Virtual 72nd Annual Convention and General Membership Meeting Registration is Open

On behalf of VAS President and Convention Chair Kevin Wood, LS, we are pleased to announce that registration is open for the 72nd Annual Convention & General
Membership Meeting.

This is NOT the usual VAS Convention!!!

Due to the on-going Federal protocols and Commonwealth of Virginia mandates related to COVID, VAS is hosting a "virtual" convention.

However, even though this is virtual, that doesn't mean we can't still host an exciting event.

The virtual convention will consist of an outstanding continuing education webinar program where licensed Virginia land surveyors can earn their CEUs, 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, Chapter Presidents and Committee Chairs meeting, 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.

Even though we can't meet in person, we will host the first ever VAS Virtual Golf Tournament. It will allow more golfers to attend because you get to play at your own course at a time that suits you. The rules are simple. Play your round between October 8th and November 8th. Send me your scorecard. The scores will be tallied as follows: a birdie = 3 points; a par = 2 points; a bogey = 1 point. In the event of a tie score, we will use the cards and pick the winner by going backwards on each round, with the points scored last defining who wins the tournament (example: the winner will be the highest score on an individual hole when the cards are compared and starting at hole 18, going backwards to hole 1). We will list all participants along with the course you played and then we will post the first, second and third place finish in the Old Dominion Surveyor and announce it at the virtual banquet at the end of the Convention. If you plan to participate in the tournament, please email your score card to kwood@pennoni.com no later than Moday, November 9. Also, if you take some pictures during your round we can add some to the ODS article."

The Virtual Convention is offering 15 education sessions where you can complete up to 26 hours of continuing education (CE) credit, from the comfort of your home or office, beginning on October 8 and running through November 11.

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.
Registration Refunds

The VAS staff has issued refunds to individuals who had registered and paid for an in-person Convention. If you paid via credit card, a credit has been issued to the card used for payment. If you paid by check, VAS has sent you a check. Please address any questions to Debbie Birtwistle of the VAS staff at 844-414-1466 or email debbie@vasurveyors.org. Members and guests are encouraged to re-register for the virtual sessions.

From the President
by Kevin Wood

Finding information is a daily activity for surveyors. We are either looking for control, recorded information, or reference of ownership. The first stop for some is to review office files and related projects. Others may visit or call the courthouse and request information. Many will begin research with the municipal GIS data. In most cases, the GIS data provides preliminary research and at times it provides ground control reference sheets. In most locations, the surveyor must go elsewhere to acquire the necessary recorded information. Unlike other states, Virginia does not provide the recorded property documents to the public without a fee. This fee can be $500 per year in each location. Now, with the COVID-19 restrictions, access to many record rooms is limited. I have talked to VAS members who share research with other surveyors. Each surveyor may purchase remote access to certain localities while he depends on others to get information from the City/County that they have access to. This is a great way to keep the costs down and I think it shows the attitude of surveyors to work with each other and get the job done. My hope is that the recorded documents will be free to the public in the future. I think it is a task for the VAS to tackle. This might be one of the quickest ways we can be of benefit to our members, all surveyors, and the public. More to come on that front in the coming year.

The use of ground control may be going away in the future, but localities still require a tie to their monumentation. Some online resources are available and others need to be requested through the municipal surveyor. Certain GPS networks are updating so that you may not tie into older control in the same manner that you did during the previous project. The VAS is hosting several webinars on this topic during the October convention.
The professional board of the DPOR is also working with the surveying community. This includes a review of the regulations and actions of professionals. Recently, the DPOR submitted a guidance document concerning prescriptive easements/rights of way. It speaks to the matter of setting monumentation and platting the property line properly. Many of us work with these prescriptive easements and it is of great importance to handle this area of the property correctly. This type of ownership can be the most problematic and surveyors are constantly needing the research. Again, the COVID restrictions are making the research more difficult. Working with VDOT to publish the right of way maps online might help future surveys and solve many issues.

The need for more and better information will always be present as surveyors add projects to their resume. Hopefully, the resources can keep up with the demand. Membership in the VAS may not solve all of your problems, but it does open a door to more resources. At the same time, each of us becomes a resource in a network of surveyors. Join the network and improve your opportunities.

