

Point of Intersection

The official publication of the Arkansas Society of Professional Surveyors

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*Cover photo
Arkansas Vistas: Snow geese resting
in the rice fields of Eastern Arkansas*



Editor's Angle

*By S. Amber Weida,
ASPS Executive Director*

Supporting your professional organization is crucial for personal and industry-wide growth. ASPS serves as a hub for knowledge sharing, networking, and skill development, providing resources that individual surveyors might not easily access on their own. Membership provides opportunities that enhance expertise and credibility. These opportunities not only benefit individuals but also raise the standard of the profession as a whole.

ASPS advocates for policies, funding, and recognition that directly impact surveyors and the industry they serve. By contributing your time, expertise, or financial support, you empower your organization to influence legislation, improve workplace standards, and address challenges within the field. Supporting your professional organization is not just an investment in your career, but a small commitment to the betterment of the profession and its future.

We hope you will continue to support ASPS in 2025. Renewal notices will be sent out on January 1.



Point of Intersection

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By Arnold Knox, PE, PS
ASPS President

President's Message



I hope this newsletter finds everyone in good spirits and knee-deep in survey work. I am pleased to report that our society is thriving, with membership growth and a small budget surplus. We currently have 341 members in ASPS, which is a four-percent increase from last year.

While our numbers may not be as high as in previous years, we are steadily growing. Our society continues to attract new members for various reasons. Some enjoy the camaraderie at our conferences, while others need the professional development hours. By working together, we can learn more and become a stronger society for the greater good of our profession.

It has been wonderful to hear from many of our members in recent months. While we may not always agree on everything, I firmly believe that we all have the best interests of the profession at heart. We conducted a poll among our membership regarding changing the law to allow experience before licensing to possibly count. The overwhelming majority voted in favor of this change.

The committee started to address this task. After consulting with the Board of Licensure and our lobbyist, we realized that we would not be ready to propose this change in the 2025 General Session. Instead, we decided to pursue a change in the 2027 General Session. This will allow more time to reach a consensus on the wording of the law and work with the Board of Licensure.

The Fall Conference at Mount Magazine was a success for our association. Amber continues to secure engaging speakers with new topics to share. We are looking forward to another great Spring Conference, with more information coming soon.

I hope everyone has a busy and productive spring ahead. Enjoy the newsletter. ~

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Surveying the 95th General Assembly

By Randy Thurman & Courtney Sheppard
of Government Solutions, LLC

By all reckoning the Arkansas Legislature is primed and ready for the Regular Session to convene January 13, 2025. Both chambers have held their organizational meetings with few surprises, budget hearings have concluded, and Governor Sanders has presented her budget and agenda for the session, again with few surprises.

On November 7, the Senate met to organize its chamber's business, committees and chairs. Senator Bart Hester (R-Cave Springs) will serve a second term as Senate Pro Tempore. Members quickly voted in a new measure to strip Democrats of any vice-chair position on the dozens of standing committees, claiming a voter mandate to bar Democrat Senator Stephanie Flowers from such leadership position, despite her ranking as number one in Senate seniority with 19 years in the legislature come January 13, 2025. Opponents noted that Republicans had vice-chaired committees during Democrat-dominated sessions. Twenty Republicans voted for the measure, three opposed and six Republicans did not vote. Needless to say, all Democrats opposed the measure.

In the House, Representative Matthew Shepherd will relinquish the Speakership after a record six years of gavel-banging. We know of few who could have pulled that off with such grace and finesse. Republican Representative Brian Evans of Cabot will occupy the "high-chair," and has shown capability and promise during his three terms in the House. House Committees are made up of 20 members, five of whom come from one of the four congressional districts. Selection of the committees is based mostly on seniority on a first-come, first-served basis. Choices are made first for the A Committees and afterwards, members choose their B Committee assignments based on the same format. Committee Chairs are chosen by the Speaker and will be made in early January prior to the Session.

The new freshman class has 13 new members, eight Republicans and five Democrats. Representative Evans indicated that the focus of the House will be on funding the Governor's new pay plan for executive branch employees and prison expansion in Franklin County. They will also focus on maternal healthcare, along with funding for

water infrastructure. The Executive branch has 22,000 employees and the Governor's pay plan will cost the state an additional \$102 million a year. Long-time House member and House Budget Committee Chair, Rep. Lane Jean (R-Magnolia), opined that he's "suspecting there's some tort reform coming."

Not to be outdone, the House Democrats followed up the House proceedings with a news conference outlining their priorities for the 2025 session. In the press conference House minority leader, Rep Andrew Collins (D-Little Rock), said that the Democrat Caucus will prioritize maternal and mental health, education, and defending democracy. With Democrats holding

only 19 districts it will take at least 32 of the Republican-held districts to pass any of their bills that require a simple majority; even more Republicans if their bills require a super majority. Despite those long odds, the next day Collins filed no fewer than three dozen consecutive bills staking out the Democrat Party position on nearly every subject matter, from post-partum care for mothers and Medicare reimbursement rates to voter protections and red flag gun control. Simple math hints that few of these will see the light of day.

Budget hearings ended November 21, the day Governor Sanders presented her balanced budget to the legislature.

Her general revenue budget of \$6.29 billion is a \$182.5 million increase from the 2025 budget. The 2026 budget year begins July 1, 2025.

The Governor proposes increases for maternal health, the state Division of Youth Services, the State Police and her proposed 15% increases for executive branch employees. In her remarks, Governor Sanders touted the frugality of Arkansas' leaders maintaining budget surpluses while delivering three different income tax cuts. She noted that, "The added funding is directed to areas we have all agreed are priorities: education, maternal health, public health, and government efficiency."

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Rethinking Surveying Licensure: Adapting Pathways to Preserve the Profession

The views and suggestions presented in this article represent the opinions of the authors and are not offered in any official capacity as members of the ASPS Board. We hold the highest respect for the in-state education programs that prepare surveyors for professional practice, and nothing in this article is intended to suggest the removal of education requirements for Professional Surveyor licensure. Instead, our intention is to engage in thoughtful dialogue about how licensure pathways can evolve to meet the demands of the modern workforce while preserving the integrity and standards of the profession.

*By Joe Martin, PS
and Jeremy A. Lawson, PS, CFedS*

Thomas Jefferson's wisdom offers a guiding principle: "I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitutions. But laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind..." Understanding this sentiment is crucial for appreciating the current legal framework governing surveying licensure and the potential changes discussed herein. Jefferson further elaborates, "...institutions must advance also to keep pace with the times...". For surveying, this means reexamining licensing pathways to ensure they accommodate the diverse routes individuals take into the profession while maintaining the high standards required to serve the public interest.

