

Celebrating Surveyor's Week in Texas

Webster defines "party" as: (1) a social gathering for pleasure; (2) a group of people organized to advance its political principles; and (3) a group of people participating in a common activity. During the week of Feb. 16th – 22nd, all three definitions apply to the field of surveying, as the Lone Star State recognizes Surveyors' Week in Texas.



"Bo Varnedoe, party chief for SurveySA, accurately measures the 'new fashioned' way of surveying."

Any company who has a person in charge of parties can't be bad to work for. That's right – a survey crew with a party

chief is a standard sight in the surveying field. Land surveying is known as the world's second oldest profession, but almost as fun as the oldest. The party chief (as well as other members of the party) get to do everything from taking pictures to scoping the land, tagging trees, watching satellites, forecasting weather and much more, while enjoying the best and the worst that Mother Nature has to offer every day of the year.

Some of history's best known surveyors include George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, William Clark of the team of Lewis & Clark, and Henry Thoreau, to name a few. Surveying is essentially the art and science of measuring and mapping land and it dates all the way back to ancient Egypt and Babylonia. In the United States, surveying dates back to the days of pioneers settling and staking their claims for land ownership. As they settled, accurate measurements were necessary to clearly define boundaries and clarify actual property ownership.

Unlike most states, Texas does not have an organized, easily understood public land system. In the early days of Texas settlement, land was granted under four different jurisdictions - Spain, Mexico, the Republic of Texas and the State of Texas. Each of these original granting entities had their own set of instructions for surveyors who worked for them. Therefore, it is important that any surveyor operating in Texas have a solid understanding of the history and law of original governing bodies and the subsequent retracement.



Keith Jimenez, R.P.L.S.

In order to determine where homeowners can put up fences, railroads can be built or skyscrapers can be erected, a surveyor has to have the right equipment. While most party chiefs say that their most important "tool" is their rodman (their assistant in the field), all those involved in surveying have traditionally relied on their strong math and history skills to help them accurately put pencil to paper. Today, surveyors use the Global Positioning System (GPS) for precise calculations and positioning of points.

SurveySA is a survey company serving South Texas, where employees are en-

couraged to use the most modern technology available to complete each assignment, while still upholding the principles and practices of the pioneers of land surveying. At the helm of SurveySA is **Keith Jimenez**, a Registered Professional Land Surveyor (RPLS), certified in five states, including Texas. Keith follows in a long tradition of surveyors, including his father, **Ernest Jimenez**, a surveyor for 40 years, and his uncle, **Amil Baker, Baker Engineering**, an active member of **Texas Society of Professional Surveyors**.

It is difficult to find an area in Texas with which Jimenez and his family members and crews don't have at least some familiarity.

"I have surveyed or supervised thousands of surveys in counties all over Texas, from Beaumont to El Paso, from the Rio Grande Valley to the Hill Country," Keith said. "Our company is dedicated to delivering accurate surveying and related services in a timely manner to land development and the construction industries."

