

## **Client Frequently Asked Questions for Surveyors**

By Todd Bauer, PE, LS

Founder and Principal, ForeSight Consulting, LLC

### **Do I really need a survey?**

As a Professional Surveyor, I get this question frequently. Clients call into the office not exactly sure what they need, and simply know that they have been told that they "need" a survey. As the conversation continues, I am eventually faced with the question "Do I really need a survey?" I ask what they are doing; buying or selling a home, adding onto an existing house, building a new home, or simply putting up a fence. In all cases, a survey is beneficial to clearly establish the boundary lines of the property and to identify any existing encroachments or problems that may impact the title of the property. In many cases a complete and accurate survey may resolve a long-standing boundary line dispute, or prevent one from happening in the future. As the saying goes, "good fences make good neighbors" and the key to putting up that fence is knowing where your boundary line is located. A survey of your property is always recommended.

### **What type of survey do I need?**

There are typically four categories of surveys: an original survey, a retracement survey, an ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey, and a surveyor's location report. Most residential transactions require either a retracement survey or a survey location report on an existing property. The requirements for a retracement survey or a survey location report are vastly different and have different applications and limitations. Typically, a retracement survey is the preferred survey product for a real estate transaction and provides the best depiction of the property boundary.

### **How much will my survey cost?**

This is probably the second most frequent question I get asked during my interaction with clients. The cost of a survey is dependent upon the type of survey required, the location of the survey and the time frame requested by the client. Most people are used to seeing the surveyors out in the field, but most of the time spent on a survey is dedicated to document research, data, processing and analysis, survey plat preparation and preparing the Professional Surveyor's report. On a typical residential lot retracement survey, the time in the field surveying may be three to four hours whereas the office time may be ten to twelve hours behind the scenes. The overall cost of the survey will be based upon the time expended on the project and the hourly rates of the firm.

### **Any questions or thoughts?**

If you have any questions about surveying, or your individual needs on a pending project, I can be reached at ForeSight Consulting, LLC at (260) 484-9900 ext. 125, or at the Angola office at (260) 624-2885 ext. 125.