Adapting licensing standards to better reflect the modern workforce is not just a matter of keeping pace with societal changes—it is essential for preserving the profession's integrity and sustainability. Recognizing diverse entry points into surveying, such as practical experience gained before formal education, ensures that the profession remains accessible and competitive without sacrificing the rigorous standards that uphold public trust. This article explores some of the current challenges facing the profession and advocates for a revision to the statute governing licensure, A.C.A. § 17-48-203, along with The Rules of the Board, Article 10 (Professional Experience), section G, allowing qualified pre-education experience to count toward the required experience needed for licensure, along with changes to the statute that governs licensure. Before continuing with this article, readers are encouraged to take

a few moments to review A.C.A. § 17-48-203 as well as the current Rules of the Board. Links to both documents can be found on the board's website: <https://labor.arkansas.gov/licensing/state-board-of-licensure-for-professional-engineers-and-professional-surveyors/>. Understanding A.C.A. § 17-48-203 and the board rules are crucial for appreciating the current legal framework governing surveying licensure and the potential changes discussed herein.

The Way We Were

The evolution of the surveying profession offers critical insights into the challenges it faces today. The 2017 rule change sought to elevate surveying standards by mirroring the pathway of engineers, who successfully transitioned from trade-based qualifications to degree-based licensure. However, the unique dynamics of surveying have made this model less effective, revealing unintended consequences that warrant reconsideration.

Stephen Haralson, PE, former Executive Director of the State Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Professional Surveyors (the Licensing Board), highlights the divergence in the historical development of surveying and engineering education in Arkansas in his articles, "The Way We Were, Part 1" and "The Way We Were, Part 2." These articles can be found in the publications section of the Licensing Board's website. While engineers began elevating their field in the 1950s, transitioning from trade-based qualifications to degree-based licensure by 2001, surveying did not differentiate itself until the 1960s and lacked formal regulation until Act 101 of 1967. At the

time of Haralson's first article, Arkansas had twenty-one ABET-accredited engineering programs, compared to only two for surveying. This disparity underscores the challenges of adopting a degree-based licensure model for surveying, which lacks the educational infrastructure engineers built over 50 years before requiring a degree. Rather than strictly copying the engineering path from trade-based qualifications to degree-based licensure, it is more practical to consider our specific needs as surveyors and account for the differences between the professions.

"...the unique dynamics of surveying have made this model less effective, revealing unintended consequences that warrant reconsideration."

Unlike engineers, who are often funneled into their field through structured academic pathways, surveyors typically enter the profession through informal channels, such as personal connections or discovering the field later in life. Dennis Mouland, a surveyor known and respected by many in ASPS, provides a prime example: after being laid off, he took a job with a local engineer and discovered a passion for surveying. This opportunity, arising from necessity rather than design, eventually led him to pursue licensure in the late 1970s. Mr. Mouland has gone on to teach courses at the university level, helped to develop the Bureau of Land Management's Certified Federal Surveyor program,

and is a well-known and respected conference speaker. Our current education requirements work to restrict our reliance on non-traditional recruitment, and arbitrarily limit our pool of candidates by making other options more appealing.

The 2017 changes also introduced a rigid framework for licensing, which disproportionately impacts potential surveyors who may face arbitrary hurdles or barriers to accessing formal education. This approach delays entry into the profession, reduces accessibility, and exacerbates the already stagnant number of licensed professionals. For surveying to thrive, it must embrace pathways that align with its distinct characteristics and that address the limitations of our educational infrastructure.

The Way We Are

Despite increasing societal demand for surveyors, the profession has experienced a sharp decline in the number of original licenses. Since 2014, Arkansas has averaged only six new in-state licenses annually, a significant drop from prior years. This stagnation, coupled with the state's slow but steady population growth, has placed increased strain on the profession. For instance, according to data provided by the Licensing Board in 2014, Arkansas had 415 active original licenses. Today, that number has only grown to 417—a modest increase over a decade, hardly what we would call actual growth.

One major challenge lies in economic and competitive pressures. Entry-level salaries for

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surveyors lag far behind those of comparable professions, such as engineering and nursing. According to Salary.com, the average annual salary for an entry-level land surveyor in Arkansas is approximately \$47,850, with a typical range between \$38,640 and \$56,950. In contrast, entry-level civil engineers earn about \$71,701 per year, with a range from \$58,710 to \$86,411, also reported by Salary.com. For registered nurses, ZipRecruiter indicates an average entry-level salary of \$58,429 in Arkansas. This disparity makes surveying less attractive to prospective can-

didates, particularly when they compare the time and financial investment required for licensure. It is also important to note that some of these salary figures may be slightly outdated and do not account for certain criteria, such as whether an individual has obtained their Surveyor Intern or Engineer Intern certificate.

Another pressing concern is the encroachment of other professions into traditional surveying domains. Nature abhors a vacuum, and with increased societal demand for surveying services, if surveyors do not fill these roles,

others will. Similarly, deregulation initiatives threaten to lower standards, which could compromise public trust. To preserve the integrity of the profession, surveyors must proactively adapt to meet demand and safeguard their core areas of expertise.

The Way We Feel

A recent poll by the Arkansas Society of Professional Surveyors highlights the frustration felt by many whose path to licensure is lengthened because their pre-education experience is undervalued. One respondent

summed it up well when he said, "The experience I gained prior to attending college and getting a degree in surveying is useless in seeking licensure, but priceless in the field of surveying. It's just a shame to know that all those years are wasted."

Another aspiring surveyor shared, "I am 44 years old and have to wait two more years to apply for licensure. I feel my experience pre-graduation is just as relevant as my post-graduation experience." This sentiment was echoed by another respondent who stated, "The experience gained working under a licensed individual before earning a degree holds the same value as post-graduation experience. The work doesn't change, and its value doesn't diminish."

The voices of aspiring surveyors reveal their concerns about the process. Many individuals feel that their valuable pre-graduation experience is disregarded, despite its relevance to the profession. Most expressed that they felt a need for reform to ensure the licensure process is fair, inclusive, and reflective of the diverse pathways individuals take into the profession.

The Way Forward

The future of the surveying profession depends on adapting licensure standards to better reflect the diverse pathways individuals take into the field. These suggestions are intended to add to the ongoing conversation, acknowledging that there may be other ideas and solutions that could better address these challenges. By recognizing pre-education and pre-Surveyor

Intern (SI) experience, aligning requirements with educational practices, and advocating for a revision of The Rules of the Board, Article 10 (Professional Experience), Section G, along with a revision to A.C.A. § 17-48-203, the profession can remain both inclusive and rigorous. It is important to clarify that experience credited toward licensure is typically defined as experience in "Professional Experience," which involves direct supervision, accountability, and adherence to ethical standards under a licensed surveyor. By recognizing pre-education experience which could be classified as "Professional Experience," the profession can remain both inclusive and rigorous.

