In 2017 the NSPS Awards Sub-Committee (ASC) of the NSPS Membership Committee was charged with reviewing the current guidelines for the following awards; Map/Plat Design Competition, Affiliate of the Year, Surveying Excellence, Student Project of the Year, Earle J. Fennell Distinguished Educational Contributions, Excellence in Journalism Contest and Public Relations. A written report dated September 15, 2017 was provided to the NSPS Fall Meeting in Frisco, Texas.

Each award was addressed individually. Per the generic guidelines of the charge, emphasis was placed on ways to increase participation in the awards process and to facilitate participation, suggesting ways of streamlining the application process if possible. To start the ASC suggested the NSPS BOD make some philosophical decisions regarding the awards application and judging process. To that end the NSPS BOD should provide specific guidance to the ASC or any other group or committee that would be undertaking this task of overhauling the marketing, application and award process NSPS employs for these awards.

This initial review raised the following questions, what kind of changes is the NSPS BOD willing to make to encourage greater participation? It has been suggested that NSPS needs to better promote these awards. How is NSPS currently promoting these awards? Whose responsibility is it to promote the awards? Are there guidelines and timelines for the promotion? To refresh everyone’s memories and for the benefit of directors who were not members of the NSPS BOD in 2017, the following is the content of the 2017 ASC report regarding each award.

**NSPS Map/Plat Design Competition**

This award appears to be the only NSPS award that requires an entry fee. The fee is intended to offset the $875.00 cash prize. Currently, State Surveying association affiliates
of the NSPS are invited to submit maps and plats. The preparer of the map or plat need not be a NSPS member but must be endorsed by an NSPS member. Given that almost all of the state affiliates are currently 100% NSPS participants, the ASC suggests that 100% state affiliates be able to submit the “Best in Show” selection from their individual “Map Contests” with the entry fee waived. It is reasonable to expect this would have an immediate impact on participation. Obviously NSPS will have to find another way to fund the award if the entry fee is waived. Examples of alternative funding would include, finding a sponsor, establish a fund and ask for individual contributions. Another possibility would be to eliminate the cash award. Having the “best” map or plat in the United States should be an eye catching addition to any business’s website or promotional materials. Is the cash award necessary?

The executive directors of the state affiliates are extremely busy, if the submittal requirements could be streamlined, it may result in more state affiliates entering their winners into the NSPS Contest. The guidelines should require that the NSPS State Directors assist the state executive director or applicant in preparing and submitting the application.

The current guidelines require the applicant to submit prints or PDF’s on six separate CD’s. The ASC believes this is no longer necessary. Many of us submit PDFs to attorneys, title companies, etc. for review. This process works fine. We all have the technology to make our own paper copies from a PDF. Our hope is that our judges will be able to conduct their review using PDFs. We suggest that with appropriate input from past judges, the guidelines be amended to require only a PDF submission for circulation to the judges for their review of the submitted plans. The affiliate would need only forward the PDF and the entry form. With exception of waiving the entry fee, the same streamlining could be put in place for individual entrants.

The ASC suggests the judges meet or have a conference call each year to discuss how to interpret the categories. NSPS should explore ways to involve students in the judging process as a learning experience. NSPS should explore developing a seminar/workshop based on the judging process as a vehicle to help educate students and our membership on the attributes of an outstanding map or plat.

The ASC recommends the following criteria for judging the plat entries be adopted;

1) Focus on quality of content, legibility, overall plan design and page format and layout.
2) Composition, clarity, demonstrable purpose.
3) The Plat Judging Committee (PJC) will be comprised of four members from the NSPS BOD.
4) The PJC may decide not to make any award if less than five plats are submitted in any given year. The judges’ decisions are final.

It is our assumption that many potential submissions are from multiple sheet presentations, with streamlined entry criteria the single sheet requirement could be
eliminated, allowing entrants to enter submissions that are multiple sheet maps and/or plans.

**NSPS Affiliate of the Year**

The ASC has one suggestion regarding Affiliate of the Year. NSPS should add an NSPS Policy, making it a duty of the State NSPS Director to submit a completed Affiliate of the Year application on behalf of the affiliate, each year at the Spring NSPS meeting. An additional way to streamline the application process would be to encourage submission of Map/Plat and Affiliate of the Year applications in conjunction.

