Due to the on-going Federal protocols and Commonwealth of Virginia mandates related to COVID, the annual convention of the Virginia Association of Surveyors for 2020 is being held in a very unconventional manner. VAS is hosting a "virtual" convention.
Even though this is virtual, that doesn't mean it can't be an exciting event.

VAS is still providing first class professional development for surveyors -- via webinars.

The virtual convention includes 15 webinar education sessions where you can complete up to 26 hours of continuing education (CE) credit, from the comfort of your home or office, which began on October 8 and runs through November 11.

The unconventional convention will consist of an outstanding continuing education (CE) webinar program where licensed Virginia land surveyors can earn their CE credits, view Geospatial Equipment & Technology Smart ("Get Smart") presentations, and participate in events such as the Virginia Surveyors Foundation annual meeting, a Young Surveyors meeting and happy hour, the VAS Annual General Membership Meeting, and to end the virtual portion of the convention, a virtual "VAS Banquet" which will include the plat awards, a VAS raffle, formal introduction of newly licensed Virginia surveyors, a presentation from our Past President, Gary Faulhaber, and from our current President, Kevin Wood.

CE seminars are affordably priced at just $40 per credit hour. There are also virtual events that are free of charge.

To view the convention program and to register, click here.

VAS worked hard with Governor Northam to have surveying defined as critical and essential, enabling surveyors to continue to work, earn a living, and serve our clients during the COVID pandemic. The Virtual Convention will enable you to continue your professional development in a safe and convenient manner. Support VAS and enhance your professional knowledge by registering today.

Convention Sponsors

[Images of sponsors' logos]
Official Notice of Annual Meeting

Please be advised that an Official Notice of Annual Meeting was mailed via the USPS on Tuesday, October 13, 2020, to every Regular, Retired, and Honorary VAS Member in good standing. The notice was sent to the address of record in each individual's VAS profile.

Any member who will carry a proxy for another member at the Annual Meeting is required to file such proxy no later than close of business on Friday, October 30. Such proxy shall be submitted to VAS Secretary Treasurer Rob Mann, LS, via Executive Director John Palatiello at john@vasurveyors.org. Include the name of the member who will be holding the proxy, and the name of any member(s) such proxy represents. Any member who wishes to present an item of business for the Annual Meeting, including issues for discussion, proposed motions, or a memorial for a recently deceased member, is also asked to provide such notice and the content of the item or motion, or name of the subject of the memorial, by close of business on Friday, October 30 to Executive Director John Palatiello at john@vasurveyors.org.

Please call the VAS office at 844-414-1466 if you have any questions or concerns.

From the President
by Kevin Wood

My wife and I just spent a long weekend in Washington D.C. We took the train out of Norfolk and enjoyed the travel time without fighting traffic. We spent a great deal of our time walking as most of the city is still shut down. Barricades were setup around government buildings, museums are closed, as are many hotels and stores. We were in a minority being tourists in the city. We tried to see a few places that we had not seen in the past. One of our excursions was a self-guided tour of the Embassy Row. It was interesting to see the small portions of other countries at each location. I am curious how each of the countries decided on a location. The neighbor is very important in this decision. Certain embassies put up gates while others spent their energy on statues and monuments that celebrated their heritage and homeland. The cultural mix is deep in D.C. and somehow the atmosphere works. During our time in the city there was a mix of political events. The intensity level of these events is going up since the November election is getting closer. Each side cannot seem to listen to the other.

I have always been impressed with our VAS meetings. We have open and sometimes very opinionated discussions. Shortly after that meeting the same people who disagreed in the meeting are joking together over a beer. The VAS creates a bond with surveyors that do not have the same thoughts on different issues. I hope we all carry that same attitude to our offices and out into the society around us. The current political environment is very violent at times. This environment did not just begin in the past four years, but it is certainly growing.

The survey community is trying to grow. That growth should include better diversity in age, sex, and culture. How do we get that point? Part of it is trying to keep an open mind in discussions. We all want to express our opinions, but we need to understand how important it is for others to be heard and understood. Our society will continue to grow
when groups like the VAS shares our example of discussion and listening. I am proud to say I am part of this society and I hope you all appreciate what we have.

Kevin B. Wood, LS
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**Editor's Column**

PLEASE VOTE. It isn't any simpler than that. Please take the time to vote this year, and if you’ve already voted-EXCELLENT! About 100 million eligible voters didn’t vote in the 2016 election. I’m sure we’ve all heard the old saying “If you don’t vote, don’t complain”. Well, there just might be some truth to that. Voting is the chance for all of us to have a say in who will be representing us and setting future policies. And if you have younger people in your office or 20-something kids like I have, please impress upon them the importance of voting. Everyone’s vote counts the same regardless of race, religion, income.

A big thanks to Khea Adams of the VAS staff and as always, please keep in mind that this is YOUR ODS, and we are always looking for articles, ideas, and pictures submitted by you. And please feel free to let us know how we are doing.