Recognizing Pre-Education and Pre-Surveyor Intern (SI) Experience

Practical experience gained under the supervision of licensed surveyors provides invaluable insights and foundational skills. It seems counterintuitive that institutions like the University of Arkansas and Arkansas State University would recognize experience before a degree through programs like Credit for Prior Learning and Prior Learning Assessments, yet surveying licensure only acknowledges experience gained after college. Aligning licensure requirements with these educational practices ensures consistency and broadens the pathway to licensure. To be clear, we are not advocating for an experience-only path to licensure. We are advocating for some flexibility regarding when experience begins, not for changing the type of experience required.

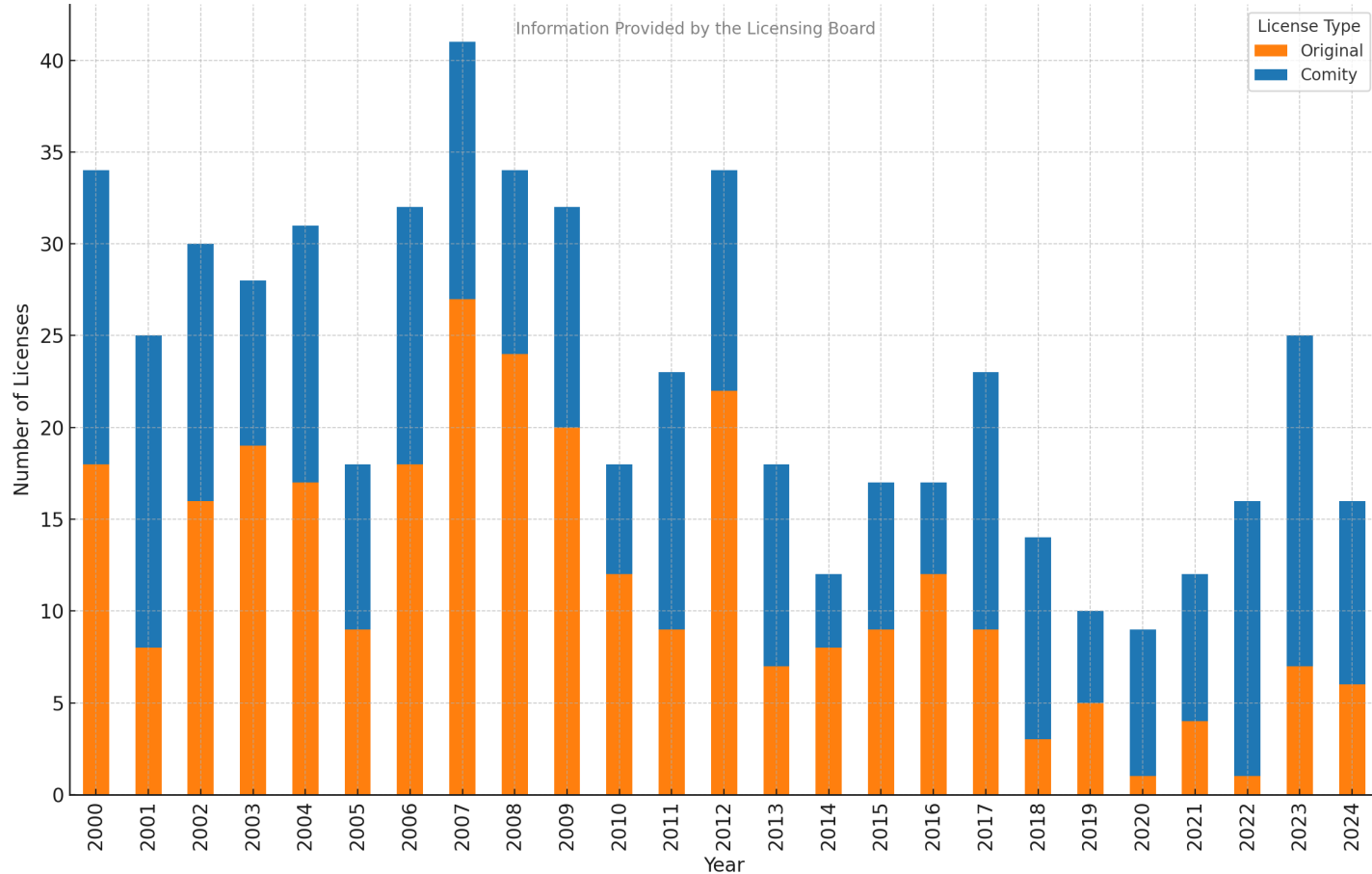
"A revised definition of "Professional Experience" should balance education and experience to reflect the realities of the modern workforce."

Advocacy for Revisions to Article 10 and A.C.A. § 17-48-203

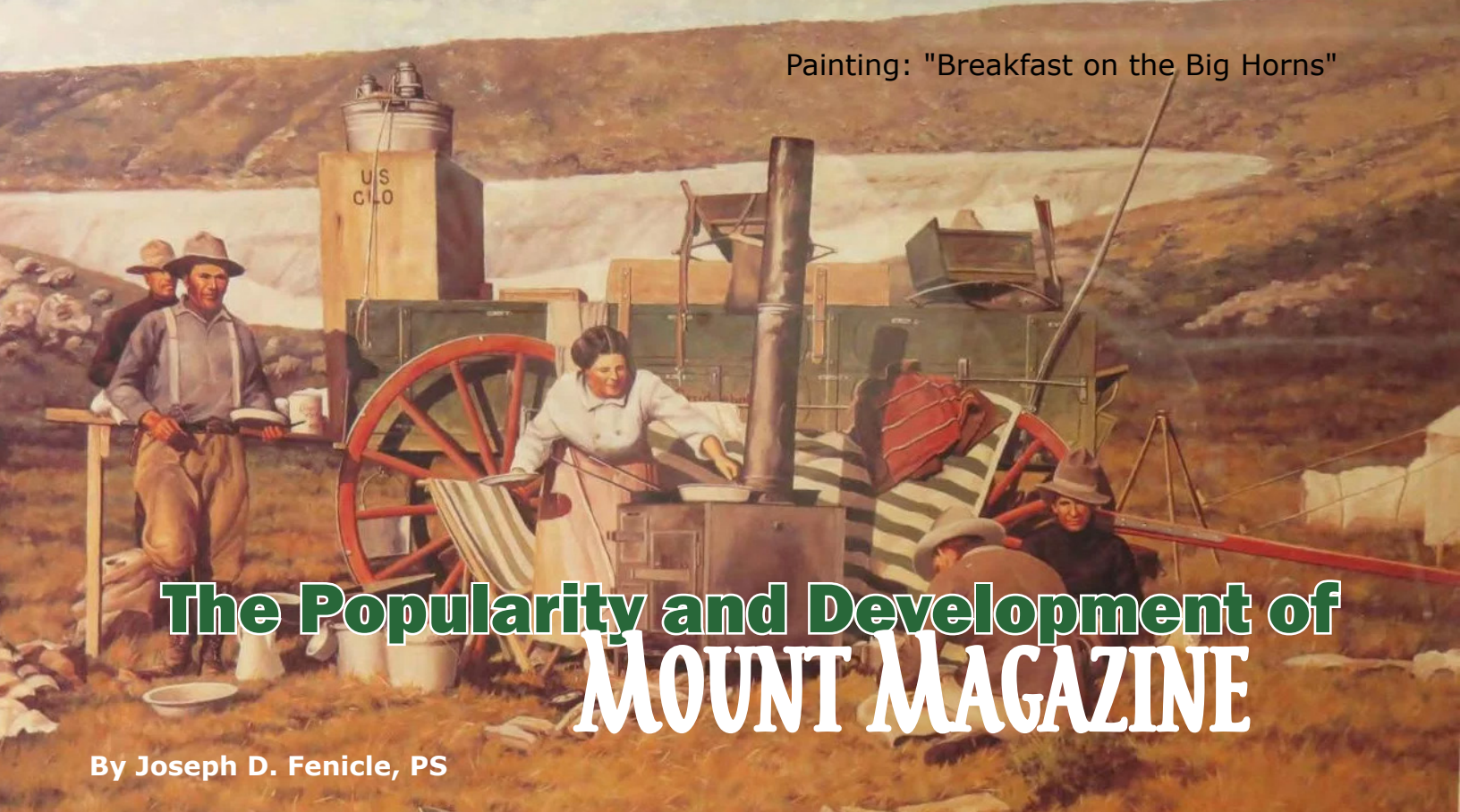
A revised definition of "Professional Experience" should balance education and experience to reflect the realities of the modern workforce. The current rules, as outlined in the Final Rules of the Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Professional Surveyors (2022), specify in Article 10 that professional experience is credited only after completing the requirements for graduation from an approved program. This aligns with A.C.A. § 17-48-203, which uses the phrase "followed by" when discussing experience requirements. This phrasing effectively excludes experience gained prior

