

**AD-300 Presents the New Manual of Surveying Instructions to the Bureau of
Land Management Executive Leadership Team**

April 6, 2010

The issuance of a new edition of the Manual of Surveying Instructions (Manual) has always been a major event in the history of the Public Lands Survey System (PLSS) and in the management of Federal lands. The Manual is not just a document about the Federal Government and its land; it is just as much a document about the protection of the rights of our neighbors and adjoining. Those landowners could be other government entities or private citizens whose rights are directly impacted by our survey policies and procedures. Further, millions of acres of private land, with no Federal interests at all are impacted by the Manual.

Both the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the General Land Office (GLO) before us, has a rich history of cultural, legal, and technological advances that helped to shape this nation.

The 2009 edition of the Manual is a major accomplishment, and yet is also just another page in the history of the PLSS and in the legacy we protect. The BLM has involved hundreds of subject matter experts. We have also spent thousands of hours discussing and debating the policies and issues. We assessed hundreds of our existing Instruction Memorandums, and analyzed virtually every word in previous Manuals and relevant legislation. We have stayed the course and developed a truly remarkable document. While in a project of this size and scope we will always find things we might not agree with completely, we can all be proud of what has been accomplished.

This book, this guidance, these instructions, is considered the “bible of surveying for the United States” and has a long and colorful history for Federal surveyors and the private sector. The tradition continues with this 2009 edition.

The debate on the design of the PLSS energized the Original Thirteen States as it was the basic design for cooperation, economic growth, and expansion of our country. The design was a key to democracy for the common man.

The term Jeffersonian Democracy was based upon land ownership.

George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln believed in this design and as surveyors understood the science, the art, the law, and the methods of surveying.

The surveying Presidents created, implemented and had practical experience in our country's foundation of land tenure, the Public Land Survey System.

We are moving forward into a new era with the 2009 Manual. The BLM can be extremely proud of this edition.

We had a 36-year time period between the publication of the last Manual and the 2009 edition of the Manual. This period of time is a career for many of us. It is also a time where we have had great change in our society and the surveying profession. However, the founding principles of surveying are unchangeable, consistent, and constant as the founders of the United States designed and expected.

Again a lot has changed since the initial design and as Federal surveyors we saw the need to update the Manual to keep pace with the science, the art, the law, and the contemporary methods of surveying.

Many have worked on this Manual. These include the BLM State Office Cadastral Chiefs, Field and Office Chiefs, Geodesists, Riparian Boundary Specialists, Cartographers, Cartographic Technicians, Surveying Technicians and many others in the Cadastral Surveying BLM community who contributed to the Manual. Our sister Agencies and private sector surveyors were also major providers and partners.

To list all the names would take considerable time and may leave someone out. However, there are some who need to be recognized for their outstanding work.

The Office of the Solicitor provided outstanding legal input and edits and the Office of Hearing and Appeals – Interior Board of Land Appeals also provided great input on administrative case law.

The professional editors cleaned and consecrated the hallowed language and meaning of the Manual into a modern and readable format.

The BLM National Operations Center (NOC) used their Visual Information skills to move the Manual into the world of color, with a modern layout. They compiled the work from our contributors to make the Manual more enjoyable to read with more visual tools.

James A Simpson, a retired BLM cadastral surveyor, must be thanked and honored for contributing his work on water boundaries. Jim is a pillar of knowledge and his efforts were an inspiration to the development of this Manual.

The American Congress of Surveying and Mapping (ACSM) and the National Society of Professional Surveyors (NSPS) also deserve thanks for publishing and distributing the Manual for the private sector. ACSM and NSPS were instrumental in forging the private and public partnership of the Public Land Survey System Foundation (PLSSF).

Now that the Manual is launched, the BLM National Training Center (NTC) under the leadership of Dennis Moulard, Cadastral Training Coordinator, is busy preparing training for Federal surveyors and outreach materials for private surveyors.

Finally, all these efforts could not have come to fruition without the steady leadership of Don Buhler, BLM's Chief Cadastral Surveyor. Don's commitment to public service and interpersonal skills made this Manual a reality.

Please enjoy the new Manual and use it wisely in your work as BLM land managers and managers of Cadastral Surveyors.