Kevin B. Wood, LS
VAS President
kwood@ pennoni.com
(757) 355-6743

**Editor's Column**

I recently received an email from our training specialist regarding a mentoring program that was starting up. As I read through the details of the program, it made me think about what kind of mentoring I am doing now for the people who work for me and with me. Most of my office is working remotely full-time, so the office interaction obviously isn’t happening like it used to. In the pre-COVID days, it was much easier to sit down with other people in the office and discuss a difficult boundary solution, or plat situation. I’m realizing that I need to be more pro-active and continue to have these communications, even if they are done remotely. I know many of you run smaller survey shops and don’t have to worry about remote communications with your staff, but what about your clients? Are you still having conversations with them even though you might not have as many face-to-face meetings as you used to have? What about communications with your fellow surveyors? As President Wood discusses in his article this month, surveyors sharing research (and control) is a great way for all of us to help each other out and keep costs down. I’ve also found that asking a fellow surveyor his or her thought process on a boundary for the property next to the one I’m surveying can really help when it comes time to put together the final product. I’ve always preached that one of the best benefits I have received from being a VAS member is the networking with fellow surveyors. I can also attest that I have been “mentored” by a few of them, whether they intended to do that or not.

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

**Fall Seminar to be Presented as a Webinar**
The Fall Seminar will be tomorrow Friday, September 18 beginning at 10:00 AM, featuring two sessions of two hours each. A total of four hours of continuing education credit will be awarded. The sessions are as follows:

**The Surveyor in Court (or not)**  
**Instructors:** Jerry Taylor, LS, Esq., and Steve Douty, LS

In this webinar, surveyors will learn how to understand, prepare for, and present as an expert witness in court and other formal presentations. In addition, it will focus on how to help your client avoid the litigation experience and how to market your services after the dust has settled. Mr. Taylor has represented his clients as both a surveyor and attorney in cases relating to land use and boundaries. Mr. Douty has served as an expert witness in federal and state courts, where he both succeeded and failed to properly represent his clients.

**Early Surveying Techniques and the Evolution of Surveying Equipment**  
**Instructor:** David Ingram, LS

This webinar will examine early surveying techniques and the evolution of surveying equipment including directional devices, distance measuring equipment, and calculating devices. Visual aids will depict actual equipment in many variations, original patent diagrams, photographs of surveyors at work, actual survey work products, and numerous other items that depict the life and work of surveyors of yesteryear. Mr. Ingram has a vast collection of historic surveying instruments, including many he has researched and restored.

For further information and registration, [click here](#).
Virginia Surveyors Foundation Annual Meeting

The annual business and membership meeting of the Virginia Surveyors Foundation will be held on October 13, 2020 at 12:00 PM. Members and guests are invited to join us via Zoom as we discuss the Foundation's accomplishments over the past 16 months. We
will also be reviewing our proposed budget for the coming year and recognizing those who received scholarships this year. Everyone interested in attending should either sign up via the VAS Virtual Convention registration or contact Khea Adams of the VAS staff at Khea@vasurveyors.org prior to October 13 to register and to receive for information on the Zoom meeting.

Melvin G. Spain, Jr. | 1940 - 2020 | Obituary
By Bennett Funeral Homes

Melvin G., Spain Jr., 79, of Mechanicsville, went to be with the Lord, Monday, August 17, 2020. He was born September 10, 1940, in Richmond to the late Ruby and Garman Spain. Melvin is survived by his loving wife of 56 years, Ann Spain; four children, Laurie Sweeney (Dale), Melissa Byrne (Brendan), Drew Spain (Ellen); and Paige Flanagan (David), six grandchildren, Taylor Housel (Zach), Madison Sweeney, Katelyn Spain, Ayden Flanagan, Emma Spain, and Eli Flanagan; brother, Vic Spain (Judy); sisters, Nancy Heath (Lawrence) and Susan Smith (Mike); as well as several nieces and nephews. Mel was a land surveyor for over 30 years. He was a loving daddy and involved himself for many years in numerous community activities with his children. He also loved anything involving his beloved grandchildren and pets.

Constitution and By-Laws Committee
By Will Nash

Any organization needs to have a set of rules to operate efficiently and legally. In the case of the Virginia Association of Surveyors, the rules consist of our Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws, and Virginia Corporate law. The Articles of Incorporation are required by Virginia law and spell out how we operate as a non-stock, not-for-profit corporation. This is a recorded public document.

Our By-Laws are a set of rules that guide our day to day operations, keep meetings orderly, and ensure proper representation of all VAS members. The policy manual is a third document that outlines the duties of each officer, committee, or liaison.

Ensuring that these rules are kept up to date and serve VAS in the best way possible falls to every officer or member, but is the direct charge of the Constitution and By-Laws Committee. I have had the privilege of chairing this committee for the last few years and have endeavored to oversee the update of the articles and by-laws while Past President Kevin Schreiner, took on the policy manual. This has most definitely been a team effort with great committee members such as Steve Douty, Matt Mosteller, and Ken Carlton.