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Painting: "Breakfast on the Big Horns"



The Popularity and Development of MOUNT MAGAZINE

By Joseph D. Fenicle, PS

General Land Office Surveyor LeRoy Williams climbed up and over the mesa on the western edge of Magazine Mountain on March 30, 1838. At this time, he had no idea the development and popularity that would become of this spot, not to mention all the other surveyors that would follow in his footsteps and retrace his work.

It was March 1st when Deputy Surveyor Williams "set a post corner to sections 20, 21, 28 & 29...". He meandered around the township and came back at the end of the month to measure north over the mesa. At 10.00 chains he reached the "Top of Revolee Mountain", now known as Mount Magazine. The early French explorers liked the shape of a nearby mountain and thought it looked like a storehouse. The French word "magasin" transformed into magazine in reference to a storehouse; hence the name Mount Magazine. Surveyors historically called it Revolee Mountain or Reveille Mountain for unknown reasons. Deputy Surveyor Williams measured across the mesa to set the next section corner in line. It was a mere 0.23 chains further when he came to "a high bluff of rocks". He continued north setting the next section corner at another 40.00 chains. He noted nothing other than some white oak bearing trees

and a black oak tree online at 20.82 chains from the section corner. The mesa was undeveloped and according to his field notes was "Land mountainous and rocky soil thin Timber Oak and pine undergrowth Oak bushes & vines". The exterior of Township 06 North, Range 25 West, 5th Principal Meridian was surveyed by Deputy Surveyor John Ruland from July to August of 1825. Deputy Surveyor LeRoy Williams subdivided the Township from March to April of 1838 under a contract signed on August 23, 1837. Deputy Surveyor Willis W. Bandy would come back from January to March 1936 to retrace Deputy Surveyor Williams but not before other surveyors got involved with the development of the mesa itself.

The original land patent, from 1882, for the western tip of Mount Magazine was given to T.M. Birmingham from the Land Office at Dardanelle, Arkansas. This was recorded as Homestead Certificate 2434, under the Homestead Act of 1862. The aliquot parts described in the land patent fit almost perfectly to the western topographic mesa comprising 160 acres. Settlers, like Birmingham, were attracted to the free land as well as the cool mountain air thought to have healing properties. The land was cleared of timber and rocks and

made fit for cultivation. Historically, the top of Mount Magazine was filled with orchards, producing rotation crops, grapes, various berries and honey. This was soon found to not be feasible as the 48-mile trip to Paris, to sell the goods, took two days on wagon routes that were steep and deeply rutted.

The Choctaw, Oklahoma and Memphis Townsite Company held title to this land by 1900 and platted the Town of Mount Magazine with spacious park land named Sunset Park to the west and Prospect Park to the south. Down the center of the plat was Grand Boulevard that had a much wider right-of-way than the other roads with names like Hazel, Victor and Edith. On the east side of the plat was Eastline Avenue, and it fit closely with the east line of Section 20. Another plat, of which not much information is known, filled the rest of the western mesa. This plat was titled "The Dakota Heights Subdivision" with road names like Katie and Willie. The town of Mount Magazine grew fast and by 1915 had at least a dozen houses, a post office, a store and the Skycrest Inn. This hotel was built on the far

west end of the mesa by Sunset Park and was built and fashioned with the finest materials around. The dressers had marble tops, the bed sheets were hand-stitched, and the guests could enjoy fine dining, tennis, croquet and horseback riding. Future design plans for the mesa included a full golf course and an airstrip, but due to the Crash of '29 those dreams fell apart. Financial disaster, coupled with rutted roads, an unreliable water supply and the domino effect of foreclosed and abandoned lots led to the full abandonment of the town of Mount Magazine. The United States Resettlement Association, followed up by the newly created Farm Security Administration purchased the remaining lots not already foreclosed upon. These were New Deal agencies to help combat poverty and were the brainchild of our longest-running President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The government called this the Mount Magazine Project. On August 30, 1938, the acquired land was transferred to the Ouachita National Forest then later transferred to the Ozark National Forest on September 23, 1941. The Works Progress Administration cut in roads, cottages and built

a lodge on the site of the current lodge. Unfortunately, the original lodge burnt down on February 3, 1971, due to suspected arson. The current lodge was built in May of 2006 and was made possible by a cooperative agreement between the United States Department of Agriculture and the Arkansas State Parks.

"After the demise of the town of Mount Magazine, the need for a better government survey became evident."

