

# Gulf Coast Surveyor

GULF COAST CHAPTER 9 OF THE TEXAS SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL SURVEYORS



## EDUCATION COMMITTEE NEWS BY TERRY ROWE, RPLS

It was an exhilarating time for TSPS Education and Public Relations these last two months. We completed the regional contest for the NSPS Trig-Star Program, a new program with the Skills USA students, and the Sam Houston Area Council's 2008 Scout Fair. You can read all of the details further in the newsletter, but first, I want to make sure that I get the thanks out. Bill Merten and Kyle Sunday of Cobb, Fendley, and Associates helped with the Trig-Star contest and Skills USA competition. Robert Hood and Universal Ensco donated several thousands of dollars of equipment to the Skills USA program. Because of their willingness to help, this program was

a success. I also want to thank Ric Vazquez (Precision Land Surveying, Inc.) and Moe Love (Jacobs Carter-Burgess) for lending a hand at the Scout Fair. It was a great time and I appreciate them spending a Saturday to further our profession. These opportunities will come around again next year, and I am also searching for other programs where we might be able to talk at Career Fairs, be a mentor, or get involved with the community. Your involvement is necessary, and always appreciated. Get Involved!!

### TRIG-STAR

Trig-Star is a national contest sponsored by the National Society of Professional Survey-

ors. This high school level competition is based on a practical application of Trigonometry. In the past, the Gulf Coast Chapter 9 has had some success in promoting and administering the program. Unfortunately, we have not fully pursued it for the last few years. Recognizing the need to encourage more young people to consider surveying as a profession, your current TSPS Board decided to either revive support of the Trig-Star program or find another suitable program to support. Though we started later than we wanted to, we had the leadership of Mrs. Celeste Brooks of Dickinson High School. She took the initiative to talk to the State to see how

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Crews beware! Future Party Chiefs in training



What a great opportunity to plant the seeds of interest in our field!

## LETTER FROM THE BOARD

My Fellow Surveyors:

March 19, 2008, marked a new step forward for our Chapter. President Stephanie Funk and almost all the Chapter 9 Officers and Directors were present at the Dinner meeting which was held in conjunction with Deep East Texas Chapter 6, led by Chapter 6 President, Joe Breaux and attended by several members, in Winnie, Texas. The joint meeting went off with a good bit of catching up and for most of Chapter 9 members we all got to talk to Darrell Shine, a legend in our time, and Nedra Foster, whom anyone in Surveying in Texas knows are the gradient boundary experts. The main event of course was a visit from TSPS State President Coleen Johnson. President Johnson brought us all up to date on TSPS State business, and the ACSM National Convention held earlier this month. As always the President brings out a good crowd and helps inform the members. We are fortunate, in deed, to have such a dedicated President, evidenced by the long round trip from Leander to Winnie and back. I'm sure that was a late night return. We sincerely appreciate the effort it takes to do the job of President.

At the meeting I was informed that the teacher in the Dickinson High School, Celeste Brooks, whom was teaching students about surveying with only one book has expressed her thanks to all those that have helped her Skills USA program get

off to a great start. Bill Merten has become her official liaison and Bill has asked that our correspondence with our Ms. Brooks be funneled through him to avoid confusion. So please make all future contacts to:

**William E. Merten**, RPLS # 5046,  
LSLS  
Cobb, Fendley & Associates, Inc.  
Tel: 713-462-3242  
Fax: 713-462-3262  
Email: [bmerten@cobfen.com](mailto:bmerten@cobfen.com)

### NOTES FROM THE EDITOR AND EXECUTIVE BOARD

Surveyor education opportunities and activities are at the forefront of this issue. We here at the GCS collect articles and input from a number of sources for the months prior to publication. It seems each issue takes on a life of its own. While our last issue was history haven, this issue is bristling with stories of educational activities reflecting a dedicated group of individuals moving towards a brighter future for our profession. Here you will find Education Committee Chair Terry Rowe's outstanding news report covering the latest on Trig-star, Skills USA, and Scout Fair. Also are articles by Bill Merten on the joint Dinner Meeting held in Winnie, Texas on March 19<sup>th</sup> with the members of Chapter 6. It was nice to meet and greet our peers from another geographic location and share professional ideas. Daryl Shine was in attendance along with the current Chairman of the State Board of

Land Surveying, Nedra Foster. Billy Wolfram has contributed an excellent article on the annual Texas A & M Survey camp, which occurs about this time every year. Several local firms contribute volunteer field crews to this program which is designed to educate the up and coming future engineers about the importance of Land Surveying to their careers. Also, we have included an article on the Texas Floodplain Management Association, an organization all surveyors should take a hard look at. This program provides opportunities and training which can be very valuable to the practicing surveyor who provides topographical surveys and elevation certificates. Randy McClendon has submitted an interesting commentary on estimating survey costs which provides a fresh look at an old topic.

Scott Crain of TXDOT has been kind enough to be the subject of our second 10 Question segment. Scott works in right-of-way and has been a help to all of us from time to time in answering right-of-way questions from the view point of the State. Scott's comments are interesting and enlightening and are just a sample of his wit and wisdom. Give him a call sometime. His interesting survey stories of the trials and tribulations of the States' right-of-way could just about fill up a book. We are always looking for 10 Question Vol-

*(Continued on page 3)*

## LETTER FROM THE BOARD

unteers. If you would like to be the subject of 10 Questions or would like to suggest someone to be the subject, just contact myself or Billy Wolfram.

The annual Softball Tournament has come and gone with Costello, Inc. capturing first place. Cobb Fendley placed second. The tournament this year was moved to a new venue, primarily due to the increasingly difficult task of getting the City's ball fields. It seems everyone had a good time and we look forward to comments on the venue and the tournament in general. Many thanks to Bill Merten and Kyle Sunday of Cobb Fendley for managing the tournament.

