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Suggestions for Increasing Society Membership

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(Abstract is on next page)

THE principal functions of the American Society of Photogrammetry are the advancement of photogrammetry through research, the free exchange of ideas, and the dissemination of technical knowledge to present and potential users of photogrammetric methods. To do an effective job of selling photogrammetry to workers in widely-diversified fields, we must continually recruit new

members while maintaining the active interest and support of our present enrollment.

We have not failed to make progress here, for corporate membership increased from 2,801 in 1955 to 3,362 in 1958. However, this increment has hardly kept pace with rising operating costs, and our activities are undoubtedly known to only a fraction of our potential audience. In June, 1958, the in-

coming president of the Society pointed out that, if memberships continue to level off, Society activities must be curtailed or greater revenue must be obtained.¹

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Assuming that no one wants to see a restriction of Society activities, the immediate alternative is to increase our income. There are at least 3 obvious ways to accomplish this:

- (1) Increase annual corporate membership dues.
- (2) Increase advertising rates in PHOTOGRAMMETRIC ENGINEERING.
- (3) Increase the number of Society members and subscriptions to PHOTOGRAMMETRIC ENGINEERING.

Apparently, few members are in favor of item 1, for it was announced last December

city administrative costs per member and per subscription, (2) lower the unit cost of the JOURNAL, and (3) increase the amount of advertising and make higher advertising rates feasible. And aside from this impersonal stretch of finances, we would derive the benefits of close association with a greater number of colleagues in our varied fields of interest.

Wanting more members is one thing; getting them is another. Here is one of several possible approaches, however:

- (1) Find out which professional groups comprise our present membership.
- (2) Conduct a mail canvass of persons in associated professional societies to advise them of A.S.P. membership advantages.
- (3) Keep present and new members active through new and diversified Society programs.

ABSTRACT: A growing technology such as photogrammetry needs a constant influx of new constituents, both young and old. Increasing membership means stimulation of greater interest in the development and application of photogrammetric techniques. Are we satisfied with our present "stabilized" membership, or do we want to continually add to our professional advocates? The author believes we should actively solicit new members and suggests possibilities for recruiting and holding them in the Society. Current members are invited to comment on this article and to submit supplemental or alternative suggestions to the Secretary-Treasurer's Office.

that a proposed increase in annual dues and JOURNAL subscription rates had been vetoed by the Board of Direction. The second proposal of increasing advertising rates would probably be met with equal disfavor. To justify such a rate increase, advertisers would rightfully expect to reach more potential consumers through an increased circulation of the JOURNAL. The present distribution of 5,700 copies should be raised to at least 10,000 before implementing this proposal.

The third choice of increasing corporate membership should have special appeal, for significant additions to our number would help to prevent future increases in annual dues. Solicitation of additional subscriptions to the JOURNAL is also financially sound, and highly advisable for a sizeable profit is currently realized at the annual subscription rate of \$6.00. The combined effect of promoting these two activities would (1) lower So-

LOCATING POTENTIAL MEMBERS

Assuming that our present membership largely includes persons devoting 75 per cent or more of their time to photogrammetric work, we must look to "part-time" photogrammetrists for the bulk of our new membership. This means contacting professional associates those primary fields of interest are engineering, geology, geography, cartography forestry, military photo interpretation, and so on.

The first step is to canvass our own corporate membership to see which professional fields are now represented in the Society.² This can be inexpensively done by enclosing a brief questionnaire with annual dues notices or mail ballots. Members should be asked to furnish information on (1) major fields of college work, (2) specialized training in photogrammetry, and (3) names of other profes-

¹ Address of John I. Davidson, Incoming President of the Society. PHOTOGRAMMETRIC ENGINEERING, 24: 508-509, June 1958.

² A partial compilation of this nature was reported in the December, 1958 issue of PHOTOGRAMMETRIC ENGINEERING, p. 750.

sional societies to which they belong.

Step 2 would be to contact members of other professional societies by mail. Most organizations have mechanized systems for addressing member correspondence. An efficient mail canvass would thus hinge upon borrowing addressograph plates for our envelopes. Where this is not possible, latest organizational directories could be used.

It is anyone's guess as to how many new memberships might be obtained by this method, but it may well depend on the degree of interest generated through letter contacts. For example, the Society of American Foresters currently has over 10,000 members. As well as can be determined from our own roster, we have about 100 to 150 foresters in the American Society of Photogrammetry. It does not seem unreasonable that we might add another 50 to 100 foresters to our ranks through a well-planned program of publicity. It is possible that we might enlist comparable numbers of geologists, geographers, engineers, and military personnel.

GETTING THE INTEREST OF POTENTIAL MEMBERS

To attract potential members, separate letters of invitation should be prepared for each professional group or field of specialization. For example, one letter might be sent to geographers, another to civil engineers, still another to foresters. Each would briefly outline general objectives of the Society, and follow up with specific reference to publications and current research underway by members in that particular field. As an added punch, it might be mentioned that our annual dues are among the lowest of any national professional society. A membership blank would be included, of course.

At present, student memberships at \$1.00 per year are heavily subsidized by the Society. These dues should be raised to about \$3.00 to more nearly defray the costs of Society service and for supplying each student with regular issues of PHOTOGRAMMETRIC ENGINEERING (subscribers pay \$6.00 for only the JOURNAL). At the same time, we should contact professors in schools of engineering, forestry, geology and geography to stimulate more interest in student membership. It would also be worthwhile to ascertain the proportion of students that become corporate members after graduation. As the future of this Society will largely rest upon men now being trained, we should strive to get them into the organization as early in their careers as possible.