After the demise of the town of Mount Magazine, the need for a better government survey became evident. During the span of January to March 1936, General Land Office Deputy Surveyor, Willis W. Bandy, completed a dependent resurvey of Mount Magazine. According to the 2009 Manual of Surveying Instructions, a dependent resurvey is "...an official re-marking of the original lines upon a plan whereby the best available evidence of the original survey or

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of a prior resurvey is given primary control over the position of the lines to be reestablished". This was clearly the case as Deputy Surveyor Bandy found and accepted the prior work of Deputy Surveyor Williams and the evidence of other unknown surveyors. Bandy's field notes reflect that he found a 3.5 foot long, 10-inch square, sandstone monument at the corner of sections 20, 21, 28 and 29. This stone was set by another unknown surveyor but accepted by Deputy Surveyor Bandy as he identified one remaining witness tree from the 1838 survey. He then described four additional witness trees. (The original field notes describing this corner are in Bundle BD0075, Book 202A, Image 16, the transcribed field notes are in Bundle BD0075, Book 202A, Image 7, and the resurvey field notes are in Book 789, Page 19). Deputy Surveyor Bandy, while running North from the found and accepted section corner, immediately started as-

cending a 110-foot rock wall "...over rocky S. slope of Magazine Mountain". At 7.20 chains, Deputy Surveyor Bandy described a "Road and centerline of Grand Boulevard...". He also called out crossing Victor and Hazel Street before he calculated the position of the South 1/16 corner. He set a standard brass tablet and set witnesses to include two bearing trees and a found sandstone monument "...apparently set by a local surveyor...". Deputy Surveyor Bandy passed the north boundary of the town of Mount Magazine, through the Dakota Heights Subdivision, and the developed roads of Katie, Willie and another unnamed road. He passed the north boundary of Dakota Heights at 30.08 chains before he found the remains of an original bearing tree and the stump hole of another as identified by Deputy Survey Williams in 1838. (The original field notes describing this corner are in Bundle BD0075, Book 202A, Image 44, the transcribed field

notes are in Bundle BD0075, Book 202A, Image 18, and the resurvey field notes are in Book 789, Page 20-21). Deputy Surveyor Bandy continued north, dropping down a fifty-foot cliff at 0.15 chains (compared to 0.23 chains in 1938), passing a traverse line on an old wagon road before coming to the next section corner. Deputy Surveyor Bandy came from a family of surveyors and traveled all over the country. He was most famous for being in the background of the oil painting titled "Breakfast on the Big Horn". The painting was made from a photograph taken by his brother, Deputy Surveyor William Roy Bandy. There were three Bandy brothers, all of whom were Deputy Surveyors.

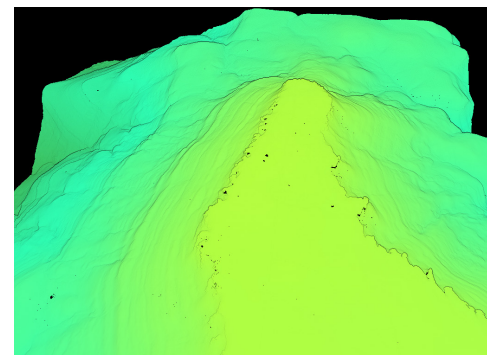
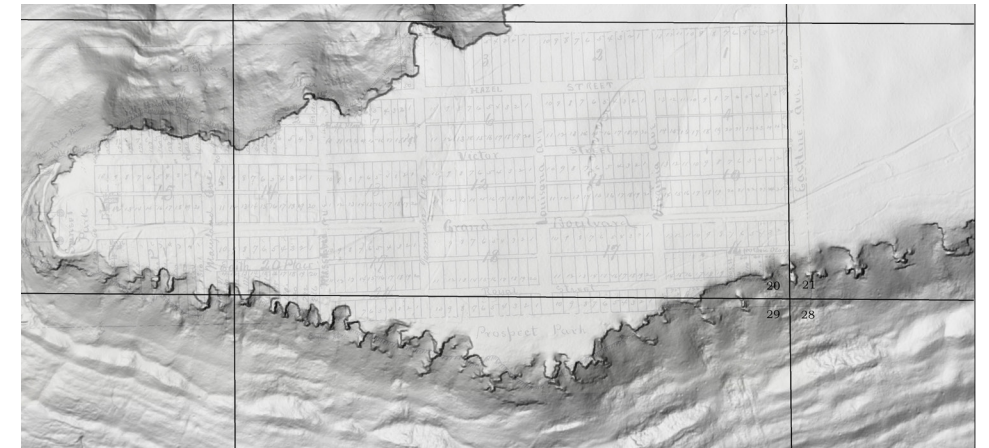
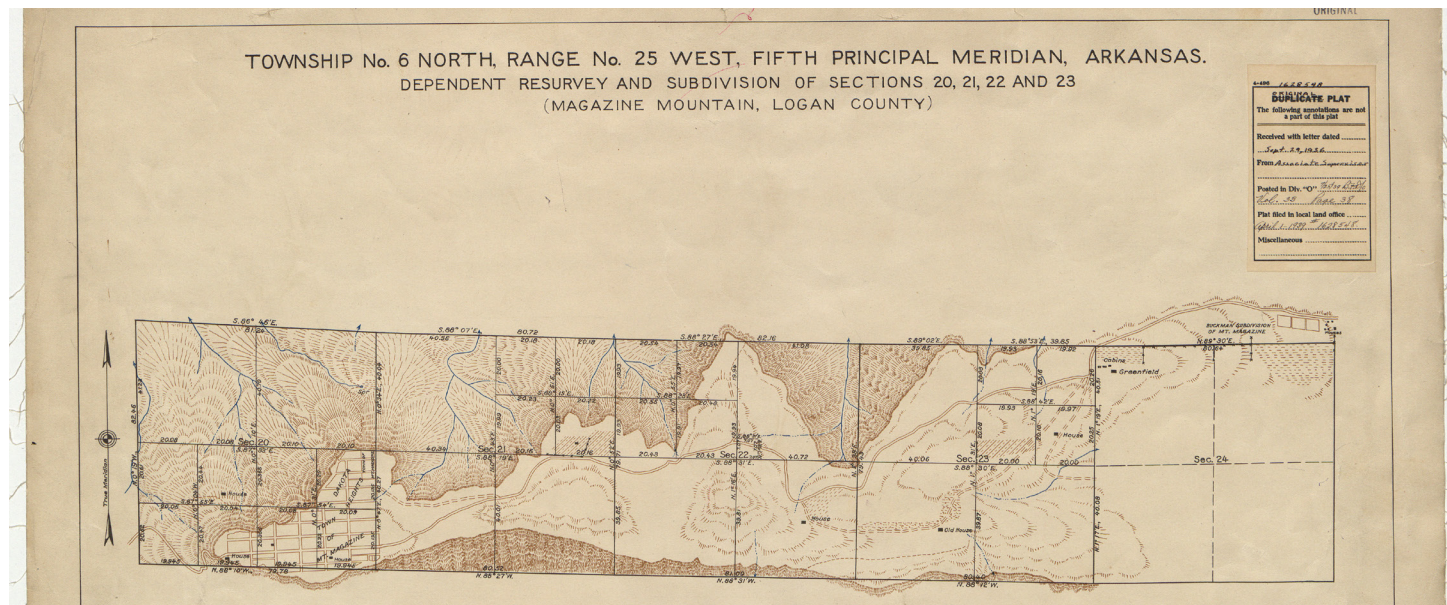
The author hiked all around the mesa of Mount Magazine before, during and after the Fall Conference at Mount Magazine State Park. His mind wandered of the early surveyors and how they did

it in such a rugged environment. He wondered who they were and how they did it. While eating dinner at the Skycrest Restaurant (named after the original Inn from 1900) he read the back of the menu about the history of the restaurant, the lodge and the area. His mind went crazy on the flight home, and he couldn't wait to get his hands on the publicly available lidar data from the 3-dimensional elevation program (3DEP). With ten lidar tiles downloaded and processed through ArcGIS Pro the author could now ease his mind. What he found though, blew his mind. He created a multidirectional hillshade showing all the trails, roads, depressions and rock piles. It was instantly clear that evidence still existed from almost two centuries ago. With about 32 million data points, the author classified the lidar data and produced a bare-ground model. He then georeferenced an image of the town of Mount Magazine, making it fit the topographic features. It was then evident that Grand Boulevard still existed as did multiple oth-

