

Field Notes April 2002

From the Chair

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as the chair of COPS for the past two years. In the past two years COPS has committed to outreach to its membership by hosting two winter membership meetings. I feel that the most successful effort was in the products produced by our Business Practices subcommittee, which offered solid information to our membership regarding successful business techniques within a survey organization.

Our new chair effective in May 2002 will be David Ray, Daylor Consulting, Braintree, MA. As I pass the baton I look to David to continue to outreach to the COPS membership, and encourage participation from its members. We continue to search for members of the steering committee and other subcommittees including business practices and government affairs. I believe that COPS is a very good organization supported by a very strong engineering society and that David will do an excellent job going forward. Good Luck, David.
Ken Brown, Arcadis, Atlanta, GA.

David Ray to Assume Chair of COPS

David Ray of Daylor Consulting Group, Braintree, MA is the incoming chair of COPS for 2002-03. He had been chairman of the Business Practices Committee and served on the ACEC Engineering Excellence Awards Committee.

COPS Members Receive Employee Evaluation Form

All COPS members were recently sent an employee evaluation form developed by the COPS Business Practices Committee. The standardized form was sent via email in Microsoft Excel format for easy use. It seemed there were plenty of evaluation forms out there but none customized for a surveying firm. This item was sent free of charge to all COPS members as a membership benefit. All others pay \$30. If you are a COPS member and did not receive yours, contact Ed Bajer at ebajer@acec.org.

ACEC Pushing USGS to Reduce Government Competition

Over the past several months, ACEC has held high level meetings at the Department of Interior in an attempt to stop the Water Resources Division (WRD) of the U.S. Geological Survey from competing with private industry. The USGS has been aggressively marketing its services to state and local governments for years, often in competition with private firms. USGS has interpreted a clause from its annual appropriations bill as a green light to provide a 50% cost-share to state and local governments. This practice on the part of USGS doesn't even give the private sector a chance to compete.

As a result of ACEC's efforts, the Department of Interior has agreed to instruct USGS to come to the table and resolve this matter. The discussions will be monitored by DOI staff. ACEC has also held meetings with the members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees who are following the situation.

The Department of Interior has received praise from the Bush Administration for its efforts in opening its activities to market competition.

ACEC Applauds Rep. Tom Davis' Service Acquisition Reform Act

On March 7th, Congressman Davis (R-VA) introduced H.R. 3832, the Service Acquisition Reform Act (SARA). The much anticipated legislation aims to improve the ease and efficiency of the government's ability to purchase services from the private sector. Congressman Davis remarked that following the events

of September 11, "SARA is even more vital for the federal government if it is to access cutting edge technology available in the private sector."

ACEC is in full support of the bill, specifically the establishment of a workforce training fund to ensure that Federal contract officers are well versed in federal acquisition regulations. Too often in the budget process, training programs are the first to go when funds are scarce. SARA ensures that contract officers are able to develop, manage and execute federal contracts. The bill has been referred to the Government Reform and Armed Services Committees.

\$\$\$urveying for Profit

That's the title of COPS-sponsored session at the ACEC convention in Las Vegas. It is Tuesday May 14 8:30am – 9:45. There are millionaire owners of surveying firms. Why not be one of them? This session is designed exclusively for discussion of maximizing profit. You may pick up that one tidbit of information that opens the door to financial success. Go to the ACEC website (www.acec.org) for registration information.

Highway 880 Widening and Bridge Replacement Wins Surveying and Mapping Category at ACEC's Engineering Excellence Awards

Mark Thomas and Co. Inc., San Jose, CA, won the Surveying and Mapping category at the 2002 Engineering Excellence Awards. The project in San Jose was on an accelerated schedule and required minimum impact to existing traffic flow. MTCO used Cyrax laser scanning technology to help minimize the impact on traffic flow. It allowed the survey crew to do a virtual survey in the office and capture accurate, complete data from locations the crew could not physically occupy thus eliminating lane closures and working in close proximity to traffic. The fieldwork for the project consisted of 229 scans that took 31 days – a total of 8 miles of highway topo. The laser system is able to deal efficiently with traffic that passes through the scanner's field of view by removing points on the scan that represent vehicles.

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