



## Field Notes

*The Newsletter of ACEC's Council of Professional Surveyors*

**February 2004**

### From the Chairman:

After our last Steering Committee meeting I decided to write a short report to the COPS membership to outline what COPS has been doing for you, "our members". Since you are paying dues, you need to know what is happening.

In Boston and in Phoenix, at the ACEC Fall Conference, we held roundtables to discuss common problems and issues. I am convinced that our roundtables are really good for the practice of surveying/engineering, and do a lot to help the individual's sole also. It is really refreshing to be a part of open and free discussions about problems that we all face. The roundtable in Phoenix focused on one item with several contributing issues. The focus issue was manpower shortages. How many of you are having trouble finding, training and keeping good crew personal? Not just the crew chiefs, but also the instrumentmen and rodmen. What causes this problem? There were several possibilities discussed. This is an issue that the Steering Committee wants to pursue. We will need help from all of our members as we try to evaluate the issue.

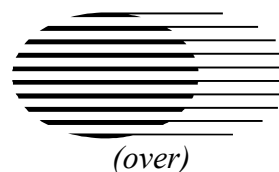
I attended my first Business Practice Committee meeting, as an observer and representative of the Steering Committee, several months ago. It was an all day session in Albuquerque, NM. It was not just a meeting. It was a working session. I do not know how

many of you are taking advantage of the "tool kit" or "Doctor's bag" of items that this

committee has put together. If you have not, you should. The list is way too long to elaborate upon here. However, the one that I have gotten the most use out of is the estimating spreadsheet. Ed Bajer is doing a good job of keeping us up to date on the latest documents. If you feel you are missing something or just want an up-date on the publications, give Ed a call or send him an email - [ebajer@acec.org](mailto:ebajer@acec.org).

Finally, in the hustle of trying to run a surveying/engineering business, like most of you, I often do not take the time look at where so much of my success comes from. Spending time at ACEC functions is an educational tool that cannot be equaled. Spending time on a Committee is even more valuable. COPS need your help on one of its three committees. We sent an email out to the membership. Please take a few minutes to read it. Then evaluate the benefits of becoming involved on a COPS Committee. Contact me to see where you can serve. You can reach me at (205) 939-1119 or at [frazier@paragon-eng.net](mailto:frazier@paragon-eng.net).

Frazier Christy  
Chairman



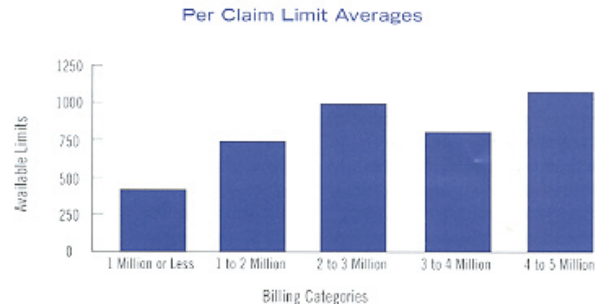
## Surveyors – Carrying Higher Limits

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Surveying firms carry a wide range of per claim and annual aggregate limits. Although a majority of firms still carry the same limit for both one claim and all claims reported during the policy year, a growing segment of firms see the value of purchasing policy year limits (aggregates) that are higher than their per-claim limit. Because surveyors complete many projects during the year, many see the higher aggregate limits as prudent to provide both the defense and indemnity support for claims on a variety of projects in any calendar year.

The amount of insurance a firm carries is a firm-specific decision. Although influenced by client demands and other external factors, deciding on coverage is based on the firm's ability to manage the risk of a professional practice and its concern for protecting its assets. Transferring risk through insurance is a major investment. And more coverage costs more in premiums. All firms want to maximize the value of their insurance program, including cost. Most, however, want to be effective in protecting their business and personal assets from catastrophic claims.

In the 2002 policy year, the following represents the per-claim limit averages carried by CAN/Schinnerer surveyor firms in the indicated billing categories.



Firms with more than \$5 million in annual billings carry an average per claim limit of about \$2,000,000. While only 5% of the firms with \$1 million or less in billings carry higher aggregate limits over their per-claim limits, more than 13 percent of firms with billings above \$1 million carry higher aggregate limits.

### COPS To Have Roundtable at Annual Convention

The 2004 ACEC Annual Convention will be held May 9-13 at the five-diamond, five-star Broadmoor Resort in Colorado Springs. The COPS roundtable will feature selected issues by the Steering Committee of import to surveyors along with an open forum.

The Convention lineup includes sensational speakers, educational sessions and social activities where you can network, learn and grow your business. See the convention program at [www.acec.org](http://www.acec.org).

For other Convention details call 202-347-7474 or [meetings@acec.org](mailto:meetings@acec.org).