Chris Jensen, LS, is VAS Second Vice President and Editor of ODS

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**Certified Survey Technician Committee**

By David Ashley

What is the CST program?

Defined by the NSPS web site:

“CST is a comprehensive national certification program for survey technicians and is sponsored by the National Society of Professional Surveyors. The program is recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor within its National Apprenticeship Program. The Certified Survey Technician Board administers the program, which is intended to gauge technical capabilities and general knowledge of workplace safety and procedures. Four levels of certification are offered in two primary tracks – field and office.”

This is an accurate description, but I personally believe the CST program is more about opportunities.

**Opportunities to train, educate and mentor our technicians.**
Training programs can easily be tailored to your staff according to their skills and abilities. This will help to not only reinforce what they are getting out of on the job training but will also expose them to other types of surveying. This will show them there is more to the profession than what they experience in their day to day jobs. It teaches them some of the math that goes on in the “magic” box they call a data collector or computer. It helps them to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
Opportunities to instill a sense of accomplishment and pride in our technicians. The program offers our technicians short term attainable goals. They spend time studying and then take a 4 to 6-hour exam. After passing the exam they are awarded a certificate reflecting their achievement in advancing their skills and knowledge.

Opportunities to inspire them to pursue surveying as a career and obtain licensure.
Of course, not everyone who gets into surveying will go on to become licensed, but if we can provide a career ladder for our technicians showing them what they can achieve perhaps some will go on to become licensed surveyors.

I have personally been involved with the CST program since 2005 and have witnessed firsthand the benefits of the program, not only for the technicians but for the companies they work for as well. The technicians will become more invested with their respective employers while also becoming more engaged in their work.

Advancements in technology make it imperative that everyone involved in surveying becomes better trained. Statistically, the average age of licensed surveyors in this country is approaching 60, so we need look for every opportunity to bring more people into the profession. The CST program offers the ability to train them, keep them engaged, and get them excited about becoming licensed surveyors.

David Ashley works for Draper Aden Associates. He is the chair of the Certificed Survey Technician (CST) program.

Interested in joining a committee? All Committees and Chairs to contact can be found on the VAS website.

Educational Trust

In lieu of compensation for being instructors at the VAS Fall Seminar, Steve Douty and Jerry Taylor made a generous $800 donation to the VAS Foundation Book Program. They would like to encourage all VAS members to remember the VAS Foundation.

FIG Update

FIG Commission 7 Meeting will be held virtually - in several different time zones and languages and will focus on rural-urban linkages. One session is organized in cooperation with UN-Habitat/GLTN, and Commission 2 has also organized a session on blended learning.
VAS Comment on DOLI Proposed Permanent Standard for Infectious Disease Prevention

VAS filed a comment in opposition to a permanent standard for infectious disease prevention proposed by the Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI). The comments were drafted by our lobbyist, Preston Bryant of McGuire Woods Consulting, and reviewed and approved by our Legislative Committee (Kevin Wood, Bruce Frederick, Gary Faulhaber).

A Surveyor's Retirement: Creating an Ownership Transition Plan

(Last in a Series)

by John Palatiello

Too often, surveyors who own their firms wait until their 60s or 70s to begin thinking of retirement and ownership transition. Retiring and turning one’s firm over to another is one of life’s most important decisions. It is one that should not be made in haste or without proper planning.

It is also too frequent that surveyors fail to have an identified successor and end up simply closing the doors and liquidating assets.

For a surveyor who has spent years building a practice, creating a good reputation, and making a good living, there is more value in his or her firm than just the assets. To such a surveyor, an ownership transition plan is as important, if not more important, than a business plan, marketing plan, or strategic plan.

Here’s a few facts to keep in mind --

- Nearly 40 percent of all business ventures end in liquidation;
- Up to 80 percent of a business owner’s net worth can be tied up in their business; and
- Liquidation usually results in the owner getting less than 100 percent of a business’s value and fails to provide a return on your investment in “good will”, reputation, and client base over a period of years.

Charles Pecchio, a consultant who taught an ownership transition seminar for VAS in the spring of 2016, believes a few basic steps are critical to the successful transfer of a firm. They include starting transition planning early (5-10 years before your planned retirement or sale), formalizing a succession plan as part of a larger business plan, and developing a written business succession plan with an implementation timetable. If you plan to implement an internal sale, to employees, a leadership development plan must be designed and implemented.

To whom you will sell your business depends on a number of factors, particularly the legal structure of your firm. If you are the sole owner the transition will be different than if you have partners, shareholders, investors, or even other licensed surveyors on staff.
There is no one-size-fits-all answer to selling your business.

Virginia has laws governing ownership of a surveying firm. These requirements must be kept in mind when planning the sale of a firm. If you have a younger family member who is a licensed surveyor and the heir apparent, the transition can be relatively easy. If you have partners, each partner and part owner need to be part of your exit strategy, as well as their own. If you sell outside of your current employees, the sale is more complex.