As reported in the last issue, the Board is moving closer to clarifying our endowment language with the University of Houston. We recently met with Ms. Janice Parsley, RPh, MBA, Executive Director of Constituent Development of the University. The discussion centered on modifying our endowment fund agreement to be more in line with scholarships for deserving students. Ms. Parsley answered many of our questions and had some great new ideas for us about how to better connect with prospective scholarship recipients and enhance our position with the College of Technology. We have also discussed the possibility of creating an endowment fund for Montgomery College, much as we did for UH back in 1984. We will be reporting back to the Chapter

the results of these discussions in the near future. Questions and comments are solicited and welcome. Please direct them to Mike mhooover@benchmarkengr.net.

We have been receiving some interesting opinion letters from chapter members. After some debate within the confines of the Board, it has been decided to begin printing some of these letters in the GCS. The discussion the Board had centered on whether or not the Chapter Newsletter was the right forum for opinion. Some felt the newsletter might not be the best fit, and some questions arose concerning what might happen if a flood of letters came in. We here at the GCS responded by saying bring it on. We realize we are not the only venue for commentary and opinion, but can think of no better problem than to have interested Surveyors sending us letters or emails. We of course must reserve the right to print those we feel are most relevant to the general readership and which we may be limited to by size, regardless of position, but with the promise to post them all on the TSPS-9 website. In fact, if you take a look at the website right now you will find an interesting opinion piece by Bud Thompson concerning the City of Houston Platting environment. In the meantime, check out BACK-SIGHTS/FORESIGHTS premier in this issue. Gary Bowes of Half has submitted an interesting opin-

ion letter in this issue concerning subdivision monumentation. So, as they say, keep those cards and letters coming.

Upcoming activities to consider include the Dinner Meeting in Arcola honoring the Skills USA winners (May 20) and the TSPS Day with the Astros (May 24). The Fishing Tournament is scheduled for mid August and the TSPS Golf Tournament may be a fall event this year. PSEFI's annual golf tournament is slated for May 21 at Weston Lakes Country Club.

Upcoming articles in future newsletters include a report by Jack Chiles on the City of Houston Centerline Monument System, a report on an expedition down the Brazos River by two local surveyors with new information on the new Fort Bend County Flood Maps, and an update on the proposed new City of Houston DRC Plat submittal system which may be implemented late summer or early fall. Also, keep an eye on American Surveyor Magazine for an article on the John Austin Southeast corner. It looks like TSPS 9 may be going national.

Another reminder, we are looking to upgrade our email list to include everyone. Please send us your updated email address and tell everyone you know to do the same. We want you to stay in touch!

Michael Hoover, R.P.L.S., C.F.M.  
Vice President TSPS 9  
Editor, GULF COAST SURVEYOR



Scouts look on as Ric Vazquez explains the finer points of chaining.



Demonstrating functions on the data collector



TrigStar Students sitting for the regional exam.



Crews will never have to eat that convenience store burrito again!

## E D U C A T I O N   C O N T I N U E D

she could get her students involved and brought TSPS 9 along for the ride.

Your Board saw this as the opportunity to bring new life into the program. Bill Merten (Cobb, Fendley, and Associates), Kyle Sunday (Cobb, Fendley, and Associates), and Stephen Blaskey (Coastal Surveying of Texas, Inc.) all spent time with Mrs. Brooks and her students talking about the test and administering the regional exam.

The regional Trig-Star contest was held on March 28, 2008 at Dickinson High School. Eight students, ranging from freshman to seniors, participated in the event. It was exciting to see the turnout and interest in the surveying profession. The results are as follows:

First place – Timothy Burns, Senior

Second Place– Aaron Deitz, Senior

A special thanks goes out to Mrs. Brooks for coordinating the event and for motivating her students to look into the land surveying as a career.

Encouraged by Mrs. Brooks' enthusiasm towards the event, we have started contacting other school districts and high schools to get involved. By the time we meet in Alvin, we will have proctored the State exam for Timothy and Aaron. We are excited about the chance these students have to win at a State level. Goals for next year are to continue to identify schools and to be better prepared for the exam period in February.

We need your help! Whom do you know in a school district or high school that can lead us to the right person to lead a Trig-Star contest?

We need your help! Will you take some of your time, just as these other surveyors did, and adopt a high school or two near your home or work and help administer the test?

Please contact Terry Rowe at [trowe@saminc.biz](mailto:trowe@saminc.biz) to be included in this exciting opportunity.

### Sam Houston Area Council 2008 Scout Fair

TSPS Chapter 9 recently joined in the Race to Scouting, the Sam Houston Area Council's Annual Scout Fair. This fair was a time for the brightest and best scouts to show off their specialty. Some units hosted a game or taught a skill while others built rope bridges or cooked chickens using solar ovens. The council also allows the business community to participate. TSPS have been providing a booth for several years with a goal of encouraging the kids and teens to start thinking about a career in surveying. This year we kept the presentation simple and allowed the participants to look through various instruments and see how a robotic total station was operated. It was great to talk to the scouts about what surveying is, show them some of the equipment that was used to survey Texas while she was becoming a state, and demonstrate to them the technology that we use to survey the state with now.

This annual event normally happens about the third Saturday in April. It is a great opportunity to come out for a day and show off land surveying.

### Texas Skills USA

Skills USA is relatively new to most of us in the Gulf Coast. Their mission is to provide opportunities for its members to become successful and productive citizens, employees, and leaders. Isn't it great when we have the chance to have productive employees and leaders? This year, Skills USA held a competition for high schools students to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding of the instruments, and theories of surveying. The State Con-

test problems involve basic issues such as: determining the bearing and distance of an unobservable line through an object; the angular relationship between unobservable lines; the distance of a object in relation to an unobservable line; the difference in elevation between non-visible objects; the height of a remote object; the area of a parcel; or a combination of similar surveying problems issues. Guess what! They do it without a data collector. Again, thanks to Mrs. Celeste Brooks at Dickinson High School for getting us involved with her students this year. Between the time volunteered by Bill Merten and Kyle Sunday and the equipment donation from Robert Hood and Universal Ensco, the Dickinson High School team was ready to go. What a great honor to know that Chapter 9 had a part of helping them win first place in the competition. Congratulations to the Dickinson High School team!

Where is your next group of field persons coming from? We think this is a great source and the Board along with the State TSPS are supporting this event. Here is another chance for you to support your profession. If you are interested in assisting an interested school, please look at the website <http://www.txskillsusa.org> or contact me at [trowe@saminc.biz](mailto:trowe@saminc.biz).

