

Great Basin College Land Surveying/Geomatics Program Graduates



Troy Hicks

Troy Hicks (Spring 2009) began his studies in the GBC Land Surveying/Geomatics Program living in the Reno area, and had made substantial progress toward the four year degree, when he and his family moved to Alaska. Due to the fact that our Land Surveying/Geomatics Program is online, he was able to complete his studies, and graduate. Troy used the Capstone Project to investigate and learn Alaska Boundary Laws under the mentorship of a land surveyor licensed in Alaska. I heard that the state of Nevada was going to be requiring a bachelor's degree specifically in Land Surveying as part of their licensing requirements for Professional Land Surveying. To satisfy the requirement a college program had to be put in place. What I heard motivated me to justify taking the time to get the formal education, I already felt like I needed, and that I really wanted. So I looked into it and found Great Basin College. Back then I lived in Reno and Great Basin College is in Elko. So I was a bit concerned about how I would be able to do the classes. They were offering remote televised classes (Interactive Video) and I tried it out and that worked very well. And there were some lab (field work) requirements for some of the early classes that required local land surveyors to take time to come help out with on the weekends. That also worked out well. They would bring over some of their equipment and help us do our lab work for the classes. It was very beneficial to have different people teach us their methods and experiences. I expected the classes to finally answer some of my questions and give me a much fuller understanding of various aspects of the profession. To that end I was not at all let down. Frankly, I plan to take a few of the classes again under audit status, particularly Boundary Surveying and Public Lands. One benefit from the education there at Great Basin College is that I can confidently prove to prospective employers that I have the knowledge they are looking for. Aside from being employable, the benefits of the education are realized in every day practice. I am very comfortable doing any type of survey field work, writing legal descriptions, computing traverse adjustments, organizing field work, reducing GPS measurements, advising field crews on how to utilize the equipment, advising clients regarding boundary issues, preparing survey plats, designing subdivisions, mapping in various datums and projections, and now in project management. Before I finished the degree program I found myself needing to move my family to Alaska. So I timed the move to coincide with the GBC Land Surveying/Geomatics Program completely moving to an Online Program. After moving I did not miss a beat and was registered for another semester and finished the remaining classes by utilizing the Internet via a web browser while at home in Alaska. Great Basin College had made the survey classes available through the Internet while maintaining the same standard as the live classroom. I was able to complete the degree and graduate, all while living in Alaska. Since then I have gone on to working for RCH Surveying in Fairbanks, Alaska, as a project manager. I finally have applied for registration as a

Professional Land Surveyor. I will be sitting for the final exams either this year or next depending on replies to letters I sent out. I plan to get more involved with the local chapter of the Alaska Society of Professional Land Surveyors. One area I plan to promote is the benefits of formal education and how it shapes the profession and serves the public.