

Chuck Salmon

UPDATE: Labour Mobility in the Land Surveying Profession



Recently, I attended an information session hosted by the Province of British Columbia.

The purpose was to enlighten the regulatory professions and trades on the latest information regarding labour mobility, as provided by the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT).

It was my pleasure to be joined by Susan Davis, President of The Society of Notaries Public. We caught up on the latest activities within our organizations and gathered a lot of good information on the labour mobility front.

The province made it very clear they do not intend to allow professions to have *legitimate objectives*. Legitimate objectives, as you may recall from my previous article [Winter 2008], are deemed obstacles to full labour mobility. Although some objectives may be permitted to exist on April 1, 2009, the goal is to remove them as soon as possible. Fortunately for the land surveying profession, that is not a major hurdle.

What was obvious through this information session is that professions need to work together across Canada, to ensure they provide up-to-date information regarding members who may be seeking to relocate to another province.

One item discussed was a standardized Certificate of Conduct that will allow a professional body to provide appropriate information to their sister organization in a different province.

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We refer to those bodies as the Home Association and Host Association.

- The Home Association is the professional body where the member is currently licensed.
- The Host Association is the professional body in the province where the member wishes to relocate.

For example, the Host Association would request that the Home Association provide a completed Certificate of Conduct on the relocating member. The certificate would provide information about

- the status of the member;
- any outstanding complaints being investigated against him or her;
- discipline inquiries about that person, current or in the past; and
- any restrictions on the surveyor's licence.

That information complies with the AIT and the Home Association is permitted to provide it. The report may or may not affect any decision by the Host Association to accept an application.

The Canadian Council of Land Surveyors Coordinating Committee on Labour Mobility has been tossing around the concept of a Certificate of Conduct. We are all in agreement with the concept and are working toward finalizing a standard form that will work for all of us.

Sometimes, it can be challenging to achieve total agreement when 11 Associations are involved. I believe we are very close to setting a standardized form that will be acceptable to all and ready to be implemented as of April 1, 2009.

I have alluded twice in this article to the date April 1, 2009. Although there was some discussion about a phase-in period leading up to August 1, 2009, governments have determined the implementation date for the AIT is April 1.

Although a challenge for some bodies, that will not have major impact for the Association of BC Land Surveyors. With all the work we have undertaken through *TILMA*, the trade agreement between BC and Alberta, we believe we are ready to implement the same process for the AIT applicants.

Through our agreement with the Alberta Land Surveyors' Association, the *TILMA* process for labour mobility went into effect January 1, 2009. I am pleased to say that so far, one candidate has written the nonmaterial jurisdictional exam and has passed. Rich Nixon was sworn in at our AGM on February 25 and received his commission. By the time this article is published, more candidates likely will have written, passed, been sworn in, and deemed eligible to practise land surveying in BC.

Another initiative on which the Association of BC Land Surveyors is working is the development of an Online Exam to allow applicants to write the jurisdictional exam in a location suitable to the Host Association, to provide instant access to, and turnaround of, the results. This initiative is about 95 percent complete; we trust it will be

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in operation by the time this article is published. Once the concept has been proven, the OnLine Exam will be shared with Alberta and hopefully other Associations across the country.

Initially, I was concerned about the labour mobility initiatives and whether they would be seen as lowering the bar. I am now convinced this initiative will help provide more flexibility for land surveyors in their daily practices. A land surveyor commissioned in both BC and Alberta would be of major benefit to a company undertaking surveys in both provinces.

It would provide for a flexible work force, allowing them to move crews and land surveyors to areas where the need arises. Because we are currently experiencing a downturn in the economy, companies would be able to move staff in to assist crews in places like Fort St. John, for example, which has been experiencing a boom for a number of years and where surveying work is still backlogged.

I look forward to future developments and especially working with members across the country as we strive to develop a refined process for the labour mobility of our members. ▲

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