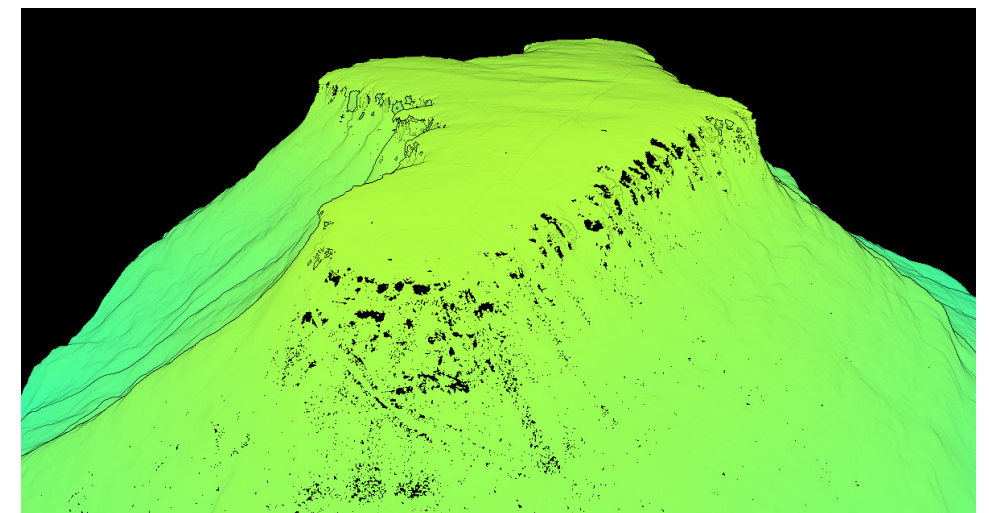
er paths. He then dumped the lidar data in Global mapper for some more 3D visualization. Again, Grand Boulevard stuck out like a sore thumb. The lidar data was downloaded from the USGS National Map and is Quality Level 2 with a recent contract from Woolpert for an additional 24,533 square miles of lidar data at Quality Level 1 being 8 points per square meter with 10 cm (0.33 feet) vertical accuracy. This data is collected from a manned aircraft typically at 175mph at an altitude of around 7,000 feet. The new data is to be released by the summer of 2025.

The author cannot wait to come back and walk the section line,

look for bearing trees, annoy his wife with survey history and stories, and most importantly make new friends and new memories in one of the nicest lodges with the best views in the United States. It is no wonder ASPS members placed the disc on the rock ledge of Mount Magazine commemorating the great Dr. David Raleigh Knowles. From this vantage point, Dr. Knowles can forever overlook the Petit Jean River Valley, Blue Mountain Lake and take advantage of the changing colors of the "...heavy growth of oak, gum, maple, cherry, walnut, ash, elm, and pine timber" as described by Deputy Survey Bandy during his 1936 survey. ~



Author, Joe Fenicle





Nominations for ASPS Board of Directors



For President
Aaron Rasburry, PS



For District 3 Director
Ross Goodner, PS



For President Elect
John Dennis, PS



For District 3 Director
Joe Martin, PS



For Immediate Past President
Arnold Knox, PS



For District 4 Director
Robert Blakeley, PS



For Secretary-Treasurer
Michael Daniels, PS



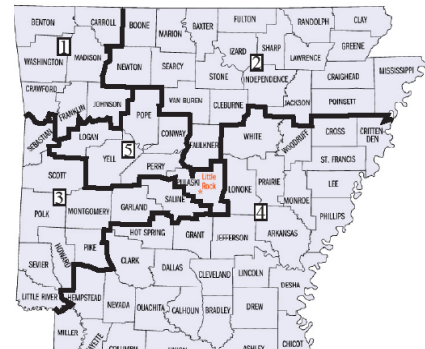
For District 4 Director
Adam Whitlow, PS



For NSPS Governor
Lanny Beavers, PS



For Vice President
Jamie Hall, PS



Candidate bios with Q&A can be found on our website.



The ASPS Board of Directors has appointed a Nominating Committee chaired by ASPS member, James Montgomery. Other committee members are Paul Walla, Scott Foster and Daniel Phillips. The committee has submitted these candidates for ASPS Officers and Directors for the 2025 election. Pursuant to the ASPS Bylaws, any ten voting members of ASPS may submit in writing to the Secretary/Treasurer additional nominees for the positions listed on this page. If they are eligible and their nominations are accompanied by a statement from them that they are willing to be a candidate, their name shall be placed on the ballot. Any additional nominees must be submitted before February 12, 2025. An email with a link to vote will be sent to our voting members by March 4, 2025. If you prefer to receive a ballot by snail mail please inform the ASPS office by February 12, 2025.

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The Sunk Lands: SURVEYING CANE ISLAND

By Michael Daniels, PS

The Sunk Lands are located along the St. Francis River and stretch from Cherry Valley, Arkansas to Kennett, Missouri. They can best be described as submerged lands that were formed by a series of severe earthquakes and aftershocks, commonly known as the 1811-1812 New Madrid Earthquake. These events caused dramatic submergence and upheaval throughout Northeast Arkansas. This natural disaster reshaped the landscape so profoundly that it significantly complicated efforts to map the area decades later.

Cane Island itself was carved out of the upland by the earthquake. Approximately 2,500 acres of land subsided and separated from the adjacent upland. The St. Francis River bordered it on the west, while a new slough formed on the east, turning Cane Island into a distinct landmass during periods of high water.

James Danley, the General Land Office (GLO) Surveyor contracted to survey Township 14 North Range 6 East in 1847, did not include Cane Island in his survey. Danley meandered the edges of the Sunk Lands, which were likely submerged at the time, but

his field notes do not comment on the land's condition.

Sage-Bunce Survey

Homesteaders eventually occupied and cultivated the unmapped land, and they appear to have lived there uninterrupted for nearly 50 years. However, disputes over ownership of the Sunk Lands, and construction of the Jonesboro-Lake City & Eastern Railroad (JLCE), eventually brought the Government's attention to Cane Island.