**TSPS Gulf Coast Chapter 9  
MAY DINNER MEETING**

**Celebrating Education**

Hosted by Terry Rowe  
Education/Public Relations Committee Chair

When:

TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2008

at

6:30 – 7:00 P.M. – Social Hour

7:00 – 8:30 P.M. – Buffett Dinner

Where:

JOE'S Barbeque Company

BANQUET CENTER

1300 EAST HIGHWAY 6

ALVIN, TEXAS 77511

281-331-9626

**Honored Guests:**

Celeste Brooks &

TrigStar and SkillsUSA Students

Dickinson Independent School District

Cost:

\$25 PER PERSON

\$5 FOR STUDENTS

**PLEASE MAKE A RESERVATION FOR THIS EVENT**  
**PLEASE HONOR YOUR RESERVATION**

RSVP by May 15<sup>th</sup> to:

JACKIE MALTBY

713-462-3242

[jmaltby@cobfen.com](mailto:jmaltby@cobfen.com)

## TEXAS FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS ASSOCIATION

BY MIKE HOOVER, RPLS, CFM

### CERTIFIED FLOODPLAIN MANAGER

### CERTIFIED FLOODPLAIN SURVEYOR

*Having become a CFM in 2006, I feel it appropriate to bring this program to the attention of my fellow Surveyors of the Gulf Coast Chapter and beyond. This terrific program has greatly enhanced my knowledge of FEMA policies and procedures in connection with floodplain management and elevation certificates. Along the way, I have crossed paths with many outstanding engineers who have provided me with a greater understanding of hydrology, hydraulics and the science of draining a site. For the time being, it is my observation that the greater number of CFM's are from the ranks of Engineers and City Officials, but I can assure you that there are great benefits for the Surveyor as well. Just last week, the TFMA concluded their bi-annual Spring Conference in League City with such topics as an overview of Clear Creek Watershed Management, Fort Bend County Flood Studies in Connection with revised Flood Maps, and the City of Dallas Levee System. Exhibitors included Harris County Flood Control, ACSM, and individual private firms such as R.G. Miller Engineering and Espey Consultants, Inc. I am including within the scope of this article information available on the TFMA website, which can be viewed at <http://tfma.affiniscap.com>. The segment concerning the pilot program for Certified Floodplain Sur-*

*veyor is condensed from an article entitled "The Case for Pursuing the Certified Floodplain Surveyor Program, by Wendy Lathrop, LS, CFM, which appeared in the January/February 2007 issue of The American Surveyor Magazine.*

The Texas Floodplain Management Association (TFMA) is an organization of professionals involved in floodplain management, flood hazard mitigation, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), flood preparedness, warning and disaster recovery. The Association has become a respected voice in floodplain management and policy in Texas. The Association includes flood hazard specialists from local, state and federal governments, the mortgage, insurance and research communities, and the associated fields of flood zone determination, hydraulic forecasting, emergency response, water resources, geographic information systems, others.

TFMA has gained recognition within the national floodplain management community as one of the first to become a State Chapter of the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM). Many of our members have been actively involved in the ASFPM organization by presenting papers at national conferences, serving on the Board of Directors and committees, and providing significant input into ASFPM's activities such as the national certification of the nation's floodplain managers.

TFMA has pioneered professional

certification of local floodplain managers and is in the forefront of efforts to increase the educational opportunities and professional skills of the state's floodplain management professionals. TFMA has now joined the ranks of those few states having certification programs which are nationally accredited through ASFPM and training and testing for those seeking their National Certification as Floodplain Managers.

### TFMA FOCUS

TFMA believes that through coordinated, well-informed efforts, the public and private sectors can:

- Reduce loss of human life and property damage resulting from flooding, preserve the natural and cultural values of floodplains, return valuable floodplains to their natural state, and avoid actions that exacerbate flooding.

The Texas Floodplain Management Association (TFMA) has been recognized and accredited through the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) as a Chapter that has established a national program for professional certification of floodplain managers. The program recognizes continuing education and professional development that enhance the knowledge and performance of local, state, federal, and private-sector floodplain managers.

The role of the nation's floodplain managers is expanding due to increases in disaster losses, the emphasis being placed upon miti-

## T F M A C O N T I N U E D

gation to alleviate the cycle of damage-rebuild-damage, and a recognized need for professionals to adequately address these issues. Floodplain managers come from a variety of careers and backgrounds; there is no college-level degree program for floodplain management. This certification program will lay the foundation for ensuring that highly qualified individuals are available to meet the challenge of breaking the damage cycle and stopping its negative drain on the nation's human, financial, and natural resources.

### ELIGIBILITY

Any person who is a member in good standing of TFMA and meets the credentials and requirements as established by the Certification Charter is welcome to apply for professional certification under the TFMA CFM® program

### EXPERIENCE

Applicants must demonstrate that they have a minimum of two (2) years experience dealing with the management of floodplains, wetlands and/or watersheds. (NOTE: Persons with less than two (2) years of experience may substitute one year with the successful completion of the FEMA 4 ½ day course: "Managing Floodplain Development Through the National Flood Insurance Program")

### THREE STEPS TO A CFM®

1. Obtain approval of Application and Application/Exam Fee- The completed application and fee must be returned to the Certifica-

tion Committee for review and approval before taking the CFM exam. Application form and fee must be received by TFMA at least 10 business days before the exam to allow for and processing.

2. Become a Member -you are not a member of TFMA, you must become a member before submit an application to take the CFM exam.

3. Pass the CFM Test - The TFMA Certification Committee will notify you by letter of your test results.

### CERTIFIED FLOODPLAIN SURVEYORS

FEMA and ACSM have partnered to create a certification for licensed surveyors that will allow for an expedited review of applications for letters of map amendment (LOMA) to Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM).

