

100 Years and Counting

March 17, 2010

“It’s a big happy birthday,” proclaims Don George, ALS, President of the Alberta Land Surveyors’ Association. “Our association will be 100 years old on March 19, 2010, the hundredth anniversary of Royal Assent of the *Alberta Land Surveyors Act*.”

“From history books and our association historical records we can tell that it was a proud moment for the Alberta Land Surveyors of the day,” adds George. “None of them however could have imagined the tremendous transformation of our province over the ensuing time. The job of the land surveyor remains essentially the same—we measure and determine land boundaries—but the way we do it is dramatically different.”

In 1910, land surveyors applied their skills to mark out the boundaries of homestead lands and the lots of the growing cities and towns. By today’s technological standards the tools they used were crude but they worked and got the job done.

“Today we use GPS and highly technological surveying equipment to do the job. We are constantly amazed at just how accurate those early boundary determinations were,” says George.

Land surveying is critical to the identification of properties. The Torrens system of land identification was adopted by Alberta and led to the creation of one of the most secure methods of registering land boundaries in the world. Property owners in Alberta can be assured of the integrity of their property boundaries because of the work of the Alberta Land Surveyors and the Torrens Registry System at Land Titles.

Land surveyors work in a variety of environments. Many work extensively in the energy industry marking boundaries of well-sites, production facilities, roads, seismic lines and other energy related developments. Others work in the municipal area establishing boundaries for subdivisions, rights-of-ways, roads, real property reports and other municipal related surveys in rural and urban communities. ALSA members even determine the boundaries of condominiums and office space.

Alberta land surveyors are well educated. Most have at least one university degree followed by a period of articling and writing a series of examinations specific to land surveying. Once commissioned as land surveyors with the official designation of ALS after their name, they may work for government, private survey firms or may start businesses of their own.

The Alberta Land Surveyors’ Association is a self-governing body that regulates the profession of land surveying for the protection of the public and administration of the profession.

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