

Survey Monument Restoration Program

Submitted by Gary Fraser, Examiner of Surveys

The Survey Monument Restoration Program began in 1998 as a co-operative agreement between the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM), the Association of Manitoba Land Surveyors (AMLS) and The Property Registry of the Department of Finance, to set guidelines and finance the re-establishment of survey outline monumentation. Survey outline monuments have a significant importance in the development of the Province. The survey outline monument infrastructure forms the base for all land holdings within the Province and provides a visual tool for owners to identify their property corners. The program has had success because of the benefits to and the co-operation between the parties. Since 1998, 170 towns, municipalities and villages have participated. A total 3,686 survey outline monuments have been

re-established at a cost of \$1.7 million. The three parties review the program guidelines annually. Copies of the guidelines and fee schedule can be obtained from AMM or the Examiner of Surveys Office (945-8789) or by e-mailing the Examiner of Surveys at gfraser@gov.mb.ca.

Municipalities under *The Surveys Act* have a commitment to protect survey monuments. Through the negotiated fee schedule and guidelines, the average cost to Municipalities to restore a lost or damaged outline monument is now less than \$240 per monument (the other half of the cost is paid for by the Property Registry). The fee allowed under *The Surveys Act* is \$1000 per monument.

Land Surveyors, besides what could be seen as a direct financial benefit, are able to provide their clients with fast economical

service, when the survey infrastructure is in place. The costs paid to the surveyors from the program are only the costs they incurred in the re-establishment of the survey outline monuments. A requirement of the program is that monument restoration is only done in connection with a request for a survey from a client. Given the research necessary and the overhead costs of survey crews when the outline monument is missing, the reimbursement to surveyors for re-establishing outline monuments often does not cover the costs. This can almost be categorized as a service.

The Property Registry is committed to the program. This year, the Registry has approved an increase in the funds available to Municipalities from \$150,000 to \$180,000. The funding, however, is dependant upon annual budget approval. The Land Titles system is based on the original surveys



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and the survey monuments that define the property boundaries. The Registry reaps the benefits of the program when the survey outline monuments are in place. They add security to the title and reduce the number of title disputes that require adjudication.

The major beneficiaries of the program are the citizens of Manitoba who are ensured quiet possession to their property and reasonable development cost. The survey monuments provide a visual tool for the easy recognition of property corners by owners. In the area of development, there are numerous projects from small fencing projects to large subdivisions that require the location of property boundaries in order to proceed. Having the survey infrastructure eliminates one of the hurdles in the development process and possibly a cost that may be prohibitive.

There are two major factors that affect the amount a municipality may have to pay out for survey monument restoration in any given year. The first is the status of the survey infrastructure. Estimates in 1998 indicated that a minimum of 30% of all survey outline monuments had been destroyed. The actual number varies from municipality to municipality. This percentage may not be reduced significantly unless protection programs are introduced. For instance, many survey monuments are destroyed during construction. A typical example is sidewalk renovation. Processes to ensuring existing survey monuments are protected prior to construction are more cost effective than replacing survey monuments after construction. Making this a consideration of any capital project may save money.

The second factor is development. Municipalities with a lot of development activity are

likely to experience high volumes of survey monument restoration. However, development should not be the cause of survey monument destruction or the cycle continues.

The most frequently asked question of the program is: *Are the survey monuments at the half-mile the responsibility of the municipality and are they covered under the program?* The answer to both is "Yes."

Basic Monument Restoration Guidelines

1. Where, in the course of survey project, a Manitoba Land Surveyor requires the use of a Survey Outline Monument that is missing or damaged, the surveyor will restore the outline monument and report the restoration to the Municipality and to the Property Registry
2. The Property Registry will examine the survey and the report and, once satisfied, will send a letter of approval to the municipality.
3. It is not necessary for a municipality to reimburse the Surveyor until the letter of approval is received from the Examiner of Surveys.
4. The municipality is responsible for paying for the cost of the monument restoration.
5. After payment is made to the surveyor, the municipality is to fax proof of payment to the Examiner of surveys at 204-948-2823. The municipality will be required to quote the Property Registry file Number from the Examiner of Surveys approval letter
6. The Municipality will then be reimbursed for the amount identified in the approval letter.
7. Municipalities will be notified when available funding drops below \$10,000. At that point, any further monument restoration will require pre-authorization by the municipality to proceed. Prior to authorizing a land surveyor to proceed, the municipality must contact the Examiner of Surveys to ensure that there are sufficient funds available. §



Partnership of Red River College, Assiniboine Community College, Manitoba Good Roads Association (MGRA)

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