

## National Surveyors Week, what's it all about?

By Frank Lenik, PLS

We've all heard about National Surveyors Week – the weeklong celebration of the surveying profession that takes place annually in March. But who's actually celebrating, and how? What is the best way to use this event to the advantage of our profession?

Consider the main three goals of the program;

1. Public awareness of our profession through education;
2. Public awareness of our profession through the media;
3. Public awareness of our profession through public service

The education of the public, both adult and youth, is probably the number one goal of National Surveyors Week. The work we perform for the benefit of the public often goes unrecognized and we need to share our knowledge with them. The work being done by our Trigstar volunteers is incredible and should be highlighted during National Surveyors Week. There are volunteers doing outreach to Boy Scout and Girl Scout groups and resources are available for these programs. We can expand on this and offer to speak to the local Rotary or Lions Club. They are always willing to have a speaker at their meetings. How better to promote your profession and your business than to make a public appearance?

Reaching out to the public through the media and making them aware of our profession and our role in today's society is a goal whose value we all recognize. Over the last few years we have achieved this in a variety of ways including Presidential, gubernatorial, and municipal proclamations, newspaper articles, and radio spots highlighting National Surveyors Week. There is also a GPS Day Website, a National Surveyors Week Facebook page and a National Surveyors Week Twitter account. Each of these channels represents another way for the land surveying community to stay connected with a different section of the public.

Although the annual effort of contacting the President, members of Congress, your governor and your municipal leaders may seem trivial, remember that it serves to remind *them* that surveyors are important. It is an essential part of our awareness campaign and serves as an introduction to our senators and representatives when we visit them on the hill. Whenever a bill, law or ordinance is being contemplated which affects the public and impacts on our profession, these elected officials should know who to turn to for answers to their questions.

Newspaper articles, radio advertisements, and on line media can serve the same function for our profession, keeping us in the public eye. Rather than being hidden behind an attorney, title agent or real estate agent, we can use the media to highlight the value of our profession with our most important constituency our clients. The best way to get an article about surveying published in a newspaper is to

contact a local reporter and let them know that you have a good lead on a community interest story. If that fails to attract their attention offer to write one yourself and submit it to the paper. State societies, society chapters and even private firms have written or sponsored articles or public service announcements which serve as advertising for our profession and their businesses.

In his inaugural address on January 20, 1961, President John F. Kennedy poignantly said “Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country”. It is with this attitude in mind that we should attempt to give back to our nation and our profession and lay the groundwork for the future. We can lament the passing of the geodetic field parties of the past and the disappearance of the NGS monuments, or we can embrace the future, share our expertise and volunteer for a common cause. In doing this we can prepare the foundation which future surveyors and the public will turn to for their geodetic positioning. It will help us hone our skills and keep us current on changes in our own practice.