal, surveys threaten our profession, the public, and can create the potential for civil suits. The bad actors create another massive hurdle for the map check process. The agency review must comment on these bad practices to meet the requirement of protecting the public. An agency performing map check must be consistent. The comments being made, when applicable, should be made consistently to every map submittal. Anything less could be construed as discrimination.

When surveyors discuss the map checking process, you often hear the term “survey police”. In most cases this term is used in a somewhat derogatory manner. It is used to imply that agency surveyors are “policing” the land surveying profession through the map check process. Over the years I have found that the idea of this principle has both support and resistance. Those that shun the idea argue that the submitting surveyor is a licensed professional and does not need policing. They further argue that they alone hold any liability and that is not the role of a county surveyor, or governing agency performing map check to police the profession. Those in favor of the idea contest that someone should be policing the surveys & maps being recorded, and who better than the agency reviewing the submittal. Honestly, I can see pros and cons to both sides of the discussion.

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LAND SURVEYORS

Map Checking...

Continued from Page 5

So, what is my point? As a licensed land surveyor that has had the opportunity to work on both sides of the process, I can assert one thing. In almost every survey that I have been part of, as a submitting surveyor or agency surveyor, we are all after the same thing. To produce a high-quality product that benefits the public and our profession. As a private surveyor producing maps for recordation, it can be difficult to get everything on a map. After decades of drafting the process has gotten easier, however, our minds can deceive us. As the surveyor producing the map, we have all the knowledge on research, field processes, and boundary analysis at our fingertips. As a map checker, a surveyor only has what is being provided on an 18" x 26" sheet. If the map is not complete, accurate, and easy to follow the intent of the survey may require a higher level of review, and thus create more comments from the map checker.

It is the duty of every licensed land surveyor, and those who strive to become licensed, to ensure that the surveys being produced are correct. They must be standalone, and true. Anything less brings the availability to harm the public and directly violates the rules of licensure. If private sector surveyors and agency surveyors work together, communicate, and build a professional understanding, the surveys and maps produced can meet this goal. The private surveyor must understand that map check comments come from a sense of duty to serve the public, and the public sector surveyors must avoid overreach and truly stick to comments that are productive. In both cases, each side of the conversation must strive to be respectful and open to new ideas.

Lastly, each surveyor must develop a firm understanding of why we are required to become licensed. There must be pride in being a licensed professional and a desire to maintain a level of integrity. We must check our ego at the door and be willing to learn from each other. Conversations about the law, principles and procedures, and survey best practices have got to take place for the betterment of our profession. As a profession, we must "police" each other to ensure that our profession, and the services that we provide, continue to be a value to the public.

By Justin Cisneros, PLS 9539

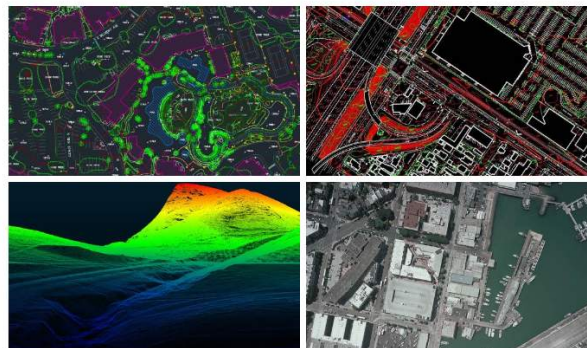
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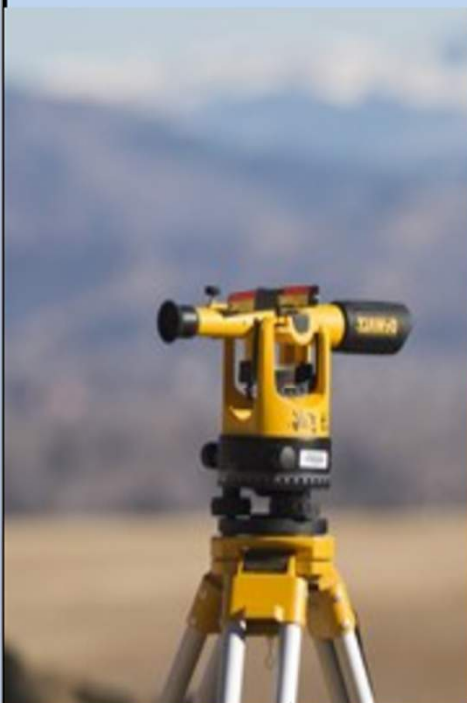
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Announcing Sacramento Chapter CLSA Annual Vendor Night September 5th

Vendors within the Surveying Community are invited to participate in our event. We will provide display space and the opportunity to speak to about your products.



Contact Annette Hovorka at
Ladylandsurveyor@gmail.com
to reserve your space.

