September 27, 2016

Executive Summary – Over the last 6 years the PSLS as a professional organization has made and is still making their mark in Pennsylvania and beyond its borders. Since yours truly did not have a “Spring Meeting” report I will add some items that have taken place since Fall of 2015.

2016 Annual Conference – PSLS had another well attended conference in January and although an off year for those needing to meet their continuing education requirements, and despite the snow storm that piled up to three feet in nearby areas, we had a very successful conference with keynote speaker Kris Kline, P.L.S. from North Carolina. Only a handful could not make because of the snow.

Webinars – Proper SPCS Observation Reductions APRIL

Contracts & Letters of Agreement MAY

UAS Aerial Photogrammetry JUNE

The NRCS CN Method to Compute Runoff Depths JULY

Did the Registration Law Change AUGUST

Travel Time Methods for Stormwater Management SEPTEMBER

Thanks to those speakers. We are blessed to have past and present professors from Penn State involved and willing to give presentations as well as our devoted members stepping up to the plate on presenting these webinars.

Most current topic and still going- Our current and ongoing issue that is the hot topic is the DRG legal battle. DRG is a utility contractor who has been providing maps of utilities’ facilities in Pennsylvania and around the country without a licensed professional, be it a P.L.S. (or P.E. in PA). A complaint was filed well over a year ago to the State Registration Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors and Geologists for conducting surveying without a license. The Board investigated the incident and cited DRG with a cease and desist order and monetary fine. DRG escalated the citation to the State Appellate Court and won a reversal to the decision. There was one dissenting vote against five other judges’ opinions. Currently the state has filed a petition with the State Supreme Court to get the reversal overturned. The PSLS is waiting on their decision if they will even hear the case. If the Supreme Court will hear it, it could still be up to a year or more before it is heard. The case can be made available for those who wish to review the comments and decisions.

Changed Administration - The company that used to administer the tests for engineers, surveyors, and geologist has been replaced with a new company who was recently awarded the
contract. PSLS is in negotiation with this new company to provide state specific questions for the two-hour portion.

Standards of Practice – Over the last couple of years the Society has been discussing the need to update their Manual of Practice which hasn’t been updated since 1998. With the recent events with the DRG this has been put on the front burner since it was referred to in the case. A committee is currently working on revisions that may help in buttoning up some misconstrued statements and to better define various items.

Legislation – Approximately 7 years ago it was decided to invest in a lobbyist to move some of the surveyor’s agenda along in various legislative moves. The first year our lobbyist stated we had more bills trying to get sponsors than any of their other professional clients.

We aggressively won a voting seat on the newly formed PA State Geospatial Council for one. The society also had other issues such as right of entry, statute of repose, retired non-working professionals to retain their P.L.S status.

In addition, the Society is actively pursuing, with the engineers, revisions to the registration law to better define or add to some of the definitions that the judges made in their comments on the DRG case that will negatively impact the profession if not quickly addressed.

Strategic Plan – A updated strategic plan was recently ratified with short term and long term goals that so far the Society has been following and continue to evaluate.

Mentor Program – Approximately 6 years ago a young SIT outlined a mentor program to help young surveyors with their career towards licensing. At the time there was mitigating circumstances that it just never got off the ground. However, at the Society’s most recent Board meeting it was again presented with details and was received and had appointed the planner to take it to the next step of creating an ad-hoc committee to put together procedures and implementation plan to get it started. The best thing was that SIT at the time is now a P.L.S. through her diligence and was the first female to be awarded “Surveyor of the Year” with an overwhelming vote during the Annual Conference.

In closing, Yes the PSLS is alive and well, and growing stronger.

Respectfully on behalf of the Pennsylvania Society of Land Surveyors,

Brent L. Birth, P.L.S.
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