

# BOUNDARIES

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 3

MAY 2008

## Frequently Asked Questions

With spring in full bloom in most of the province, Albertans' thoughts turn to landscaping and building and renovations.



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.

The Alberta Land Surveyors' Association recommends that clients contact two or three land survey firms that specialize in the

**It is at this time that Albertans may need a land survey to help them with their do-it-yourself project or even sell their home.**

**Here is a list of some of the frequently asked questions at the Alberta Land Surveyors' Association office.**

*Q. How much does a survey cost?*

The cost of a survey can vary depending on the parcel's location and topography.

The Alberta Land Surveyors' Association

particular area of practice. That is, some firms specialize in oil & gas survey work while others specialize in residential real property reports.

Find out how much the firms would charge for the survey work. But don't select a firm on price only! Consider how quickly you need the survey done and other services that each land survey firm might offer. Choose the one you feel most comfortable with.

*Q. Do I need a new real property report?*

The Real Property Report is a "snap shot" of the property on the date of the survey. Changes are often made to improvements on a property or adjoining properties. These may be new or modified fences, decks, driveways, garages or other features. Only an updated Real Property Report can show their location relative to property boundaries. Changes to your title will also be shown.

*Q. Can a land surveyor come on to my land?*

The Surveys Act allows a surveyor and the surveyor's authorized assistants, using reasonable care, to pass over, measure along and ascertain the bearings of any line or boundary, and for those purposes pass over or through the land of any person but the surveyor is liable for any damage caused.

## For More Information

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The Association encourages land surveyors and their assistants to contact the landowner when they are about to come on to the property. If the landowner is not present, the Alberta Land Surveyors' Association makes "door-knocker" cards available to its members to let the landowner know that a survey crew was onsite.

*Q. Is the land surveyor qualified?*

Only Alberta Land Surveyors are authorized to define boundaries or improvements (such as houses, fences, decks, sheds) relative to boundaries.

Landowners are strongly encouraged to ensure that anyone representing himself or herself is properly licensed with the Alberta Land Surveyors' Association. Landowners can call 1-800-665-2572 or go online to [www.alsa.ab.ca/find.asp](http://www.alsa.ab.ca/find.asp).

*Q. What does the property corner look like?*

When a boundary is determined, an Alberta Land Surveyor typically inserts a one metre-long metal pin at the exact intersection of property lines. The location of these pins is marked on survey plans registered at Land

Titles. These pins or markers are called survey evidence.

In historic times, other means were used instead of metal pins — wooden posts, piles of rocks, or mounds of dirt. Over time, many of these markings have disappeared. When these boundaries have to be re-established, extensive research must be undertaken including measurements from the nearest survey marker.

Retain the services of an Alberta Land Surveyor if you are trying to determine the location of your boundaries. Alberta Land Surveyors have the education and experience to properly evaluate survey evidence.

Sometimes, landowners have mistaken rebar for a survey monument or vice versa.

*Q. Where can I build my fence?*

The real property report should not be used to establish boundaries due to the risk of misinterpretation or measurement error by the user.

Landowners may want to get out a tape



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measure and mark off the distance shown on their real property report. However, factors such as slope, the starting point of where you are measuring, the angle coming off the starting point and even the accuracy of the tape measure can all have a significant impact when trying to determine where the fence should be located.

Retain the services of an Alberta Land Surveyor to have your property line accurately located. This type of survey is often called a fence-line survey and an Alberta Land Surveyor will locate your boundary and physically mark the boundary on the ground so you know where you can build your fence.

*Q. Can I use my GPS to find my property corners?*

GPS, or global positioning system, is a sophisticated hi-tech measuring device. But it is still just a measuring device.

The Alberta Land Surveyor has the education and experience to be able to determine where to measure from and where to measure to.

The intent of any Alberta Land Surveyor when re-establishing property lines is to re-create what the original surveyor did. In many cases, the original surveyor did not have GPS.