On July 4, 1898, three county officials—Judge Emmett Rogers, Clerk R.H. West, and Sheriff R.L. Collins—met during the July Term of the Craighead County Court to address the "Surveying and Platting of the lands known as Cane Island." The court declared that Cane Island was "unsectionized" and noted that "the owners have never paid taxes on the said land, and that the same has never been assessed for taxation."

The court promptly ordered County Surveyor S.A. Sage and Civil Engineer W.O. Bunce to survey, plat, and create detailed descriptions of each tract of

land, using measurements and landmarks to define each boundary line.

Between July 14 and July 22, 1898, Sage and Bunce conducted an on-the-ground survey of all 33 tracts, and their field notes were later filed in the County Clerk's record.

Their plat identified key landmarks, including a schoolhouse, two cemeteries (Lots 3 and 26), Bethbara Baptist Church (Lot 8), an old church lot (Lot 13), a disputed tract (Lot 10), and the newly completed JLCE railroad.

The 1909 Relief Act

In 1909, Congress authorized the "Act for the Relief of Certain Occupants of Unsurveyed Public Lands in Craighead County, Arkansas" (35 Stat., 684). Known as the Relief Act, it sought to codify the Sage-Bunce survey as the official plat, allowing settlers to claim up to 160 acres at a price of \$1.25 per acre.

However, the GLO determined that the Sage-Bunce survey contained several inconsistencies. GLO Commissioner Fred Dennett criticized the survey for its mis-

closures and vague descriptions, noting that some tracts also exceeded the 160-acre limit.

Van Antwerp Survey

The GLO assigned Edwin H. Van Antwerp, an experienced Examiner of Surveys, to retrace the Sage-Bunce survey and rectify any discrepancies. Van Antwerp had served as an Examiner of Surveys since 1901 and had been a Deputy Surveyor for the GLO since the late 1870s.

Before beginning his survey, Van Antwerp met with property owners to review existing boundaries and corners. He meticulously recovered original markers, including stakes, witness trees, and possession lines. He reported no disputes over the 63 corners he reestablished, writing, "In no case was there any disagreement, dispute, or objection to the location of any of the sixty-three corners set by me."

Van Antwerp's notes describe the island as having fertile black sandy loam soil and a variety of timber species. He observed that the land had been "settled and cultivated for over sixty years," with property often bought and sold

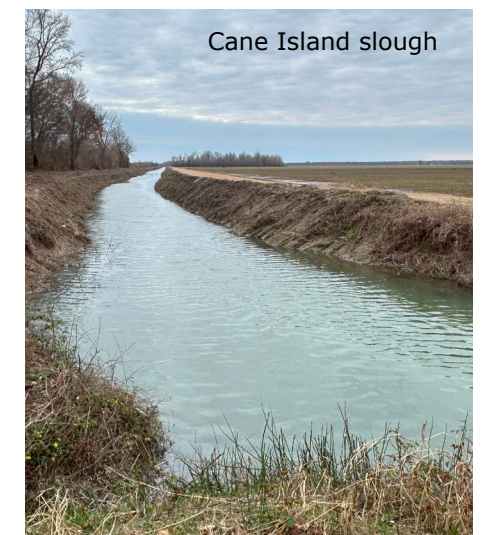
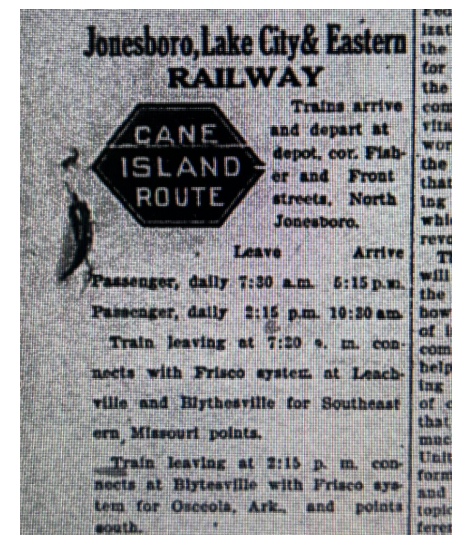
informally, "No writing passing in many cases."

The revised "Supplemental Plat of the Survey of 32 Claims on Cane Island in T. 14 N., R. 6 E., 5th P.M., Craighead County, Arkansas" was approved on November 12, 1909, and remains the controlling plat for the area. The Sage-Bunce and Antwerp surveys can both be found on the Bureau of Land Management's GLO records website.

The GLO Direct System

Antwerp's survey was one of the first modern GLO re-surveys in Arkansas that utilized GLO employees. The Direct System, as it would later be called, consisted of federally employed U.S. Surveyors, as opposed to contract work with Deputy Surveyors. The broad implementation of the system brought consistency to surveying efforts across the remaining Sunk Lands in northeast Arkansas.

The unique surveying history of Cane Island provides a link to the early days of the GLO's Direct System and the unique place that Cane Island, the St. Francis River, and the Sunk Lands have in its history. ☞





By Terry Cleaver, PS



Well, I skipped my first ASPS conference in years and after I saw and heard who all was there, I regretted it. I missed the regulars that typically attend the fall conference at Mount Magazine but there seemed to be some folks in attendance I had not seen in a while. I will have to take that into consideration the next time I decide not to go. Overall, I heard it was a great conference and I am sorry I missed it, but I did use those two days to catch up on some important things... just so you know.

The UACCM Surveying Program had 58 students enrolled in classes for the fall 2024 semester with the vast majority of students being virtual attendees, with the exception of the introductory classes. We are now calling these types of courses "flex" because of the flexibility they create for the student. Students can be physically in the classroom, in the classroom virtually, or watch the recording that evening. There are no excuses anymore for not getting on track for licensure.

As long as you have a wi-fi connection you can continue employ-

ment and take courses toward the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree in Surveying. I would be happy to speak with anyone about a plan to complete the AAS. Maybe you have an employee who needs the incentive to go forward and attain licensure. Contact me at cleaver@uaccm.edu or 501-977-2017; email is best for me. There is still time for next semester. Classes start on January 15. Also, the admissions office can be contacted at 501-977-2053 or 800-264-1094 Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM for information about the classes and registration. We are looking forward to communicating with you about your surveying education needs.

We have six students graduating this fall 2024 semester, and two others have acquired the minimum 30 credit hours in surveying. Both of these students have a Bachelor's degree, and the 30 additional surveying credit hours, along with passing the Fundamentals of Surveying (FS) exam, allows them to apply for the Surveyor Intern (SI). All but one of these individuals are currently employed. Congratulations to all of the graduates this

fall! As always, without the support of ASPS and its members, this would not have been possible. Thank you!

Thanks to those who came by our booth at the fall conference at Mount Magazine this past October. The students appreciate the support you showed to them during the conference. The ASPS membership has always shown great support for our students and they wanted me to convey their thanks for your continued support. They look forward to seeing you again in Hot Springs in April for the spring conference.