HOLDING MEMBERSHIP INTEREST

To keep new members interested in the American Society of Photogrammetry, we need to inject more diversification into annual meetings and technical articles for PHOTOGRAMMETRIC ENGINEERING. While topographic applications of photogrammetry should not be minimized, it may be well to echo the pleas of our Editor for more articles on interpretation, and uses other than mapping and for elementary techniques of value to the "beginner" and occasional users of aerial photographs. We must cater much more to the interests of photo interpreters or face the possibility that they will eventually organize a separate professional society.

Annual meetings.—At annual meetings, perhaps one day could be devoted to specialized photogrammetric applications. For instance, five concurrent sessions might be held under subject matter divisions such as:

- a. Topographic mapping and aerial triangulation.
- b. Application of photo-geology for stratigraphic mapping.
- c. Interpretation of forests and natural vegetation.
- d. Use of aerial photographs for urban planning and tax assessment.
- e. Applications of aerial photographs for highway engineering.

Such sessions would supplement, not replace, the general technical papers on subjects of wider interest.

Another means of diversification would be to rotate the location of the annual meeting among such cities as Washington, St. Louis, Denver, and San Francisco. Or, an annual meeting might be held in Washington for those primarily interested in topographic mapping and instrumentation, with a semi-annual meeting in another city for members engaged in photo interpretation activities.

Benefits of continued membership.—Significant increases in our number should enable the Society to provide additional services to members. Within five years, it may be feasible to publish six issues of PHOTOGRAMMETRIC ENGINEERING each year, with the present YEARBOOK being absorbed into regular bimonthly issues. Corporate members who have been in good standing for five previous years could be furnished with 25 to 50 free reprints of articles they write for the JOURNAL. And membership lapel buttons might be awarded to those in good standing for ten consecutive years. It should also be possible

to arrange discounts for members wishing to purchase photogrammetric equipment from regular advertisers in the JOURNAL.

Training courses.—As a final suggestion, it might be feasible for the Society to annually sponsor one or more training courses, particularly for new members who currently make limited use of aerial photographs in their professional work. For a start, a one-week course in elementary photo interpretation might be well-received. Handling this work on a self-supporting basis would probably require use of public or university building facilities. Instructors would have to contribute their services for one or two days at no charge other than a basic subsistence allowance. A registration fee of \$25 to \$50 per

student would cover incidental costs of photographs and instructional materials. The idea might later be expanded to industry sponsorship of advanced courses on stereoplotting instruments, aerial triangulation, and so on. Of course, before a program of this scope is initiated, Society members must be polled to determine the extent of expected participation by both students and instructors.

In conclusion, it can be truthfully said that there is little new in the ideas presented here. The important point is, to get new members, we must seek them out and show them the advantages of Society affiliation. To keep them, we must expand the scope of our activities to the point where their interests are our interests.

Obituaries

WM. N. BROWN

One of the Founders of American Society of Photogrammetry. Pioneer in the Use of Photogrammetry in Mapping and Topographic Surveying

W. N. Brown, one of the founders of the American Society of Photogrammetry, died on January 12 of a heart attack. He was 85.

Born in Gainesville, Virginia, he chose the career of his great grandfather Jonathan Elliott, who was on the staff of L'Enfant when he laid out the city of Washington. He graduated as an engineer from the Virginia Military Institute in 1893 and shortly thereafter, began his career as a topographer with the USGS. In 1903 he made a mining report in Alaska. After this he engaged in mining in Mexico which was abandoned after a revolution.

After returning from Mexico in 1912, he founded his own Civil Engineering firm in Washington. During that period and until 1948, he worked on projects in 45 states as well as in Bermuda.

Mr. Brown was a pioneer in utilizing aerial photographs in engineering work. He first used aerial photography in 1924 in mapping the Elk Hills oil fields in California. In 1929-30, in mapping the upper Mississippi River, under contract for the Army Engineers, aerial photographs were projected to scale on plane-table sheets and used as a basis for locating all physical features. During the winter, soundings of the river were made through the ice. The sounding lines were located on individual pictures and tied into a nearby physical feature. These soundings

proved more accurate and economical than soundings made from boats.

In the summer of 1934 Mr. Brown, together with Mr. O. S. Reading, Mr. L. T. Eliel, Mr. M. S. Wright and others interested in the use or production of aerial photographs, discussed the formation of a national organization. As a result he and Mr. C. H. Birdseye and Mr. C. W. Collier signed the application for the charter of the American Society of Photogrammetry, on July 24, 1934. They anticipated a membership of not more than 50 or 100. Membership in the Society now totals several thousand.

In the late thirties Mr. Brown supervised tests in five states for the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, to demonstrate the accuracy with which farm tracts could be measured on aerial photographs. During the two World Wars he was engaged in laying out camp and plant sites for the military.

The American Society of Civil Engineers honored Mr. Brown by making him a life member. He was also a member of the American Military Engineers, the Washington Society of Engineers and the Cosmos Club. Mr. Brown traveled a great deal in his work.

One of his great pleasures was to follow the progress of his former employees and to have them drop in for a visit as they passed through Washington. He often said: "I enjoyed topographic surveying every day for 51