

Expanding our Scope of Activities through Regulation Change

By David M. Brubacher, O.L.S., O.L.I.P. and the Professional Integration Committee

David Thompson, perhaps the world's greatest land geographer, had no need of integration. He was a surveyor, astronomer, explorer, map maker and much more. By the 1950's, there were many surveyors working in a variety of land related disciplines, able to provide the products and services demanded by their customers. Planning and drainage services, for example, were the sole responsibility of the surveyor.

In the 1960's the profession began focusing more of its attention on cadastral products and services rather than the wider range of activities traditionally performed by the surveyor. This change put us on the path of becoming an association of cadastral surveyors with considerable expertise in a small segment of an ever-broadening spectrum of surveying activities.

The Association expanded the profession in the 1980's to include photogrammetry, hydrography and geodesy but by then the memory of our historical range of activities was dim indeed. There were common complaints about the loss of work to other professionals who had stepped in to fill the gaps, yet there was little effort made to work with the surveyors in the new branches to defend or retake our lost turf. Seeing little return on their dues investment, some non-cadastral surveyors left the Association, never to return.

We expanded the profession again ten years ago, creating the Geographic Information Manager designation. Having recognized some of our past mistakes, Council created the Professional Integration Committee to actively work towards regaining the integration we had from David Thompson's day through to the 1950's. PIC has since become one of the most active committees of the Association.

In 2002 and 2003 PIC organised meetings where the content was tailored to the Certificate of Registration (*C of R*) member in an attempt to increase participation. Paradoxically, holding meetings for a special group only supported our differences.

In 2007, PIC issued two broad recommendations to Council that would enable the Association to take ownership of the expanded profession. The first recommendation was that the Association immediately develop standards of practice, skill and knowledge for the non-cadastral branches because without them the Association had no tools to govern all of its members and therefore no way to

fulfill its mandate under the Surveyor's Act. These standards would differentiate the member from a non-member because of the principles and ethics to which a Professional Surveyor adheres. Furthermore, all of the members would gain the recognition they deserve, effectively demonstrate their professionalism and have the opportunity to take advantage of their credentials for greater earnings, career advancement and job responsibilities. This recommendation was heartily accepted by Council.

The second recommendation was that the Association implement revisions to the existing licensing regime so that the Certificate of Registration holders would instead enjoy the benefits of a shared but exclusive license. Council agreed that our proposal was a worthy goal, but without the effective governance proposed in the first recommendation, there would be little support by government. The marching orders for PIC were clear; revise the regulations and create the supporting knowledge so that the Association could fully govern its members, and then revisit the licensing issue later.

Revisions to *General Regulation 1026* would assure the public of Ontario that members of all disciplines of Professional Land Surveying are qualified in their specific discipline(s). The amendments would maintain the status quo for licensed members and allow for identical treatment of members who hold Certificates of Registration.

Similarly, the amendments to the *Performance Standards for the Practice of Cadastral Surveying, O. Reg. 42/96* (to be known as *Performance Standards for the Practice of Professional Land Surveying*) would result in consistent and equal treatment of Licensed and Certificate of Registration members with respect to certification and competency, thus ensuring that Association members provide consistent and equal levels of practice and services across Ontario.

After enormous effort, repeated revision, lengthy member review and copious feedback, PIC submitted draft amendments to *Reg. 1026* and *O. Reg. 42/96* to Council for approval. The drafts have since been reviewed, slightly edited, returned to the Council and Committee for comment and then approved by the government. By the time you read this, the final cast-in-stone amendments (known as 'Black Corner' copies) will have been returned to the Association, published on the website and sent to the membership for study.

These regulation amendments have been created to permit Professional Surveyors to self manage and regulate their work². The resulting regulation is flexible and in many cases relies on the professional ethics of the member to make appropriate decisions. Providing guidance and best practices documentation is the supporting knowledge referred to earlier that will help the member in those situations. Because the documentation is controlled by the Association and not in a regulation, it can be more fluid and respond to changes in practice and technology. The supporting documentation is exactly what PIC has been spending much of the past year creating and will continue to develop for the foreseeable future. The entire set of documentation will be made available to the membership in a form yet to be determined.

Please take the time to study these regulation amend-

ments as they are critical to our future. Anticipating questions, PIC is preparing a collection of questions and answers available to the membership that will be updated regularly. If you have questions, by all means, feel free to contact the Association office, a Councillor or a member of the Professional Integration Committee. We will answer your questions to the best of our ability and update our document so that everyone can benefit.

Lastly, we ask that each and every member cast a ballot. We have done our best to create the regulations and supporting knowledge articles that are flexible, strong, and inclusive and lead the Association into the future while at the same time returning us to the broad range of practices that we enjoyed in days gone by. We trust you agree and vote accordingly.



¹The lines between GIM services and spatial specialists in other disciplines are blurred and no one profession can claim ownership. The activity, though, is one of high regulatory interest meaning that there is sufficient public protection demanded that a competent person needs to perform the activity for the protection of the public. Therefore PIC proposed a licence exclusive to specially educated and trained professionals, even though engineers, foresters and others might also issue a similar licence in the future.

²Note that the section of O. Reg. 42/96 specific to Cadastral Surveying remains untouched by PIC. It is still very much a technical, how-to-do-it portion of the regulation that needs to be amended in the future.