The State of North Carolina was the first step forward, with agreements between FEMA and its regional office, the North Carolina Society of Surveyors (NCSS), the North Carolina Board of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors, the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management (NCEM), and the North Carolina Geodetic Survey (NCGS). With these stakeholders in the NFIP represented in an agreement to pursue the program, creating a training program was next. Already, trained and tested Certified Floodplain Surveyors (CFS) in North Carolina have gained the right to issue Letters of Map Amendment (LOMAs) and Letters of Map Revision Based

upon Fill (LOMR-Fs) for properties or structures meeting certain criteria, and instead of the normal 60-day review period, the time is reduced to five business days. Currently there is annual training and testing for new CFS candidates as well as review training for those renewing their CFS status, both available as regular components of the North Carolina Educational Institute held each fall. The program has not yet been extended beyond North Carolina, where FEMA still considers it a pilot program. In part, this lack of extension is due to the legwork involved in coordinating the approval of all interested parties within a state, a process FEMA will not undertake and which should fall to the professional surveyors desiring CFS status within their own locales.

Holding CFS status means that the professional has an established and recognized level of expertise. This is both marketable and a testament to credibility. A layperson relies on licensure when hiring anyone with specialized expertise, and CFS status provides another reason for the public to turn to one professional instead of another.

Those interested in the CFS program and how to implement it in their states should contact Curt Sumner, LS, Executive Director for the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping at [curtis.sumner@acsm.net](mailto:curtis.sumner@acsm.net) or 240-632-9716, ext. 106.

## BACKSIGHTS / FORESIGHTS MONUMENTATION

At a recent joint meeting of TSPS Chapters 6 & 9, President Coleen Johnson commented that TSPS is continuing to pursue a new TBPLS (Board) rule concerning the staking of interior corners in subdivisions. I have followed the discussions over the past year between TSPS and the Board pertaining to this matter, and as a member of TSPS, do not support any proposed new rules, or changes to the existing rules, regarding corner monumentation.

The concern, as I understand, is that certain cities or other governmental agencies have codes and ordinances requiring that all lot corners in a subdivision be staked at the time of recordation, and if that occurs prior to clearing of the land, and/or construction of infrastructure improvements, those corners are sometimes destroyed. Further concern is that this situation occasionally results in the lot corners not being set and/or being set or reset by non licensed persons.

Presently, there isn't even a Board rule requiring that ALL lot corners in a subdivision be staked, and if a non licensed person sets or resets the lot corners, that person would be in violation of the Land Surveying Practices Act. When a subdivision plat is signed & sealed by a surveyor, and the surveyor chooses not to set the interior corners, although indicating such on the face of the plat, that surveyor is in violation of the current Board rules and therefore subject to disciplinary action and/or fines.

Why do some surveyors consider this issue to be a problem? It simply seems to be the ordinary course of business. If a corner set by a surveyor is destroyed, it can be reset by a surveyor. And, how does the survey of a subdivision differ from any other survey of land where a corner monument set by a surveyor may be subsequently destroyed?

It is apparent that a request for any revision of the particular requirements concerning subdivisions should be directed to the entities that have established such rules. Further, if the perceived burden in this matter is the additional cost to reset corners; that is nothing more than a business issue to be resolved between the surveyor and the developer/client.

It is interesting to note that no developer, contractor or other member of the public has brought a concern in this matter before the Board. Rather it seems that this issue involves a few surveyors seeking relief from the existing Board rules by requesting new rules to circumvent them.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary C. Bowes, RPLS, LSLS

The following minutes are from TBPLS Board meetings in 2007 on this subject.

June 1, 2007 Board meeting

Rules Committee

Ms. Foster presented a policy let-

ter regarding the subdivision/monumentation issue. Ms. Foster explained that the rules as written are sufficient and the letter is intended as only a tool that a surveyor could use when working with cities regarding their subdivision/monumentation requirements.

Carlos Cotton asked to speak on behalf of Jerry Fults regarding this issue. Mr. Cotton acted as the facilitator on the Negotiated Rules Committee that developed language for Proposed Rule 663.17 (e). Mr. Cotton noted that all committee members agreed that exterior monumentation must be noted and no members wanted to deal with amending plats. Bud Thompson stated that he supported the rule as presented and felt that the public was better served by simultaneous lot corner setting.

Proposed Rule 663.17 (e)

Subdivisions that require infrastructure construction must have exterior corner monumentation set prior to plat recordation. It is the responsibility of the surveyor signing the recorded subdivision plat and the Company he/she is registered to work under to ensure that the setting of interior lot and block corners be completed within one calendar year from the date of recordation.

Mr. O'Hara explained that current rules require that if you certify that monumentation has been set, monument must be set and failure to set it is a violation of the rules.

**B A C K S I G H T S / F O R E S I G H T S**  
**M O N U M E N T A T I O N C O N T I N U E D**

Mr. Gilley noted that such a rule could be in conflict with exiting Rule 663.8 (2),

Existing Rule 663.8,

Strict adherence to practice requirements of related sections of the statutes, the state code, and all local codes and ordinances should be maintained in all services rendered. The registrant:

(2) shall abide by, and conform to, the provisions of the state code and any local codes and ordinances not consistent with this Act. Any surveyor subdividing land into tracts subject to statutory requirements providing for an approval process by a governing body for such subdivision shall notify the individual whose intent it is to create the subdivision of the existence of the statutory requirements that pertain to and affect the development of the proposed subdivision prior to commencing the survey. It is recommended that this notification be in writing and a copy of which is maintained within the surveyor's permanent records.

Ms. Foster moved that the Board repropose 663.17 (e). Mr. Smyth seconded the motion.

Mr. Boyt suggested the following amendment,

In the event of a conflict between this subsection and local ordinances and rules, this subsection will prevail.

Ms. Foster and Mr. Smyth accepted the amendment and the

amended motion carried with Mr. Runyan abstaining.

The Board will continue working with the letter to municipalities.

August 10, 2007 Board meeting

Rules Committee

Ms. Foster reported on 663.17 (e), the subdivision monumentation rule. A lot of time has been invested in this rule. The Board and a Negotiated Rule writing committee have both worked on this rule and there are still unresolved issues. Current rules require that all monumentation noted as set must be set. Mr. Smyth moved that the previous motion to revise Rule 663.17 be withdrawn. Mr. O'Hara seconded the motion. Jerry Fults, representing the Texas Society of Professional Surveyors, spoke in favor of the revision. The motion carried unanimously.