The fall meeting of the Surveying Advisory Committee took place on September 17 this year with enrollment, accreditation, classrooms, and the potential for new surveying equipment being discussed. Our committee members present for this meeting consist of Jonathan Hamner, chair; Jeremy Lawson, vice chair; Mark Ashley, John Burton, Dodd Harmon, Allen Miller, Daniel Phillips, Dustin Riley, Marty Satterfield, Spencer Thomas, and Paul Walla. We have a dedicated committee representing surveying

in Arkansas extremely well. We are fortunate to have these gentlemen to help steer this program in a direction that is the most beneficial for us but more importantly, our students. We always look forward to their visits to our campus and hearing what they have to say about surveying in Arkansas. Thank you, gentlemen.

Construction is underway here on the UACCM campus for a new Allied Health and Science Building that will house the nursing program and the science department. It will be a two-story building generally located in the southeast part of the campus along University Boulevard. This building will be extremely beneficial to those two departments as they continue to grow in this high-demand area of the medical profession. Many changes are being made to accommodate ve-

hicle and pedestrian traffic, so it may start looking a bit different in that area in the spring and early summer. Classes are being scheduled for the new building starting in fall 2025.

Thanks, ASPS, for allowing us to be a part of such a strong group of individuals who represent the profession of surveying so well in Arkansas. With a new legislative year coming in January the ASPS Board will need the members' support as they navigate the system to represent us and our needs. I'm sure we will receive information and surveys to find our opinions on potential legislation that may affect us in the coming year(s). We here at UACCM appreciate everything ASPS does and stand ready to help in any way we can. Here's to a strong and prosperous new year! ☺

Continued from page 9

to completing one's education from counting toward licensure. Consequently, any change to allow pre-graduation experience would first require amending the statute itself by revising this phrase.

If the statute is revised to allow for pre-education experience, Article 10 (Professional Experience), Paragraph G could be modified to include pre-graduation experience that adheres to the principles of direct supervision, accountability, and adherence to ethical standards. It is worth noting that the application for licensure already requires references from professional surveyors who must evaluate and attest to the applicant's experience. This demonstrates that the Board relies on the honesty and professional judgment of professional surveyors to verify experience. Extending this trust to include pre-graduation experience under supervision would align with current practices and ensure that only valid and supervised work is credited. This change would align licensure requirements with modern workforce realities and ensure the profession remains both accessible and rigorous.

By advocating for these statutory and rule changes, we believe that the profession can realize several

key benefits. Recognizing pre-education experience makes the profession accessible to individuals from nontraditional routes, including high school graduates and career changers. Flexible pathways align with workforce expectations and attract technologically adept professionals. Structured mentorship guarantees that all candidates meet rigorous professional and ethical benchmarks, while shortened timelines for licensure enhance the profession's competitiveness, reducing dropout rates and increasing workforce sustainability. By embracing these strategies, the surveying profession can adapt to current challenges, maintain its standards, and secure its future.

Conclusion

The surveying profession stands at a critical juncture, requiring thoughtful revisions to ensure its future vitality and relevance. By addressing challenges such as stagnating licensure rates, economic disparities, and limited entry pathways, the profession can adapt to the demands of a modern workforce while maintaining the rigorous standards that protect public trust. The first step in driving any changes is active engagement from all surveyors. ☺

Continued from page 5

Her budget proposes to set aside \$100 million for the state's Medicaid growth and an additional \$90 million for the Education Freedom Accounts (EFA), commonly referred to as vouchers. Sanders proposed that an additional \$90 million be set aside in a reserve fund for voucher expansion as well. Those two numbers, totaling \$180 million pretty much match the total state budget increase of \$182 million for 2025. Coincidence, one supposes. With the public school fund budget increasing by a net of \$38.5 million and \$90 million going for vouchers, it appears that traditional public schools will be feeling the EFA pinch pretty quickly, as opponents theorized two years ago.

"Governor Sanders also announced on December 17, 2024, the "Arkansas Forward" initiative aimed at reducing/avoiding \$300 million in costs..."

The state's two-year and four-year colleges also lost in the 2026 budget sweepstakes. Their funding was reduced from \$778.8 million to \$777.5 million. However, higher education grants increased in 2026 by \$3 million.

Governor Sanders also announced on December 17, 2024, the "Arkansas Forward" initiative aimed at reducing/avoiding \$300 million in costs over the next six years, presumably by the end of her tenure as Arkansas's Governor. The Arkansas Forward team focused on five main areas: IT administration, procurement, vehicle fleet management, personnel, and real estate.

Some items that are worth noting from the report relate to all licensed professionals, including surveyors:

"Changes that would support the department's execution of its mission: Realignment of ADLL's (Arkansas Department of Labor and Licensing) structure of Boards and Commissions (contemplated in ADLL-11) supports ADLL's efforts bring value to the public and licensees served by

ADLL. Improvements in how ADLL staffs the Boards and Commissions can improve customer service by simplifying the licensing process across functions, reducing licensing processing times, and reducing the overall cost of regulation, which can result in fee reductions.

Creation of a single licensing appropriation: By consolidating the licensing funds, Iowa enabled greater flexibility in administrative funding. This allows for more effective allocation of resources across various licensing functions, addressing demand fluctuations without being constrained by department-specific budgets.

Recommended steps for establishing a consolidated board structure:

- Conduct initial assessments to develop a consolidation proposal: Complete
- Review legal and operational considerations for proposal: Complete
- Clarify and define legal restrictions (identifying needed statutory changes): Complete
- Present plan to Secretary Bassett for approval: Complete
- Engage with Arkansas Legislative Council: In process
- Draft necessary statutory changes
- Ensure appropriate transparency and controls
- Develop a comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan
- Initiate Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan
- Develop a phased plan for data and system integration"

There does not appear to be any real appetite for income tax cuts this time around. Budget Chair Jean indicated that the consensus appears to be for new tax cuts to come in the fiscal session in 2026 for the 2027 budget. Wisely, the Chair noted that "this could all change depending on who is hollering during the session."

Early bill filing began November 15, 2024, and 88 bills, as well as a half dozen resolutions, have been filed prior to Christmas. As usual, we will do our best to alert and advise the Arkansas Society of Professional Surveyors Board of all issues related to your profession in a timely manner. ☺



2024 FALL CONFERENCE
OCTOBER 24 & 25
THE LODGE
at Mount Magazine



Clockwise from top left
-ASPS Board of Directors on hand (clockwise from top left): Aaron Rasburry, Arnold Knox, Marty Satterfield, Michael Daniels, John Dennis, Jonathan Rogers, Joe Martin
-Speaker, Daniel Phillips
-Speaker, Joseph Fenicle
-Laser Specialists; Kevin Lindsey and Matt Todd
-Javad GNSS; Phillip Lancaster
-Navigation Electronics, Inc.; Robert Martin and Josh Bettis





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