There are different types of sales, but they all have financial, tax, retirement lifestyle, and family implications.

An owner can sell and get out, leaving the firm upon the sale, sell and stay on for a few years, or sell with the intent of staying for a longer term to run the firm for the new owners.

In any case, discussing your strategy with your spouse and family, accountant, attorney, business partners, and financial adviser is an important first step.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when executing a transition:

- Keep things confidential, or closely held, for as long as possible. Word of the sale of the firm could demoralize employees and discourage clients from continuing to do business with you. Never advertise or publicize that your firm is for sale and never let your name or the name of your firm be known. Use a broker or consultant to assist with your transition and insist that they require any interested party to sign a nondisclosure agreement before providing the identity of your firm or any proprietary information.
- Think of potential buyers. Are there employees who can assume the firm? Are there friendly competitors or fellow surveyors you know through VAS who have similar cultures, ethics, business approaches, or you believe would be a good fit, with whom you can discuss a deal in confidence?
- Begin developing or updating essential information about your firm – financial information, client lists, major on-going contracts and projects, an inventory of equipment and other assets, staff resumes, etc.
- Work with your accountant and bring in a consultant who knows how to do a valuation of a professional service surveying firm.

If you don’t know what EBITDA is, start studying. It stands for Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation, and Amortization and is a metric used to evaluate a company’s operating performance. Some view it as a substitute for a cash flow analysis. In finance, EBITDA is used to describe the overall operating profitability of a business over a given time period. Optimally, the firm should have cash on hand and no debt when entering a sale.

While it is important that you take care of yourself in the transition, focus on the longer term well being of your employees and clients as well.

Finally, don’t let ego get in your way. You’re not indispensable. With the right successor, your firm can fly to new heights. That should be your goal. As Jim Collins pointed out in his best-selling business book *Good to Great*, a great leader is one who has enough self-confidence to set up their successors for success.

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John Palatiello is Executive Director of Virginia Association of Surveyors and President of John M. Palatiello & Associates Inc., a public affairs consulting firm based in Fairfax, VA, providing government relations, public relations, association management, strategic communications, and political consulting services to the business community.
planning, event planning, and management and marketing consulting services to private firms, associations, and government agencies with an emphasis on the architecture and engineering; geospatial, mapping and GIS; information technology; construction; transportation and infrastructure, and land use sectors. He has advised numerous surveying and mapping firms on transitions.

**Upcoming Events**

72nd Annual Virtual Convention & General Membership  
October 8 - November 12  
[Click Here](#) to Register

**Safety Minute**
AUTUMN safety

As the weather cools and leaves fall, the season of joy brings about some dangers with it. Stay safe this fall with these few tips.

5 tips for fall safety

1. Drive wise

Drive slowly, especially with wet roads and fog. With the rapid weather changes, check tire pressure and clear the frost from car windows for increased visibility.

2. Get vaccinated

The Center for Disease Control suggests anyone six months and older get the flu shot to protect the body from viruses.

3. Sweep the chimney

The National Fire Protection Agency suggests have fireplaces, chimneys and vents cleaned and inspected every year.

4. Check the detectors

Testing smoke and carbon monoxide detectors every month and replacing batteries once a year could be the difference between life and death.

5. Lock away firearms

Hunting season brings hunting accidents. Keep firearms unloaded and stored in a lock box until needed. Firearms should never be kept in unlocked cars or unattended around children.
The Old Dominion Surveyor

*The Old Dominion Surveyor* is the official publication of the Virginia Association of Surveyors. It is published monthly and sent to members. All material must be submitted by the deadline noted for each issue.

**Editor**
Chris Jensen

**Committee**
Khea Adams - Virginia Association of Surveyors

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More than 400 members of the surveying profession in Virginia read *The Old Dominion Newsletter*. Advertising in the magazine is a great way to reach that audience! Our online publication allows us to link from your ad to your website.

**Advertising Rates**

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(7.5" wide x 10" high)
One Issue - $400
Annual - $3,000

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(7.5" wide x 4.74" high)
One Issue - $250
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**Half Page**
(3.5" wide x 10" high)
One Issue - $250
Annual - $1,500

**Quarter Page**
(3.5" wide x 4.75" high)
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(75 px High)
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- Preferred Formats: Ads may be provided in black/white or color; please send layout-ready copy (compatible electronic files include .eps or .pdf files with all fonts and graphics embedded). All ads must be digital. Please send ads via email to Khea Adams at Khea@vasurveyors.org
- All advertisements are non-refundable
- If purchasing an Annual ad, you can change your ad monthly.

Click Here to Purchase Your Ad
VAS is pleased to work with Land's End to provide an opportunity to purchase quality clothing with the VAS logo embroidered on it. Go on, showcase your membership in VAS. To start shopping and place your order, click here.

Did you know that when you recruit a new member to VAS you will receive a 25% discount on your membership dues? Spread the word about the great work VAS is doing for the surveying profession and be sure to tell the new member to include your name on the recommended by portion of their application.