The changes proposed by this committee and offered by other directors and members have been approved by the Board of Directors and will be presented for a vote of the general membership at our annual meeting in October. This is the time for all VAS members to read, ask questions, and understand what is being proposed. As soon as this process is complete the by-laws for all ten chapters will be evaluated for compliance with the VAS documents and state law. This task will have a new lead in the as I believe President Wood has someone in line to chair this committee. It has been my honor to serve in this capacity and I would suggest that anyone who has some time to offer will find committee assignments very fulfilling.
Will Nash works for the Town of Farmville. He is the NSPS Director and heads the VAS Constitution and By-Laws Committee

Interested in joining a committee? All Committees and Chairs to contact can be found on the VAS website.
Over the past several months, we’ve discussed in the space several types of planning for a surveying firm. We began by discussing the need for planning in general, followed by an introduction to a formal business plan and a strategic plan. There’s a certain logic to the sequence of these columns.

One may ask, what’s the difference between all these plans?

Business planning is generally a road map. It is a general description of the business, its
finances, and elements of strategy, marketing, and other key factors. A business plan is often required by a bank when applying for a business loan. Whereas a business plan provides structure for ideas that define the business, a strategic plan is used to provide focus, direction, and action in on key goals, objectives to benchmark progress and establish metrics for guiding a firm in the coming years. As I indicated in my first column in this series, these plans can be separate and individual or combined into one document. Overlap and duplication are acceptable, provided such elements are consistent and interoperable to each such plan.

A marketing plan identifies your target clients (by groups or target markets, or individual firms), how you will reach them, what message you will deliver, and how you will retain your clients so they will repeatedly come to you for their surveying requirements. Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large. While inter-related, marketing is distinct from sales, advertising, or public relations. There was a time when marketing sales, advertising, and public relations by those in the professions (law, medicine, engineering, etc.) was considered unethical, but those days are long gone and there are now very ethical, principled, and respectable ways to carry on business development to the highest standards. There are codes of ethics in the surveying, mapping, engineering, and geospatial field that advise a professional not to engage in garrulous or misleading advertising, not slander, nor will it in any way impair the ethical image of competitors, but rather project the services offered in a truthful and dignified manner and observe and abide by the laws and regulations governing good business and professional practice.

A marketing plan begins with market research. This may include something as simple as listing specific clients you’d like to have or certain markets you’d like to enter and expand. Such markets could be geographic (increase revenue from clients on the Eastern Shore) or by industry group (expand work for local government). The plan should establish a unique selling proposition (USP). That is a strength of the firm that distinguishes your firm from your competitors. It should be stated as a positive virtue of your firm, not a criticism of competitors. As an ethical professional, a USP should be based on your firm’s competence, experience, and qualifications, not its price structure. It should always be a firm’s goal to be recognized, respected, and retained for the quality of its service, not for being the lowest price. A marketing plan outlines the USP, identifies target audiences, and documents the means to communicate the USP to those audiences in order to create demand for your services.

A marketing plan should include strategies for branding the firm. In today’s environment, these include digital, traditional, and conventional methods. This includes a modern, state of the art logo, website, social media, emails, and newsletters, as well as presentations at conferences, sponsorships, articles in selected publications, webinars, and education seminars.

It is important to focus a marketing plan on “relationship marketing”. In other words, pay attention to retaining current clients; as this could be a more important and successful strategy than garnering new clients.

The goal of a marketing plan is to establish yourself and your firm as thought leaders, subject matter experts, and the “Go To” firm for your USP.

Finally, be sure to include metrics and benchmarks in your marketing plan. Set goals on which success can be measured (revenue targets, percentage increases, retention rates, new clients recruited, or new sectors entered). Refer to the plan regularly, make certain every member of your firm has the plan and understands his or her role (every employee...
is part of a firm’s image, USP, and marketing effort), and track your progress against achieving the numeric goals.

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 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.

Upcoming Events

Fall Board of Directors Meeting
September 17, 2020

Fall Webinar
September 18, 2020
Click Here to Register

72nd Annual Convention & General Membership Webinar
October 8 - November 12
Click Here to Register

Safety Minute

On July 27, 2020, the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry’s Safety and Health Codes Board approved an Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) for COVID-19 to be enforced by the Virginia Occupational Safety and Health (VOSH) program. The VOSH Program will be conducting compliance inspections under the ETS. The standard is intended to protect workers and to control, prevent, and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

More information can be found at the following links:

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

VAS 2020 - 2021 Officers and Directors
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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

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

Half Page
(7.5" wide x 4.74" high)
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Annual - $1,500

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

Quarter Page
(3.5" wide x 4.75" high)
One Issue - $150
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Banner Ad
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Subpage Ad
(75 px High)
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- Submission Deadlines: The first day of the month of the issue(s) selected
- 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.