The first phase of the judging should be identifying three finalists in each category. The finalists could be guests on the radio show. It would be a great way to promote the award and more importantly the activities and achievements of the affiliates.

It is hoped that through increased participation by the affiliates, NSPS will receive a lot of information that would be of benefit to all of the affiliates. NSPS could add an “Affiliate’s Corner” to News and Views as way to share highlights of affiliate activities and achievements with the other affiliates, the NSPS membership and again, promote the award.

**NSPS Surveying Excellence Award**

The ASC suspects, if there is a lack of nominees for this award it is due to the award not being promoted in the individual states. If each of the affiliates awards a surveyor of the year award, as a starting point NSPS could request that each state submit their surveyor of the year or other suitable candidate for this award. Each of the suggestions included under Affiliate of the Year could be applied to this award as well. Of course individual submissions would be encouraged as well.

**NSPS Student Project of the Year**

The ASC requests that input be solicited from the NSPS Education Committee regarding how best to encourage student participation and promote the award in the student community. Most of the students I am familiar with maintain academic schedules and in some cases work schedules as well, that leave little space on the plate for anything else.

If the timeline for this award could be shifted to the summer months, perhaps students would be better able to find the additional time to put an application together. The ASC suggests the NSPS Education Committee be charged with working out the details of any proposed changes. During the summer months many students intern with or have summer jobs with survey firms or agencies. NSPS should take advantage of these working relationships to promote the award, the many ways students are gaining practical work experience and the employers, many of whom are NSPS members, are helping this crucial element of education to occur. The students would have valuable resources at their disposal and the employer could use the effort as a public relations asset.
The ASC asks what are and what is the purpose of requiring Modern Language Association (MLA) style guidelines?

**Earle J. Fennell Distinguished Educational Contributions**

Being from a State that recently had a Fennell Award winner, I was not aware of an issue with this award. Apparently there has not been a nomination in 2016 or 2017. Input should be sought from the Public Relations Committee (PRC) to explore ways to better promote this award.

ASC requests that input and suggestions be sought from the NSPS Education Committee regarding this award. The ASC suggests the NSPS Education Committee be charged with working out the details of any proposed changes.

**Excellence in Journalism Contest**

The ASC suggests that NSPS request that all NSPS Officers, Directors, Members of the ASC and Journalism Contest judges receive digital copies of each affiliates newsletters and magazines if at all possible. Having an inclusive group receiving publications to review should help identify and highlight examples of excellence. Highlighting articles on a regular basis could be a benefit to the award process and the professional community.

The criteria for judging the entries should include the following edits:

1) All categories will be judged on legibility, composition and clarity.
2) Affiliate newsletters and magazines will be judged on the focus and quality of their content, overall publication, design and layout.
3) Original feature articles will be judged on the substance, relevance, photography and presentation.
4) Editorial entries will judged on how well the topic/issue is presented and the position is argued.
5) All entries will be judged by the Excellence in Journalism Judging Committee comprised of five members of the NSPS BOD. The judging committee will elect a chairman. The decisions of the judging committee are final.
6) The judging committee may decide that no award will be given in any year when there less than five entries.

If there is a lack of submissions for this award, perhaps NSPS highlighting examples of quality journalism could be used to promote the award and the interesting articles being generated by the affiliates? As has been suggested with the other awards, NSPS should take advantage of both News and Views and the radio show on a consistent basis.

I continue to believe the suggestions from 2017 listed above are a solid initial assessment of the NSPS Awards Program. Any suggestions, redirections or amendments to the sub-committee charges will be greatly appreciated. Anyone wishing to help NSPS and the
profession take full advantage of the benefits of these awards please join the process and share your ideas and energy.

In April of this year President Van Horn reached out to discuss this sub-committee and committees in general about the NSPS committee structure and ways to involve greater participation in committee work by the NSPS Directors. At present the sub-committee work is being done by a small number of people. The President asked that a sub-committee meeting be scheduled immediately following and in the same room as the Membership Committee. It is hoped that interested members of the Membership Committee and any other interested NSPS members join us with energy and ideas about reinvigorating the NSPS Awards Program. Thank you to you all.

Respectfully submitted, Robert Dahn, Sub-Committee Chair