

BOUNDARIES

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The Alberta Land Surveyors' Association (ALSA), established in 1910, is a self-governing professional association legislated under the *Land Surveyors Act*.

The Association regulates the practice of land surveying for the protection of the public and administration of the profession.

transformation of our province over the ensuing time. The job of the land surveyor remains essentially the same—we measure and determine land boundaries—but the way we do it is dramatically different.

In 1910, land surveyors applied their skills to mark out the boundaries of homestead lands and the lots of the growing cities and towns. By today's technological standards the tools they used were crude but they worked and got the job done.

Today we use GPS and highly technological surveying equipment to do the job. We are constantly amazed at just how accurate those early boundary determinations were.

100 Years and Counting!

It's a big happy birthday. The Alberta Land Surveyors' Association turned 100 years old on March 19, 2010, the hundredth anniversary of Royal Assent of the *Alberta Land Surveyors Act*.

From history books and our association's historical records we can tell that it was a proud moment for the Alberta Land Surveyors of the day. None of them however could have imagined the tremendous

Land surveying is critical to the identification of properties. The Torrens system of land identification

was adopted by Alberta and led to the creation of one of the most secure methods of registering land boundaries in the world. Property owners in Alberta can be assured of the integrity of their property boundaries because of the work of the Alberta Land Surveyors and the Torrens Registry System at Land Titles.

Land surveyors work in a variety of environments. Many work extensively in the energy industry marking boundaries of well-sites, production facilities, roads, seismic lines and other energy related developments. Others work in the municipal area establishing boundaries for subdivisions, rights-of-ways, roads, real property reports and other municipal related surveys in rural and urban communities. ALSA members even determine the boundaries of condominiums and office space.

Alberta land surveyors are well educated. Most have at least one university degree followed by a period of articling and writing a series of examinations specific to land surveying. Once commissioned as land surveyors with the official designation of ALS after their name, they may work for government, private survey firms or may start businesses of their own.



Keep Wheeler House!



Council sent a letter to Parks Canada requesting that the building known as Claremount/Wheeler House in Banff not be destroyed.

Arthur Oliver Wheeler was one Alberta's first land surveyors and the founder of the Alpine Club of Canada.

In 1923-24, he built Claremount (named after his first wife) just off of Mountain Avenue in Middle Springs in Banff adjacent to the townsite.

Parks Canada faces two problems in dealing with Wheeler House: it sits inside a designated wildlife corridor and the home and property have fallen into a state of disrepair.

Nevertheless, the Alberta Land Surveyors' Association believes there are a number of people and organizations who would be interested in preserving the building in some manner and honouring an important figure in Alberta's history.

In particular, Mr. Wheeler was active in connection with irrigation and topographical surveys in Southern Alberta, in the Crow's Nest area, and in the Selkirk Range. In 1913, he was British Columbia's commissioner on the establishing of the interprovincial boundary between that province and Alberta.

In 1885 came the Riel rebellion, and throughout this he served as a lieutenant with the Dominion Land Surveyor Intelligence Corps. With the rebellion over, he again returned to survey practice with the Department of the Interior who trained him in photo-topographical surveying. This specialized type of surveying was to claim much of his later years.

Making Their Mark in High Prairie

"Making Their Mark: The land surveyor's role in the peaceful and orderly development of Alberta" will be on display at the High Prairie museum from April 2 to June 23, 2010.

It is a wonderful exhibit which combines text, photographs and artifacts to bring to life the experiences of the early Dominion Land Surveyors all the way up to what surveying is like today. It includes a full sized tent showing the tools and supplies of an early surveyor.

Land Surveyors & Realtors Working Together

Find out what a Real Property Report is, who prepares it and why it might be important in negotiating your new home in this television commercial by the Edmonton Real Estate Board.

Visit www.ereb.com/Media/TVSpots.html

For More Information

This newsletter is published by the Alberta Land Surveyors' Association as a public service. If you would like to receive a copy of *Boundaries*, please contact us at info@alsa.ab.ca or 1-800-665-ALSA.

Boundaries is also online at www.alsa.ab.ca/boundaries-news

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Land purchaser faces additional \$10,000 bill

“I would never buy another property without seeing a Real Property Report (RPR),” says Jim Smith of North-Central Alberta. “The property I bought is causing me a lot of problems.”

The new property purchaser is now facing surveying and legal fees that may exceed \$10,000, something that would not have occurred had he seen the RPR that had been prepared for the property. After buying the property, Smith learned that his garage extended five metres onto a road allowance and the house did not meet the set-back requirements as prescribed in the municipal land-use bylaws.

The real problem began in 1906 when the road allowance was created and a road was constructed. The road builders took the path of least resistance and built the road where it was

the RPR to the purchaser because the sale might not go through. Smith, the purchaser, was eager to buy and didn’t insist on seeing the document.

How will it be fixed? Fortunately, the three parties affected by the situation are working together to resolve the problem. The county is talking about transferring a portion of the old road allowance to Smith and the land owner north of the road is talking about transferring land to the county so a new road plan can be created where the road actually exists.

“I still would have bought the property,” says Smith. “But, I would have insisted in paying a lower price to cover the increased costs I am now facing.”

An RPR is a document prepared by a professional land surveyor. The diagram clearly shows all boundaries, building locations, easements, utility rights-of-way, and encroachments on or from other properties



easy to build—not on the road allowance but on the property north of the road allowance. Over the years, no one noticed and the house and garage were constructed on the property south of the road. Everyone assumed the road was properly located.

The Real Property Report, prepared by an Alberta Land Surveyor, clearly identified the location of the house, garage and road allowance. When the seller reviewed the RPR he saw the problems. He didn’t want to show

relative to property boundaries. Once the RPR is completed it is shown to the municipal authority to determine whether it meets the land use bylaw requirements. If it does not, arrangements can be made to fix the problems before the sale, or price adjustments can be made to pay for fixing the problem after the sale.

This is a true story. Names have been changed or omitted to protect privacy.

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