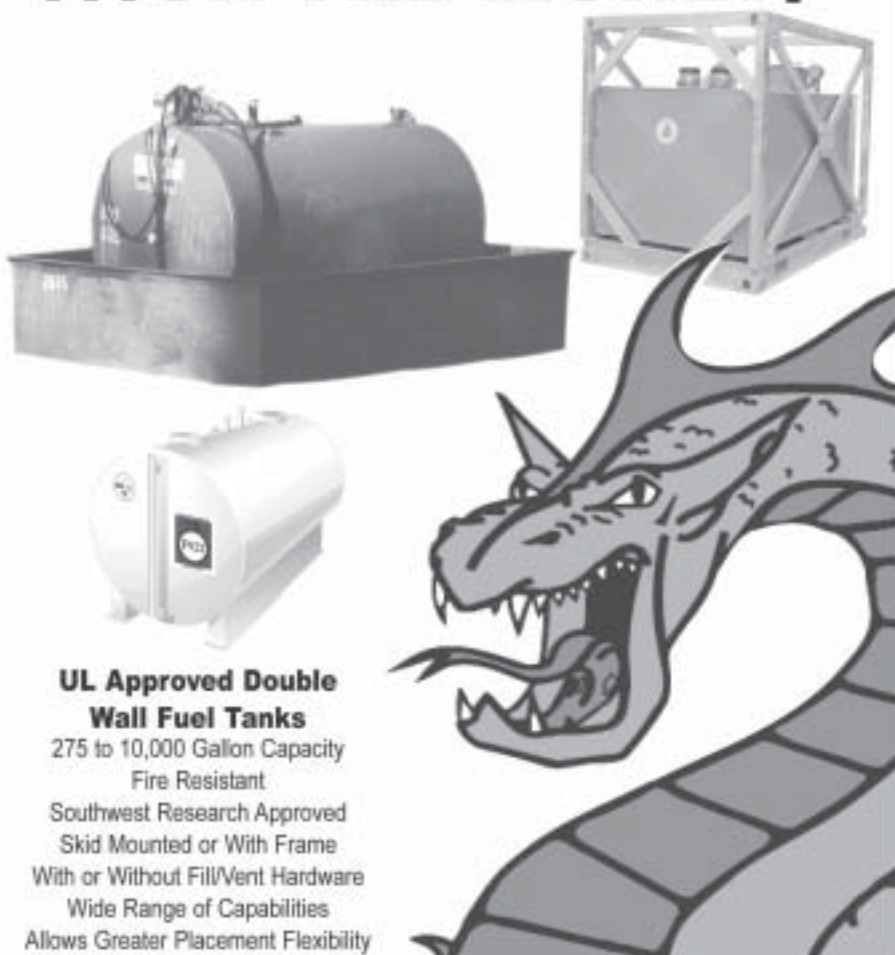
Nearly 200 years after Lewis and Clark's famous journey, surveyors are still getting it right. To recognize the accomplishments of professionals in this very exacting profession, **Governor Rick Perry** is designating the week of February 16-22, 2003 as Surveyors Week in Texas. You can join the party, along with everyone at *San Antonio Construction News*, by celebrating the expertise and skill of professional land surveyors, as well as their historic contributions to the construction industry.



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Immigration issues impact hiring

Attorney **Bob Kilgore, Cox & Smith, Inc.**, is a specialist in the legal aspects of labor-related issues and serves as Chapter Labor Counsel for the **South Texas Chapter – Associated Builders and Contractors**.

After reviewing one of his reports regarding class action suits filed against employers for hiring illegal aliens, *San Antonio Construction News* contacted Bob to find out how construction-related companies in South Texas are impacted by immigration issues.

SACN: Bob, define the information every employer should have to verify an employee, or prospective employee, is authorized to work in the U.S.

BK: Form I-9 should be filled out for all employees. The form has a checklist of acceptable documents. The types of documents that are required are those that establish identity and lawfulness of working in the United States. For example, a U.S. passport satisfies both requirements because it has a picture and U.S. citizens are lawfully entitled to work in the U.S. More often, two documents are used, like a driver's license and a social security card.

SACN: If an illegal alien from a 3rd party team of workers is apprehended by immigration authorities on-the-job, does the liability fall to the GC, the subcontractor, or to the 3rd party (employ-

ment agency or smaller company)? Typically, who gets fined?

BK: Liability attaches to the employer. A third party can be liable if it is a joint employer. Very simply put, if you exercise the same level of control over the worker as you do your regular employees, you can be held liable.

SACN: In construction, there are times when a contractor has a small window of time in which to do a great deal of work. He needs more warm bodies, fast. How can he protect himself against the inadvertent hiring of an illegal alien?

BK: If it's your employee, insist on checking their verification documents. The law gives you three days to do this. You do not have to be a document expert, but you do need to make a good faith effort to review them. If the documents are not tendered in three days, terminate the employee for failure to provide requested records.

SACN: Are employers protected from assessed fines or charges if they carry Employment Practices Liability Insurance?

BK: Don't depend exclusively on insurance. Even if your policy covers claims, many policies exclude immigration violations from coverage. Those policies that do not exclude these claims have high deductibles.