On July 15th, 2011, the Professional Land Surveyors of Oregon welcomed the David Thompson Canoe Brigade to Astoria. There was rain, black powder, and banners galore. This group of folks left Invermere, Canada, on June 3rd and paddled their Voyager Canoes over 1043 miles to arrive at Astoria 200 years to the day that David Thompson himself arrived here.

I could talk about David Thompson and his exploits. I could talk about what it takes to organize an event such as this (thanks Jim Luke). I could even talk about the weather on the day of the Brigade’s arrival (sun everywhere but in Astoria)—but I think something unique was going on.

What happens when a group of people, focused on a single goal, sets out to do something truly amazing? A sense of community starts to develop and grows day by day. This group becomes one entity working together. It overcomes hardship, it solves logistical issues, and it changes to meet the challenges that occur every day. This community becomes vital to its own existence. If you have ever had this experience, you know the feeling.

These very attributes are what make surveyors so very special. We are independent, self-sufficient, hard-driven individuals focused on the task at hand. We change to meet the challenges that come our way. Most importantly, we come together when the need arises. We put aside our independent nature and work as a team to accomplish the task at hand. This was evident on the day of the Astoria event. A call went out for early help in the setup. Wendell Harness, Rob Ledgerwood, and Vance Swenson were there. It was raining—we needed more cover. Jered McGrath and Ryan

**David Thompson Brigade Arrives in Astoria**

**BY JOE FERGUSON**
Godsey showed up with more pop-up canopies. It was windy: how are we going to hold everything down? Vance’s wife shows up with one-gallon water jugs to tie off the canopies. Here comes Mary Louise VanNatta and Jeanette Pruitt from the PLSO office to set up the PLSO booth—it sure would be nice to keep the water off of the handouts, Jean has a tarp, lets us use it as a wind break. This kind of thing went on and on all day. Any challenge that came up was met head on with determination and smiles all around.

When the Brigade arrived, it was obvious that they had had a very trying day. Greg Crites said that they were making eleven knots until they hit Tongue Point, and then dropped to three knots. One of the brigadiers was taken away with hypothermia. Yet, when they arrived to the sound and smell of black powder (Thanks to Jeanette Pruitt from the PLSO Office and John Williams for the CANNON!) there was nothing but a great sense of accomplishment and jubilation.

City representatives (Councilor Arline LaMear from Astoria, and Mayor Mark Kujala from neighboring Warrenton) gave warm welcomes and exchanged gifts with the brigade leaders. The brigadiers sang and danced even though they were dog-tired and it was raining. Everybody had a great time on the town that evening.

Welcoming the arriving canoe brigade with muskets (top and right). Clatsop Nehalem Tribal Chair Diana Collier (above) addressing the event participants. Denny Demeyer of PLSO (lower right) marches through Astoria after successfully making the long and arduous trip. [All photos courtesy of PLSO.]

Thanks to everyone who helped put this event together and participated. We all had great fun—wish you were with us. If you did not make it, enjoy the photos on these pages and be sure to check out the PLSO web site for more.