Don Henderson - Rest in Peace

On July 2nd William Donald Henderson passed beyond the touch of our hands at his longtime home in Cool surrounded by his loving family after a valiant battle with cancer.

Born in Stockton to parents Bill and Sally along with sister Janet, Don spent the first decade of his life there. After graduating from Placer High in 1964, Don worked at the state printing office to fund his education at Sierra College and Sacramento State College, earning his degree in 1969. That same year he married a local Auburn girl, Lynda Rick, and enlisted in the U.S. Army and California National Guard. While Don and Lynda eventually went their separate ways, destiny brought Don and Gentiane Szonn together some years later. Their union produced a beautiful, intelligent daughter, Nicole and the apple of Don's eye, grandson Lucian.

Don's working career was spent as a land surveyor where he worked with Norm Andregg, Dennis Meyer, Charlie Barieau, Jim McKeegan, and his mentor, Robert James Ralph. In 1996 he co-founded R.E.Y. Engineers, Inc. alongside Brian Thionnet and Bob Huun. This engineering firm, still thriving today, played a pivotal role in the development of El Dorado Hills and Folsom. Upon retiring in 2006, Don went on many fishing trips with his good friend, Tom McMahan, and devoted more time to his lifelong community service.

Excerpted from Gold Country Media – July 5, 2024

Don was a veteran union party chief when we met. I was a kid out of school heading into the working world with my sights set on launching my surveying career and hoping to get my professional license someday. Every surveyor should be as fortunate as I was to get to spend time under the mentorship of a crew chief of Don's caliber and with his willingness to share his knowledge and expertise. I never became anywhere near the party chief Don was but by the time he retired we had spent 16 years working together with the last 10 years as business partners. Without Don our company simply would not exist. Beyond his ability he brought an amazing work ethic and commitment to the company that served as the foundation for the field survey department that he built and managed until he retired. He made hard work fun by mixing in plenty of humor into the work days. Over the years his endless number of sayings and limericks became legendary within our company, none of which will be repeated here! Don had nicknames for a lot of people in his life and we called him Hendu. We are all thankful for the legacy he left behind. Personally, above all the work related reasons for which I am so thankful our paths crossed I am most thankful to call him my good friend. My life is better because Hendu was in it and I'll always hold onto the memories we made and shared.



-Brian Thionnet

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From the Colorado Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Professional Land Surveyors

Dear Licensee:

This communication is to inform you of recent legislation affecting architects, professional engineers and professional land surveyors.

On June 3, 2024, Gov. Jared Polis Signed HB24-1329, Sunset Architects Engineers & Land Surveyors, into law.

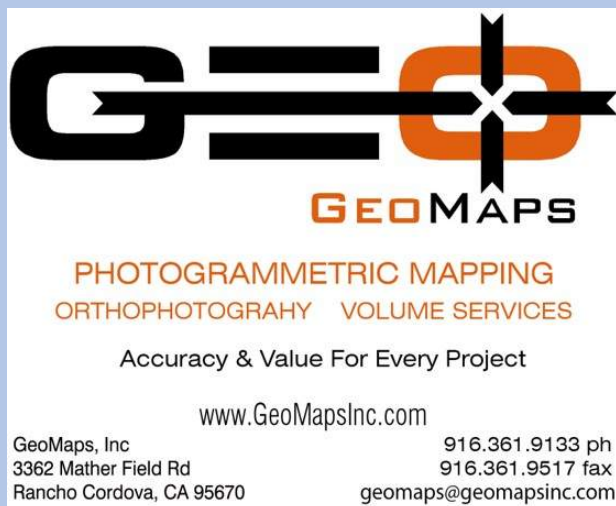
This bill implements the following recommendations from the Department of Regulatory Agency's sunset review:

- The Board is continued for nine years;
- adds in a failure to respond to allegations of a complaint within the length of time specified by the board;
- updates statutory references to the names of examinations for professional engineers and professional land surveyors;
- **repeals the requirement that board members be citizens of the United States and residents of Colorado;**
- repeals the requirement that applicants supply a business address on a license application;
- requires continuing education to renew a professional land surveyors license and grants the board rulemaking authority to establish these continuing education requirements;
- replaces references in current law regarding the Occupational Credential Portability Program; and,
- requires an applicant for licensure by endorsement as an architect to hold a license in good standing from another jurisdiction with qualification requirements that are substantially equivalent to the qualification requirements in this state; and makes a technical amendment to replace gendered pronouns with gender neutral terms.

Please visit the DPO Legislative Update webpage for all updates affecting licensees under the Division's regulatory authority. Thank you.

There are a lot of strange things happening across the nation with respect to our Boards of Regulation. This is just the latest one.

-ED



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