

Another Amazing SurvCon is in the Books

William Beardslee, PLS, PE

Over 700 attendees enjoyed the 24 seminar sessions of SurvCon 2019 – also the 40th Anniversary of NJSPLS. *(By the way, mark your calendars now for **SurvCon 2020**, Feb. 5-7, 2020)*

Steve Mazurek, Mark Husik and Rona Goldberg again provided education, frivolity, good food, and endless networking opportunities to meet new folks and enjoy old friends. The “Icebreaker” provided great food and grog, along with a lot of smiling faces for those once-a-year friendly chats. The Annual Meeting saw the officers for the year installed, with the Surveyor Of The Year Award going to Al Fralinger for his long time efforts leading to the establishment of the 4-year program at Rowan University.

The array of vendors was exciting as some exhibited so much new technology, while others sought to help us keep our businesses safe and prosperous.

Let’s look at some of the “**Quips and Quotes**” from the seminars.

“The forensic surveyor’s first task is to document the scene.”

This seminar on forensic surveying, offered by one of the cornerstones of NJSPLS, Bruce Blair, offered factual and interesting ideas on data collection and presentation of forensic survey information. With the advent of scanning, this interesting niche in surveying services has become more common.

“The US eastern tectonic plate moves southwest at 1 cm per year.”

Spatial and geodetic relationships are certainly the territory of the retired leader of NGS Dave Doyle. Dave gave an interesting and very informative session on the background of geodesy through the fascinating upcoming 2022 adjustments. He also reminded everyone that “*Horizontal and vertical locations change with time*”, including an example of a vertical change of 3’ in elevation on a certain monument over time.

“Mills were economic drivers in early America. Cities created around the mills were at fall lines in the river where navigation ended.”

Kris Kline provided his thorough presentation on the impact of the “navigable” waterways through a series of interesting examples, one of which included Trenton. Certainly all surveyors at some time have run into boundary issues associated with navigable waterways, some of which seem, today, not to be so “navigable”. The mills were at the fall lines of waterways to generate power from the drop in stream elevation. Shipping of some sort could make the trip upstream to the fall lines to take the products from the mills downstream for sale while delivering necessary supplies to the mill towns.

“You are a PLS – Professional Land Surveyor. You are not a PSL - Professional Savings and Loan!”

No SurvCon would be complete without a session on how to help us in terms of our practice and particularly our E&O insurance by Deb Christen and Mark Amirault. The discussion on contracts reminded surveyors to include language to actually **collect** the fees they are owed. One interesting quip was to remind surveyors “*You cannot sue a P.O. Box*”. Make sure a real address is included in your contracts.

“Are you aware that many of the regulations in the handouts were changed within the last few weeks?”

This yearly session by Lew Conley and previous State Board members brings to focus the need to keep current with all rules and regulations. Lew spent time informing of the very recent changes to the regulations, and that it was the professional’s responsibility to keep current - a clear reminder that turning out your services should not overshadow your need to practice legally and in full compliance.

“Possession has the reputation of being on the correct survey lines.”

In his course on “Avoiding Boundary Problems”, Gary Kent used this useful phrase to describe how sometimes things **are** as they seem. So many times possession and actual boundary lines are in conflict. But sometimes, possession lines can lead to the correct answer.

Gary also reminds us “*The Surveyors Report is the container for your information*”. Putting all the collected data for a project in the surveyor’s report allows the surveyor to clearly describe the methods used to create the boundary determination.

“The best time to start your exit strategy is when you first take a new position or start a firm.”

In his course on "When Its Time To Move On", Bill Beardslee described numerous exit strategies for selling a business or retiring from a management position. The data is also useful for surveyors looking to buy a business and establish it for long-term success.

"There are only 691 resident licensed surveyors left in New Jersey."

Past President Rich Smith recited this alarming statistic from website data at the annual Past President and Fellows breakfast. However considering supply and demand, this could be an opportunity for current surveyors.

Mark your calendar for SurvCon 2020 ~ February 5-7, 2020.