Problem Solved.
Volume 2 / 2011

I hope you’re pleased to receive the second issue of our quarterly Cole e-Newsletter. Please read on to learn what’s new with us and how we can better serve you... our valued partners.

In this issue:
- Cole by Design
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Enjoy! We look forward to continuing to keep in touch.

Kevin E. Riggs, P.E.
President / CEO

Landscape Architecture *(land-skāp · är’ke-tekt’chur)* **n.** 1. the development of land for human use and enjoyment through effective placement of structures, vehicular and pedestrian ways, and plant material 2. the art of arranging or modifying the features of a landscape, environment, an urban area, etc., for aesthetic or practical reasons 3. designs by Cole that are seamlessly integrated into your project’s context creating a framework with both the natural and built environment.

No matter what the definition, it’s a big part of what we do here at Cole. Since our Landscape Architecture group was formed 6 years ago, as a company we have experienced a greater appreciation for authenticity of design. Merging Landscape Architecture with our existing disciplines of Planning, Civil Engineering, and Surveying was a natural fit. All four disciplines have a direct impact on a site’s constructability and combine similar elements of design, topography, accessibility, and natural and man-made resources. The influence of Landscape Architecture has allowed our engineers to be more forward thinking and consider the project’s holistic value. When all disciplines are working simultaneously, site work benefits from the contribution of similar design philosophies. With all related disciplines in-house, the finished project is far more likely to look intentional, reflecting our cohesive talents and dynamic working environment.

Our Landscape Architecture practice combines social responsibility with a strategic balance of function and design to provide the ultimate solution. At Streets of St. Charles, a 1.4 million sq. ft. mixed-use community, we created a better built environment through acute consideration for the integrity of water quality. Working with our Engineering group, we transformed a typical utilitarian detention basin into a unique amenity. As a key feature of the project, this central rain garden not only serves the bio retention needs of the development, it also brands the project and drives design. On all Cole projects, water quality issues are treated with deliberate design and a methodical plant palette to address both environmental factors and aesthetics. Our goal is to always establish a lasting, safe, and inspired environment with mutual benefits for owners, end users, and the surrounding community. Proper implementation and sustainability are an inherent part of every project. Our success lies not only in what we create, but how it endures.

As designers, we notice everything. Our clients appreciate how this awareness and strong sense of design propels successful site development. Design. It’s what we do.

Contact Jeremy Roach, RLA, Director of Planning + Landscape Architecture at jroach@colestl.com or 314-984-9887 to learn more.

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Getting Serious About ADA

In 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was established to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. This law was enacted to protect nearly 50 million disabled Americans. Since the original act was passed in 1990, the Department of Justice has amended the ADA by implementing specific standards for building and facility accessibility called ADAAG (American Disability Act Accessibility Guidelines) and PROWAG (Public Rights of Way Accessibility Guidelines). ADAAG standards were further specified this past March with greater consideration for engineering design and a closer look at public infrastructure. According to the law, public entities (Title II – State or Local Government with 50 or more Employees) were required to have completed an ADA self-evaluation and have a transition plan in place, and public accommodations (Title III – Commercial Facilities) were to remove architectural barriers and communication barriers nearly 20 years ago. Yet many still are non compliant.

Lawsuits generated by private plaintiffs pointedly towards non ADA compliance are on the rise as many private business owners are being targeted for not adhering to ADAAG. On the west coast, such lawsuits have reached epidemic proportions and continue to spread exposure. In addition, The Department of Justice has become a greater force in targeting both public and private entities. In 1999, the City of Sacramento was engaged in a lawsuit for not constructing ADA compliant sidewalks during road improvements. The judgment not only cost the City over $1 million in fines, they were also required to assign 20 percent of their annual budget for the next 30 years to improve sidewalks, crosswalks, and curb ramps. Correspondingly, under the current Obama administration, the Department of Justice has vastly increased efforts to examine any entity which offers goods and services to the general public for ADA compliance. Facilities that do not comply with current ADAAG risk a fine from Department of Justice, or worse yet, a lawsuit. Both are easily avoidable by developing an ADA Transition Plan (Title II) or by ensuring that your business is compliant with current ADAAG (Title III) standards.