December 7, 2007 Board meeting

Rules Committee

Ms. Foster next discussed a policy letter to Political Subdivisions. The letter addresses the counties requirement that all corners of a subdivision be set when the initial plat is filed. Many times these corner monuments are lost in the construction of infrastructure. The Board and many surveyors have worked on a rule to address this concern, however the Board feels that the policy letter is a better route to take. The letter states why it is not necessary to have all corners set prior to filing the plat. The letter includes the use of

amending plats. Members have received comments against the use of an amending plat. Preparation and filing of amending plats can be very difficult. The Board discussed deleting references to amending plats. Mr. Boyt said that in discussions he has had with Texas Municipal League it was noted that what was needed was a statement from the Board that they could take to their councils and county commissioners to educate them regarding their requirements. Ms. Foster asked Mr. Boyt what effect a policy letter would have. Mr. Boyt said it is a statement of interpretation of statute or rule and how it relates to issues. Mr. Boyt said that a policy regarding these matters would be very appropriate. Local governments are setting up the surveyor to fail, to force them into non-compliance with the Act and Rules. Mr. Boyt also noted that we must remove the phrase "with the approval of the Office of the Attorney General". Use of such a statement would require a great deal of consultation with the AG. Mr. Turner asked all Board members to review this for additional discussion at the next meeting.

See also Bud Thompson's editorial on the chapter website or see his editorial on page 8 of the July 2007 issue of *Texas Surveyor*.

# TEXAS RTK Cooperative Network

- ◆ One State, One Network
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- ◆ Radio Free RTK
- ◆ Flexible One Man RTK Crew
- ◆ GLONASS Capabilities

**Thank You  
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**Pharr**

1-956-961-4591  
801 Ferguson Ave.  
Pharr, Texas 78577

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## T E X A S   A & M   S U R V E Y   C A M P

The information herein is adapted from the Texas A&M Department of Civil Engineering Newsletter *Civil Engineer* which covers Survey Camp annually in their summer issue.

The original Survey Camp was taught to Aggie civil engineering students as early as the 1890's. In those days, students spent six full weeks honing their skills in the field and gaining invaluable insights into the survey profession in the Texas Hill Country. Survey Camp as it was known was disbanded in the 1980's to promote computer based courses in the department of engineering's curriculum. Fortunately, in 2001 the department's Advisory Council, made up of professors and practicing civil engineers, made the decision to reinstate the Survey program citing that graduating students "misunderstood surveying". In an effort to close the gap, Survey Camp was revived under the direction of Carlos Cotton '73, PE, RPLS and Associate Professor Roger Smith PE, PhD. The 21st century version of Camp is an elective CVEN403: Applied Civil Engineering Surveying which is taught during a 2 week mini-mester every May to about 30 students. Participants experience first hand how to use total station, level, and GPS equipment. They complete field work necessary for topographic surveys in unimproved and improved areas of Texas A&M Riverside Campus. Students are also responsible for completing a model construction staking job. After they complete the necessary field work, they bring in the data to a drafting environment for further instruction. The students gain insight into field procedures and more importantly how to communicate to survey staff in the future. Approximately 15 companies and agencies volunteer a professional each year for 2 days of field instruction. This years camp will be held from May 12 to May 23, 2008. Anyone interested in participating in future Survey Camps may contact Carlos Cotton 713-777-5337 or Roger Smith 979-845-0875 for more details.

A.C. Mulford PLS, [Boundaries and Landmarks](#), 1912

"THE VOCATION OF THE CIVIL ENGINEER HAS ALWAYS BEEN INVESTED WITH A DIGNITY OF ITS OWN. BUT IT SEEMS TO ME THAT OF LATE YEARS, IN PAYING HIM THE HONOR WHICH IS HIS JUST DUE, WE ARE APT TO FIX A LITTLE TOO WIDE A GAP BETWEEN HIM AND HIS HUMBLER BROTHER, THE SURVEYOR. WE GIVE ENGINEERING THE CHIEF ATTENTION IN OUR TECHNICAL SCHOOLS, BUT SURVEYING WE ARE WONT TO RELEGATE TO THE FRESHMAN CLASS. YET THE PROFESSION OF THE SURVEYOR DEALS WITH ONE OF THE OLDEST AND MOST FUNDAMENTAL FACTS OF HUMAN SOCIETY - THE POSSESSION AND INHERITANCE OF LAND. FIRE, FLOOD AND EARTHQUAKE WIPE OUT THE GREATEST WORKS OF THE ENGINEER, BUT THE LAND CONTINUETH FOREVER."

Although engineering programs around the country may not be as extensive as Surveyors would like to see, we must keep in mind that they are just that, engineering programs. Carlos Cotton and Roger Smith should be commended for attempting to close the disconnect between Surveyors and Engineers. I do not think it is a stretch to say we all experience this disconnect on a daily basis. It is evident from the quote above it is not a new development. We have an interdependent relationship with engineers that may never diminish. In an age where the Professional Surveyor's future will be shouldered by a technology driven generation of professionals who have never thrown a chain or adjusted a traverse by hand, it is crucial that we embrace any opportunity to guide the perception of our profession abroad as well as within our own ranks. Volunteering your time for this type of program is a great opportunity and privilege. In addition to teaching the fundamental skills of a surveyor you have a chance to groom the minds of students who, in all likelihood, you may work alongside in the future.

Billy Wolfram

**E D U C A T I N G   T H E   C L I E N T**  
**B Y   R A N D Y   M C C L E N D O N ,   R P L S**

All too often a client expects that if he tells you how many acres he has, you can tell him how much a survey will cost. It would be best to ask him what he intends to use it for. "Land title conveyance" would be one appropriate response. The next thing you might say to him is "Where is it?".

As often as I can when giving a free estimate, I ask the client to do some of the research (it is free to him of course, it will cost me my time). I have them send me a copy of the current deed, a metes and bounds description, a Google Earth depiction, a tax id number, an address, or all of the above. After your client does a couple of hours of research for you, you will be better prepared to determine your cost of his survey.

Finally, there are certain things that I look for that tend to run up the cost. If I account for all of them, the cost is usually higher than I originally imagined. Here is a laundry list of the things that add to the cost of a survey for land title conveyance. You may want to cut this out and keep it on hand.

