April 2020

Quarterly Report – April 2020

PSC Proactive Response to COVID-19 Crisis

The practice and business of our members has been greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, as has our personal lives and routines. PSC continues to operate as an essential business, as our Ontario based office manages the professional liability insurance program for our members operating across Canada, except Ontario and Québec. As the status of the professional surveyor as an essential service changes in each province day to day, PSC is continually monitoring the situation. It is important that PSC advocates for the position that our members can work in a safe manner, physically distancing ourselves from the public and amongst our staff, but this position is certainly withstanding the health and well being of society as a whole. The health and safety of the pubic always comes first.

PSC reminds all members to practice physical distancing during the COVID-19 crisis in accordance with Federal and Provincial orders. Members and their colleagues should maintain a distance of two metres between each other while working in the office or in the field, including vehicles. Please refer to Federal and Provincial websites for further workplace requirements and recommendations.

Surveying as an Essential Service

On April 3, PSC contacted Ministers across the country to "….urge that any order limiting business activities be mindful of the unique characteristics of the engineering, surveying, and geospatial profession and that these activities not be closed or limited." Where construction, public works, resource development, or real estate transactions continue to be essential, so does the work of the professional surveyor. You can find my letter to the Prime Minster here.

Federal Wage Subsidy Program

On April 9, PSC wrote a second letter to the Prime Minster's Office regarding Federal wage subsidy programs in place to prevent layoffs due to COVID-19. PSC calls for the criteria to qualify for the 75% wage subsidy program to allow for year over year comparison of revenue. The current criteria leave many of our members behind. Even if your business does not qualify for this wage subsidy, you can still benefit from the 10% payroll remittance deduction and deferral of WCB payments. Businesses with a 2019 payroll between $50,000 and $1,000,000 qualify for an interest free loan through the Canada Emergency Business Account for up to $40,000, with $10,000 forgivable when paid back by the end of 2022. You can contact your financial institution for details.

Public Awareness

PSC continues to work toward raising public awareness of the important work land surveyors do on behalf of the public. We are running a new advertising campaign starting in April 2020 on social media, targeting home sellers stalled by the COVID-19 crisis and homeowners looking to build fences or build additions to their property.

New Video – Title Insurance

Our whiteboard video regarding title insurance is now streaming on YouTube here. The video seeks to propagate two main messages. First, that title insurance is not a replacement for a property survey – they are two separate services. Secondly, that there are two types of title insurance policies, a lender policy and a homeowner policy.

We are currently moving onto new ideas in our media development, including the effects unauthorized practice of surveying and the role and mandate of the professional surveyor. All of our videos and our ads (in gif format) are available on our website, our YouTube channel and to any of our members who may wish to display them on their own websites. Please contact the office at info@psc-gpc.ca for information.

PSC Board of Directors

Ray Guy has stepped down as Newfoundland and Labrador Director for PSC after five dedicated years of service. Ray has been instrumental in public relations initiatives. His valuable volunteer time will be missed.

In place of Ray, we are excited to welcome Brad Eisan, NLS. Brad is a 2012 UNB grad with a mixed-industry background in professional surveying and will be bringing fresh perspectives to your Board of Directors.

David Parkhill, NBLS, has stepped in as PSC Director for New Brunswick following his service as Past President of the ANBLS. Dave has had a heavily involved career of service to the professional surveying community and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Board.

Board of Directors:

Thompson, Michael, Chair, ACLS	Gabriel Arancibia, QC
Litke, Jordan, Vice-Chair, BC	Claude Levasseur, QC
Patkau, Darren, Treasurer, SK	David Parkhill, NB
Mike Fretwell, AB	Mike Williams, NS
Wilson Phillips, MB	Wayne Tremblay, PEI
James Dorland, ON	Brad Eisan, NL

National Surveyors Conference - 2020

The joint Annual General Meeting for Professional Surveyors Canada and the Association of Canada Lands Surveyors has been officially cancelled due to the COVID-19 crisis. The AGM for PSC will be an online session using GoToWebinar. The date of this meeting is expected to be in May or June and will be announced at least 21 days in advance in accordance with our Association's bylaws. Our next in-person AGM will be at National Surveyors Conference 2021, to be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel and Conference Centre in Calgary, April 14-18, 2021. This is a joint AGM in partnership with ACLS and the Alberta Land Surveyors Association.

Memorandum of Understanding with CSN Australia

PSC and Consulting Surveyors National have entered into a memorandum of understanding on March 24, 2020. The focus of the MOU is the sharing of knowledge on common issues and the development of a young surveyors exchange program between Canada and Australia.

CSN has made great inroads with the Australian State and Federal Governments regarding the importance of the surveying professional through the development of a value study of the surveying profession. PSC is looking to our Australian counterparts success in matters such as government perception of the profession and development of a truly nationwide real-time precise point positioning network. PSC also has MOUs established with the National Society of Professional Surveyors (USA) and Asociación Española de Geómetras-Expertos (Spain).

Underground Infrastructure

Our work with underground infrastructure was extensive in the last few months. We were given the opportunity to present our position to the Senate Committee that was reviewing Bill C-69 in early May 2019. One of two proposed amendments by PSC was included in the recommendation package of the Independent Senators Group, but the amendment did not get through the full committee clause-by-clause review. While our proposed amendments did not make it into the final version of the Bill, we received tangible support from several Senators and raised awareness of professional surveyors as experts to be consulted on matters of land management among legislators.

Offer to Collaborate with UESI

On March 19, PSC wrote a letter to the Canadian chapters of the Underground Engineering and Surveying Institute regarding the lack of a Canadian standard for Subsurface Utility Mapping (SUM) and Subsurface Utility Engineering (SUE) reports. UESI is a subset of the American Society of Civil Engineers and establish a chapter in Ontario in 2018, with recent chapters also being established in Alberta and British Columbia.

PSC has offered to work with UESI and other industry partners to develop made-in-Canada standards for SUE reporting. The ASCE standards for SUE are being actively used in Ontario, even though the regulation and practice of surveying and engineering are separated by self-governing legislation in Canada. Such a collaboration could be an opportunity to involve the expanded surveying profession in Canada.

CSA Standard S250

CSA has responded to PSC regarding our published position on their standard for Mapping of Underground Utility Infrastructure. Our recommendations regarding projections, coordinate systems, and the definition of Land Base Mapping are to be adopted, but our calls for the term "Subsurface Utility Engineering" to be replaced with "Subsurface Utility Mapping" will not be considered.

PSC has been actively advocating for years to CSA to have professional surveyors directly represented on standards committees that affect our profession. The fact that non-surveyors are setting standards without consultation of professionals and experts on the subject matter is absurd, and PSC will refer to the active and intentional exclusion of our profession when CSA standards form the base of future legislative regulations.

The practice of engineering and the specific term "engineering" is actively protected by legislative means in Canada. If the term SUE is to be used, there must be a component of engineering design involved, and a professional engineer needs to endorse the product. Likewise, if a SUE report defines or relates underground infrastructure to title or right-of-way boundaries, that encompasses the legislated practice of professional surveying and must be endorsed by a professional surveyor. PSC will not allow for the definition of boundaries to be rebranded as engineering, as we expect that engineering regulators will not allow the practice of engineering or the use of the term 'engineering' to be used by non-engineers, or for non-engineering products.

P.Surv.

The trademark process for P.Surv. has been stalled by pending ratification of the United States Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA) and included trademark clauses. PSC has written letters to Minsters with mandates related to trademarking and international trade. We continue to monitor the situation, and hope for registration of the P.Surv. trademark as soon as possible. The application for trademark was submitted more than 15 months ago.