Today the responsibility weighs heavily on engineers to ensure that all design projects, whether municipal or commercial, are ADA compliant. Designs must address both pedestrian and vehicular use while also reflecting context and aesthetics. The transportation environment must function effectively for a variety of users: children, elderly, those using strollers, wheelchairs, scooters, or the assistance of a cane or service animal. Unfortunately, not all governmental agencies have a plan in place to address all users. We see the most common mistake as improper construction of new public improvements considering all updated infrastructure must be accessible and usable by people who have any number or type of disability. Incorporating accessibility in improvement projects requires a methodical and comprehensive understanding from both a regulatory and usability perspective. At Cole, we are adept and interpreting ADAAG and solving compliance issues in cost effective ways. We can assist public agencies of any size with developing and implementing an ADA

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transition plan. Currently, we are working with St. Louis County Highways and Traffic on establishing their ADA Public Infrastructure Transition Plan. This project includes the inventory of approximately 800 miles of sidewalk and inspection of nearly 4000 intersections which includes 863 signalized intersections and approximately 15,000 curb ramps. We have assembled a well qualified and innovative team to conduct the ADA public inventory in the most cost effective manner utilizing a new and modern technology. We will inventory the sidewalk using a ULIP (Ultra Light Inertial Profiler) mounted on a Segway. This method can measure approximately 20 miles of sidewalk per day while the standard practice of using a smart level measures only 2 miles per day. Likewise, with a smart level, the slope is only measured where the instrument is laid. While driving the Segway with a ULIP mounted, the slope is measured constantly.

We have also inspected numerous commercial properties for ADA compliance. For these clients, we perform an analysis to determine if the site complies with current ADAAG requirements and produce a report which highlights any ADA compliance issues, describes methods to make the facilities accessible, and provides a schedule and cost estimation for completing the access modifications.

Regardless of the reason; ignorance of the law, a non willingness to spend the money to upgrade facilities, or in the case of governmental agencies, it may not be desirable to spend money on projects that do not directly appeal to the general public such as road or sidewalk improvements — non compliance today is unacceptable. Conducting a thorough self evaluation is a necessary next step. Developing a transition plan (public entities) or ensuring that your site complies with the latest ADAAG requirements (commercial clients) could not only prevent future costly lawsuits or fines from the Department of Justice, it’s also the right thing to do.

For any questions on this issue, please contact Tim Baker, P.E., at tbaker@colesl.com / 636-978-7508 or Mike Vonderheide, P.E., at mvonderheide@colesl.com / 314-984-9887.

The Geospatial Evolution

In 1983, Fox & Cole was credited as the third engineering firm in the nation to take “computers” to the field. The newly developed OMNI 1 electronic surveying instrument more than doubled overall productivity of our survey crews. The point of investing in the latest technology and newest equipment was the same back in 1983 as it is today at Cole — to perform more work at greater value without increased cost to our clients.

Prior to 1983, survey equipment hadn’t shown much promise of upgrade for nearly 40 years. After the breakthrough of the OMNI 1 total station, survey equipment continued to steadily evolve. We made a commitment to parallel this evolution and remain on the cutting edge of technology with such sophisticated equipment today as the Robotic Station. These stations not only enhance our manpower in the field, they also contribute to accuracy and safety. The Robotic stations also allow our Crew Chief more time to spend training field staff; another benefit to our clients.

As we continue to advance our thinking and embrace technology, we have challenged ourselves to now keep pace ahead of this evolution. We are taking our survey applications and data collection methods to the next level. Our use of geospatial technology is the latest triumph in providing top level service to our clients with

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the most progressive technology available. We combine mapping grade GPS units with GIS (Geographical Information Systems) to more accurately gather, store, process, and deliver geographic information. In turn, we can now combine the geographic datasets with spatial software to conduct advanced analysis. Once again, what this means for you is efficiency in accelerating your project, greater accuracy with your data, time savings, and ultimately, cost savings.

GIS technology provides the tools for creating, visualizing, and interpreting the data associated with developing and managing utility and infrastructure projects. The use of GIS streamlines the collection, tracking, and real-time analysis of geographic project data. We have the ability to create electronic maps that can be leveraged to identify priority areas, reveal patterns, track maintenance or construction schedules, and conduct what-if scenarios which will drive the most informed decisions in land use and development. With this GIS database, we can assist you with spatial analysis, overlay data, real estate and professional property data, as well as the integration of other systems and solutions.

Here at Cole, you’re already in the capable hands of a thorough, efficient and responsive survey staff…some of the most experienced in the industry. The benefits are clear when this is combined with the commitment to make our data collection methods more intuitive and powerful, along with our in-house software development capabilities and desire to be a leader in the GIS arena. In next quarter's newsletter, we'll share greater detail about our GIS work.

Announcements

- The Cole website is officially under renovation. Our old site is no longer accessible. We apologize for any inconvenience, but encourage you to visit our landing page for a sneak peak at the new design – colestl.com
- Cole has joined ULI North Texas, TREC Dallas, CREW Dallas, and is involved in the Prosper, Frisco, and McKinney Chambers of Commerce in Texas. We look forward to seeing you at upcoming events.
- As always, we would like your feedback and invite your questions. Let us know what interests you!

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