Transactional Cost – kind of a flat fee for being involved

Acreage Fee – this component is directly proportional to the number of acres

Number of property corners – it could as few as three or many, many more

Perimeter distance – similar to the factor list above

Frontage – this component is for the linear feet on a public R.O.W.

Improvements – this is a per acre cost, and varies depending on the character

Wooded – this can be a huge factor if not considered in your costs

Adjoiners – this can be figured as a flat fee for each adjoiner on the tax map

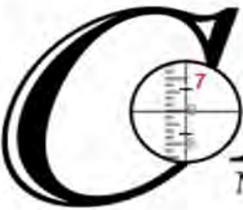
Deliveries – based on how many, how often, and how quick

Abstracting – you will need a lot of experience to estimate this one

Sales Tax – easy to calculate

Expediting Fees – they may want it cheap, good, and *fast*

You probably have an idea how each of these components runs up the cost if you have enough experience at what doing these type of surveys takes. The question is whether you are considering them all each time you prepare an estimate. This list may help you the next time a client tells you how many acres they have.



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## 10 QUESTIONS WITH... SCOTT CRAIN, RPLS

Scott Crain, RPLS Number 5692, works for the State of Texas in the right-of-way department of the Houston District. He can be reached at 713-802-5719.

1) Tell us a little about your background and when you became licensed as an RPLS?

In the winter of 1979, I decided to take a trek from Missouri to Texas to visit a friend. I ended up at the office of McQuillan Surveying, inquiring about their ad in the paper "Immediate Opening for Rodman, No Experience Needed". A short man sporting a crew cut and moccasins began the interview in a drill sergeant tone "We don't allow guns on the job! Had a party chief pulled over last week with a loaded 38 in the truck!" I responded enthusiastically, "I don't own a gun!" He quickly replied, "Start Thursday." Although not owning gun, I soon learned how to run one, and ended up spending roughly 10 years in the field working at various companies. I eventually ended up at the Highway Department in 1989, and spent the next 12 years retooling myself for a career in civil engineering. I was in my junior year at U of H when I received a phone call from my long time friend John Weeks urging me to send in an application to the Board for the SIT. In May of 2003, I received a letter from the Board that transformed my life. As result, I had a new career and decided for now to put civil engineering on the back burner.

2) As a long tenured employee of TxDOT, how would you describe your experience working for the State?

Looking back over almost 19 years of service, I can say my time at TxDOT has been productive and positive. The experience I have gained covers a wide range of areas both in surveying and design, involving a myriad of projects from conception to final submission. Some of the finest people, working in a variety of fields and professions, have been employed at the State, and I have been fortunate to have crossed paths with many of them professionally and personally. Technology is an influential force in the transportation business, and I have benefited greatly from TxDOT's overall goal of initiating, promoting and training its workforce to deal with new technologies.

3) Who influenced you most as a Surveyor?

Many surveyors have influenced my career, but an engineer by the name of Harvey McCulley, who hired me at the Highway Department, definitely stands out from the group. Although not a surveyor, Harvey always held surveyors in high regard and believed it was the initial ground work that surveyors provided that created a solid foundation for a successful project. He instilled a positive work ethic that promoted teamwork and self-motivation, but more importantly, he espoused that education was the core of success. He was full of one liners that were related to the job at hand or work in general, and one stood out from the rest - "Never make stupidity a virtue." On many levels, I owe Harvey a ton of gratitude.

4) What has been your most memorable Surveying job or experience?

It is not so much as one survey or one experience, but many combined over many years of work. This particular question stirred up many memories as I took a quick look at my past. I am sure some of you can appreciate the sight of a perfect set line of laths a few thousand feet long, being waist deep in mud, finding an illusive old original corner, the heat wave of 1980, pulling and throwing a 200 ft chain, checking in gnats as\*!, the thick and stagnant air of August while chopping line, hand signals, using CAD the first time, trying to understand how GPS works and then using it, passing the exam, and signing and sealing your first survey.

*(Continued on page 16)*

## 10 QUESTIONS WITH... SCOTT CRAIN, RPLS

5) What are you going to be doing in 2015?

On a personal level, I figure to be deep in a mid life crisis by then, so I think at the very least driving a Porsche. On a career level, I am planning on retiring from the Department in about 4 to 5 years and then moving my knowledge and experience to the private sector. There are many areas of surveying that I do not deal with at the Highway Department that I would very much like to experience.

6) What have you been doing lately professionally?

I hooked up with Mike Hoover about 8 years ago by chance at a training seminar in Austin. Over the years, I have witnessed first hand Mike's enthusiasm for learning and sharing surveying knowledge. He has taken this enthusiasm and somehow convinced me to commit to teaming up with him to prepare for the LSLS examination. So the question "What have you been doing lately professionally?" - ask Mike

7) How do you feel about the 4-year Degree requirement for licensure?

I have always thought that education should be an important facet of our profession, and the requirement of the four-year degree was a logical step forward. Education places the surveyor on a playing field with other professions within our industry, and sets a positive foundation for building new skills. With that said, I also believe that it is important to have education backed with sound field experience. Within the Texas surveying community, a group of motivated surveyors are promoting and contributing a tremendous amount of effort towards making the degree requirement work. I hope over time this effort will result in the inclusion of an approved four-year degree program based on some distant learning classes. A viable path for those in our profession that do not have the luxury of time to attend a traditional program due to personal and/or family obligations would be a tremendous asset to our profession. Time will only tell if what has been set in stone will pay off dividends - I believe it will.

8) What, if anything, do you feel TSPS offers members of the Surveying community?

The "if anything" doesn't enter into the equation. A successful profession is a function of how well the members of that profession communicate on a personal and professional level. The TSPS is a perfect example of how it should work.

9) What annoys you most in day to day professional practice?