## **In the News around the World**

### [Before Home Buying Check Survey for Boundaries](#)

Move Smartly, Canada – 26 May 2008

### [Team of experts can help with home purchase](#)

Calgary Herald, Canada - 15 May 2008

### [Koa logger fighting state over claims he illegally harvested trees](#)

Honolulu Advertiser, HI - 26 May 2008

### [2.6m hectares still to be surveyed](#)

The Herald Eastern Cape, South Africa – 26 May 2008

## **Free Brochures**

*“The Real Property Report,” “Understanding Easements and Rights of Way,” “Alberta’s Subdivision Process,” and “I destroyed survey evidence—a practical guide to survey markers for the homeowner,*

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*handyman and contractor*” are free brochures available from the ALSA and can be ordered by visiting our website, [www.alsa.ab.ca](http://www.alsa.ab.ca)

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**David Thompson  
Brigade on the Move**

Alberta Land Surveyors have been taking part in the David Thompson Brigade this spring as the biggest event of the David Thompson Bicentennial Celebration from 2007 to 2011.

The 2008 David Thompson Brigade started off in Rocky Mountain House, Alberta on May 10 under snowy/rainy conditions.

On May 13, the Brigade pulled into Devon under warm sunny skies and the Town of Devon put on a wonderful display that evening to commemorate one of Canada's greatest surveyors and explorers.

The next morning, the Brigade made a short stop in Edmonton. They landed right on time at 10:00 a.m. and were greeted by about 150 onlookers and media. There was an obligatory toast to the King and a local school choir singing several songs to mark the occasion. The voyageurs drank some tea and had a biscuit and were off again 45 minutes later making their way to Fort Saskatchewan that evening.

Les Frederick of the Alberta Land Surveyors' Association spoke to a group of schoolchildren in Devon to explain not only the importance of David Thompson to Canada as a surveyor but also the role that the surveyors who followed Thompson's footsteps had in the settling of the West.

In her book, *Laying Down the Lines*, author Judy Larmour wrote, "the HBC informed Thompson that any information that 'can tend to form a good Survey and Map of the Country Inland [sic] will always be particularly acceptable to us.' The company presented him with a compass, thermometer and a case of instruments.... David Thompson's method of surveying was based on what he learned from Philip Turnor: the determination of longitude through lunar observation. With three hours and a telescope in hand, he could establish Greenwich time by observing the moment of eclipse of one of the moon's of Jupiter.... By all accounts, the location of Thompson's astronomical observation was usually within a mile or so of the true location.

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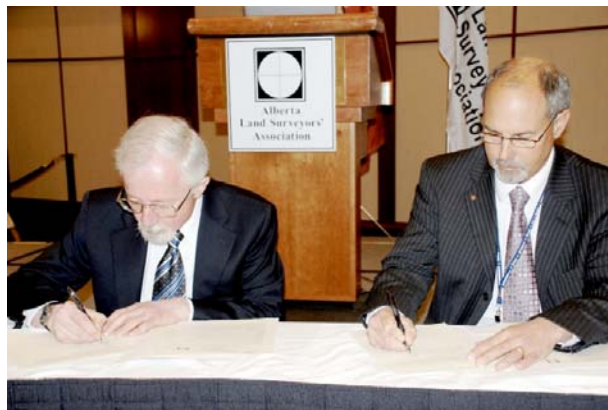
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## Land Surveyors Sign Historic Agreements

“Professional land surveyors can now easily move back and forth across the border between Alberta and British Columbia, as they carry out their work, thanks to an historic labour mobility agreement,” said President Ron Hall at the Alberta Land Surveyors’ Association’s 99<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting.

The Alberta Land Surveyors’ Association (ALSA) and the Association of British Columbia Land Surveyors (ABCLS) signed the agreement recognizing the benefit to professionals and the public in both provinces. The public and industry will benefit from a significantly larger pool of land surveying companies and land surveyors.



“The agreement still requires land surveyors wishing to practice in another province to pass an examination related to Alberta or British Columbia specific-legislation. Once land surveyors have passed the examinations they will be eligible to practice their profession in each province,” adds Hall.

“This agreement between our two associations is in keeping with the spirit of the Trade Investment & Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA), signed by the two provincial governments on April 28, 2006. The land surveyor agreement between the two provinces is one of the first signed by professional regulatory organizations as part of TILMA. Our goal is to reach similar agreements with other land surveying associations in Canada,” concludes Hall.

A university degree or equivalent, a minimum of two years of articling, and the successful completion of four professional exams and three project reports are the current requirements for students to earn their Alberta Land Surveyor commission.

The Alberta Land Surveyors’ Association also signed a memorandum of understanding with the Alberta Society of Surveying and Mapping Technologies (ASSMT). One of the purposes of the understanding is to create a formal and industry-wide structure for career development and formal advancement to the senior technologist level.

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