

Surveying 'Da Situation



By John D. Matonich, LS

John Matonich is President and CEO of Rowe Incorporated, and is a licensed surveyor in Michigan and Ohio. He currently serves as Chairman of the Joint Gov't Affairs Committee for ACSM, and Chairman of the Bylaws and Resolutions Committee of NSPS.

Time Out!

As I was driving home from the office the other day, I was thinking of how many different routes I've taken in an attempt to shave a few minutes off the trip. Like many others, I'm caught up in the race to save time. I believe a lot of folks are even obsessed with it. Truth is, I'm not sure all this hi-tech gadgetry is really saving us anything. I now carry a cell phone that not only makes and receives calls, but sends and receives e-mail, and keeps my calendar and contact list. It will even automatically synchronize with the computer in my office so everyone knows where the heck I'm going. I think it's my electronic security blanket, but I recall that life was a bit simpler when this stuff wasn't around.

Today our family, friends, co-workers and clients expect us be instantaneously available. Gone are the days when a client would call only to find out I was out of the office and not have a problem with a return call the next day. Today, they know I can be reached by cell so they expect a response right away, even if it can wait until tomorrow. I really think the majority of calls made by cell phones are frivolous. I was at our local school earlier this year to pick up my son and was watching the kids as they exited the building. Most had cell phones in their hands and were dialing as soon as they hit the door. The odd thing was I think most of them were calling their friends they had walked out with or spent most of the day with. Adults are just as bad. I played in a golf tournament recently with a guy who after every hole had to call one of his buddies who was playing in the same tournament just to see how he was scoring. I wondered if they maintained the same line of communication when they



got home to their respective significant others in the evening.

Electronic mail is just as bad. I must receive 40-60 e-mails a day. While many are important, I am really tired of the online drugstores, off-shore casinos, low mortgage rates and, of course, the hundreds of beautiful lonely housewives that simply must meet me. The computer experts at my office work hard to filter this garbage out, but it can sneak in the system every now and again.

I am trying to revolt against the electronic age just a little. I still like to write notes and send them via the U.S. mail. I let most of my cell phone calls go to voice mail and decide when to return

them later. I have always preferred to read the newspaper at home after dinner and work the crossword puzzle with a pencil. I don't have a portable DVD player to keep me company when I fly, but use the time to catch up on a good novel instead.

Every time some new technology hits the streets, I'll have to ask myself whether it will really make my life easier or just more complicated. I'd like to ponder on that a little more, but my cell phone is ringing, the e-mails are piling up, the fax machine is out of paper and the remote starter on my truck is acting up.

And that's the situation as I survey it *A*