I basically try not to get too frustrated with the daily grind-life is difficult as is. However, there are a couple of things that cause me to shake my head. One involves the property owner who refuses to use the services of a surveyor to establish their boundaries along the State owned right-of-way. This is quite evident with the amount of encroachments I come in contact with on a regular basis. I believe A.C. Mulford in his book Boundaries and Landmarks put this in perspective, "It is a fact, however, that these boundaries along roads are the most unstable of all boundaries for the simple reason that, while each man watches his neighbor to see that there is no transgression of the line between them, all parties concerned are apt to combine to borrow as much land from the public highway as possible." The second is simple, and really needs no explanation - corners called to be set, should be set.

10) If you weren't a Surveyor, what else would you have been?

In my senior year of high school, I became very interested in archeology. Not sure why, but it seemed like an adventurous occupation - travel the world and study ancient civilizations. I told my Dad that I wanted to go to school to be an archeologist. His response was "You can't make any money doing that". How ironic - I ended up in the survey profession employed by the State.

## CHAPTER 9 SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT 2008

BY BILL MERTEN, RPLS, LSLS

It was a beautiful day for softball at the Houston Sportsplex softball fields. We had a fabulous turnout of eighteen teams at the new venue. Edminster, Hinshaw, Russ, Associates and Montgomery & Associates started strong early along with Total Surveyors and Miller Survey Group toward mid day.

By evening, only four teams remained, Cobb Fendley, Jacobs Carter Burgess, Terra Engineering and Costello. Jacobs Carter Burgess was coming on strong at the end but was unable to pull it out in a 14 to 12 loss to Costello knocking them out of the competition. Terra put on quite a show, for engineers, but couldn't get the runs across against Cobb Fendley's strong defense. In the two game Championship Series, Cobb Fendley and Costello went head to head. In the final game, Cobb Fendley ran out of gas and was unable to stop the Costello attack.

After placing in the top 4 for at least the last 3 years, Costello, Inc. endured a long day of softball to come out victorious and take home the championship trophy. Costello slipped into the losers bracket early in the competition but methodically worked their way into the championship game by defeating their opponents one by one.

Congratulations to Costello, Inc. on their victory and thanks to all who participated and helped out with the tournament arrangements and logistics.

The final results: First place – Costello, Inc., Second Place – Cobb Fendley & Associates, Third Place – Terra Engineering, Fourth Place – Jacobs Carter Burgess.

SEE YOU ALL NEXT YEAR!

William E. (Bill) Merten, RPLS, LSLS  
Tournament Director



Champs! Costello, Inc.



Runner Up! Cobb Fendley



## Texas Society of Professional Surveying Gulf Coast Chapter



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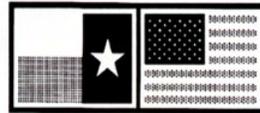


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## EDUCATION AND LEARNING SPRING 2008

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON** – BACHELOR OF SCIENCE – SURVEYING ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

SURY 2461 SURVEYING 1 M W 1:30-3:00 P.M., T. 5:30-7:00

SURY 4361 SURVEYING PRACTICUM TBA

SURY 4170 ETHICS IN PROFESSIONAL SURVEYING TBA

CNST 2365 SITE DEVELOPMENT T. Th. 10:00-11:30 P.M.

### S U R V E Y I N G A N D M A P P I N G

INSTRUCTION IN THE SURVEYING AND MAPPING CONCENTRATION EMPHASIZES THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES AS WELL AS PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF ADVANCED SURVEYING AND MAPPING TECHNIQUES, RELATED COMPUTATIONAL PROCEDURES, GEODESY, MAP COMPILATION, AND PHOTOGRAMMETRY. SURVEYING AND MAPPING, IN ITS BROADEST SENSE, INCLUDES MAKING PRECISE MEASUREMENTS OF THE EARTH'S SURFACE USING SOPHISTICATED OPTICAL AND ELECTRONIC INSTRUMENTS, DETERMINING THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN ADJACENT LANDOWNERS, WORKING AS A FIELD ENGINEER FOR A GENERAL CONTRACTOR ESTABLISHING THE LOCATION OF NEW CONSTRUCTION, ESTABLISHING TRANSPORTATION ROUTES AND MAPPING THE EARTH'S SURFACE. THIS PROGRAM IS COMMITTED TO ATTAINING THE FOLLOWING GOALS.

- PROVIDE AN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE THAT PREPARES THE STUDENT FOR THE CHALLENGES OF THE SURVEYING AND MAPPING PROFESSION.
- EMPLOY STATE-OF-THE-ART TECHNOLOGIES IN THE SURVEYING AND MAPPING CURRICULUM.
- PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE STUDENT TO EXHIBIT CREATIVITY, LEADERSHIP AND TEAM-BUILDING ABILITIES, CULTURAL APPRECIATION, AND AN UNDERSTANDING OF GLOBAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES.
- INCORPORATE INTERDISCIPLINARY CONCEPTS AND PROBLEM-SOLVING EXERCISES IN THE PROGRAM.
- PROVIDE BROAD EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE INCLUDING COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS, MATHEMATICS AND BASIC SCIENCES, AND PREPARATION FOR LIFELONG LEARNING.

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**LONESTAR COLLEGE MONTGOMERY – CERTIFICATE – ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE**

**SUMMER** (BEGINS JUNE 2, 2008 THRU JULY 8, 2008)

SRVY 1301 (INTRODUCTION TO SURVEYING), MTh, 7:00 PM TO 8:55 PM

SRVY 2344 (LEGAL PRINCIPALS II), MW, 7:00 PM TO 8:55 PM, TTh ON-LINE INSTRUCTION

**FALL** (BEGINS AUGUST 25, 2008 THRU DECEMBER 14, 2008)

SRVY 1301 (INTRODUCTION TO SURVEYING), M, 6:00 PM TO 8:50 PM

SRVY 1315 (SURVEY CALCULATIONS I), T, 6:00 PM TO 8:50 PM

SRVY 1413 (PLANE SURVEYING), MW, 5:30 PM TO 7:50 PM

SRVY 1441 (LAND SURVEYING W/LAB), TTh, 6:00 PM TO 8:50 PM

SRVY 2313 (CONTROL SURVEYING), M, 6:00 PM TO 8:50 PM

SRVY 2340 (ADVANCED PLANE SURVEYING), W, 5:30 PM TO 9:20 PM

SRVY 2343 (LEGAL PRINCIPALS I), Th, 6:00 PM TO 8:50 PM

ANYONE WHO IS INTERESTED IN OUR PROGRAM CAN CONTACT ROGER DIRECTLY:

ROGER W. McDONALD, RPLS DIRECTOR: LAND SURVEYING & MAPPING TECH PROGRAM  
LONESTAR COLLEGE MONTGOMERY  
3200 COLLEGE PARK DRIVE, F359  
CONROE, TEXAS 77384-4500  
OFFICE:936-271-6179 Fax:936-273-7342  
EMAIL: ROGER.MCDONALD@NHMCCD.EDU

LONE STAR COLLEGE MONTGOMERY WILL BE PROCTORING A CERTIFIED SURVEY TECHNICIAN (CST) EXAM SATURDAY, JUNE 28, 2008 AT 8:30 AM. THE EXAM WILL BE HELD IN BLDG F, ROOM 306. PLEASE CONTACT ROGER McDONALD, ABOVE, OR BRENDA NULL AT THE STATE OFFICE IN AUSTIN FOR MORE INFORMATION. YOU MUST HAVE YOUR APPLICATION IN BY MAY 17TH.

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THE COLLEGE IS CONSOLIDATING ITS RESOURCES IN TEXAS CITY THIS SUMMER. INTERESTED PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS CAN CONTACT STEPHEN DIRECTLY.

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## May

## June

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30					

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- May 3 – Gulf Coast Chapter Slow Pitch Softball Tournament, SW Houston, TX.
- May 9 – Jefferson Historical Seminar: Texas Surveying, Jefferson, TX.
- May 16-17 – Second Quarter TSPS Meeting & Ray Wisdom BBQ Auction, Austin, TX.
- May 20 – Gulf Coast Chapter Dinner Meeting 6:30 pm, Joe's Barbeque Co., Alvin, TX.  
Hosted by Terry Rowe and honoring Dickinson SkillsUSA students.  
See page 6 for more information.
- May 21 – PSEFI Golf Tournament, Weston Lakes Golf Course, Fulshear, TX.
- May 24 – 3rd Annual Picnic day with the Astros 6:00 pm at Minute Maid Park, Houston, TX.  
See page 18 for more information.
- May 26 – Memorial Day
- June 7 – Implementing GIS in a Surveying Environment, Harlingen, TX. (8 CEUs)
- Oct. 22-27 – 2008 Cruise Convention, registration ends May 19, 2008

Additional information on these events can be obtained from the State TSPS website, [www.tsp.org](http://www.tsp.org)

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### Update Contact Information!

We want to include you! You must let us know you have moved or changed email addresses. We currently do not have e-mail contacts for over 40% of our membership. Tell a friend or colleague to contact us.

### Addicks Reservoir Calibration Site

The Chapter is considering abandoning the baseline calibration site due to a lack of interest. This is a call for feedback from members before we terminate our arrangement with the county. Interested parties should submit their response/comments to **Stephanie** by e-mail. [sfunk@cobfen.com](mailto:sfunk@cobfen.com)

### 2008 State Convention Participants

!! PLEASE DON'T FORGET !!

If you are planning on attending the 2008 State Convention on the Cruise ship to Cozumel, Mexico, Oct. 23-27, 2008, then you must have your passport updated. Passports will be required when reserving a cabin for the cruise by **May 19, 2008**.

### Geocaching with Friends and Family

This is a great activity to relate your profession to something your friends and family can understand. Although it is not 'surveying' as we practice it, this is a way to educate them and have a lot of fun. Geocaching is defined by Wikipedia as a treasure hunting game in which participants use a GPS receiver to hide and seek containers all over the world. There are many websites out there that have geocaching themes. The most common is [www.geocaching.org](http://www.geocaching.org). You can register an account without entering any personal information. You only need an

active email account. Search for cache sites by zip code, State, or country to begin finding a location nearest you. The location page will give you Lat/Long coordinates you can plug into your handheld GPS to guide you to the general area and a brief description of a landmark. Some locations have simple encryption puzzles that you must work out to identify clues to locate the cache box. Others require short compass and pacing courses to locate the box from a described landmark. Once you have uncovered the cache box you can log in a book your name and date you visited. Many contain small treasures that you can swap with one you have brought. The rule is put something in if you take something out.

This activity may seem mundane to you but you can create a memorable outing for you and your family. There might even be a cache site in your neighborhood. Take your boy/girl Scouts, grandkids, anyone who has ever asked you "what do you do anyway?" and introduce your profession to them in a creative and active way. Whether you are a seasoned veteran or a small child, there is instant gratification for anyone who is successful in the hunt.

### GBI welcomes two new partners

GBI wishes to announce that James E. Dyer and Jon P. Bordovsky have joined the staff as limited partners.



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The Gulf Coast Chapter publishes Gulf Coast Surveyor to provide information on the surveying profession and TSPS to its members. The newsletter is published 6 times a year. The Chapter assumes no responsibility for any statements made or opinions expressed in articles, advertisements, or any other portions of this publication. There is no implied endorsement of any product, firm, or service in Gulf Coast Surveyor.

The editors of this newsletter reserve the right to edit any content for technical correctness & accuracy.

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## COMMERCIAL & CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

The Gulf Coast Surveyor welcomes advertising from all sources. If you or your business would like to advertise in this publication please contact our Secretary/Treasurer Gerald Wright through his e-mail:

[geraldw@tbsmith.com](mailto:geraldw@tbsmith.com).

The rates for commercial advertisements are as follows;

- 2.0" x 3.5" ad for \$80.00 per issue
- 3.5" x 4.5" ad for \$115.00 per issue
- 4.5" x 7.5" ad for \$195.00 per issue
- 8.0" x 11.0" ad for \$375.00 per issue

Classified ads are free for our members. We allow a maximum of 4 lines or approximately 20-25 words. General business ads, however, will be treated as commercial advertising. If you would like to submit an add for the Wanted page please send your submission to Billy Wolfram at his e-mail: [bwolfram@benchmarkengr.net](mailto:bwolfram@benchmarkengr.net).

Ads accompanied with payment must be in by the 20th of the month preceding our next issue. This newsletter is published January, March, May, July, September, and November of each year.