

Nevada State Board of Landscape Architecture's Accomplishments

By Vern L. Krahn, Board President

Approximately eight and a half years ago, I became a member of the Nevada State Board of Landscape Architecture. During that time, I have had the honor and privilege to work with a number of great professionals. These individuals have given of their wisdom and have spent time away from their families and businesses to protect the public's health, safety and welfare and change the profession of Landscape Architecture in Nevada. In looking back, this is even more amazing when one considers the accomplishments of the Nevada State Board of Landscape Architecture over the past ten years. To help put this into perspective, approximately ten years ago the Board:

1. Was operating under legislative authority granted as a part of its original enabling legislation and had no adopted regulations. The enabling legislation was passed by the legislature in 1975. It allowed for the licensure and regulation of Landscape Architects in Nevada and gave the Board authority to be self sufficient with its own budget.
2. Was trying to improve its relationship with the other Nevada professional design boards and the State Contractor's Board by actively seeking membership on the Nevada Construction Industries Relation Committee and requesting representation in the *Blue Book*. This ad-hoc committee of state boards was responsible for developing and publishing the *Blue Book* which assists building officials and the public to understand how state laws affected the construction industry in Nevada.
3. Had only a few years before made the decision to require all individuals seeking licensure in this state to take the Nevada Specific Examination. This examination is a complimentary section to the Landscape Architect Registration Examination (LARE) and was required as another way to protect the health, safety and welfare of the state residents.
4. Was dealing with ways to increase the financial stability of our organization. The enabling legislation had placed fee caps on what could be charged for Board services. As a result, the expenses for the Board to provide basic services to our registrants and examination candidates in the early 1990's were starting to drain the Boards financial reserves.
5. Was starting to develop an enforcement plan and investigative program to regulate Landscape Architects in Nevada. The challenge was that the enabling legislation provided very little enforcement powers over our registrants and granted no civil authority to regulate individuals practicing Landscape Architecture without a license.
6. Was limited in the methods and means the Board could regularly communicate and receive constructive comments back from its registrants.
7. Had just started discussing with its registrants and educators throughout the State ways to encourage university trained graduates to seek careers in Landscape Architecture. Along with encouraging entry into the Landscape Architecture profession, we wanted to encourage professional advancement within the ranks of the registered Landscape Architects. This was necessary to assure the Board that all practicing registrants were protecting the public's health, safety, and welfare.

During the last ten years, major changes have occurred regarding the Board's daily operation and the impact it

has had on the practice of Landscape Architecture in Nevada. These positive changes can be illustrated with the Board's:

1. Successful legislative efforts in 1995 and 2001 in updating our licensing law to provide the same, if not greater, legislative authority as other Nevada professional design boards. Also, our new legislation changed how the Landscape Architectural profession was being regulated and practiced in the State and enhanced the Board's ability to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.
2. Active membership in the Nevada Construction Industries Relation Committee. Since becoming a member, this partnership with the other state professional design boards has resulted in our representation beginning with the 1995 edition of the *Blue Book*. Our profession is still being represented in this publication even today, with the development of the new 2002 *Blue Book*. This publication has received state wide and national recognition for demonstrating how different design professions can address various overlapping issues and inform the public on the roles and responsibilities of design professionals.
3. Continued administration of the Nevada Specific Examination twice a year (June and December). The Board is continually seeking ways to upgrade the examination with new plant material identification photographs and develop new examination questions.
4. The ability to effectively budget and financially develop a dependable cash flow, cover examination and enforcement expenses, set funds aside for future expenditures and provide a fair and equitable fee structure for our registrants and new applicants.
5. We are strongly committed to be actively engaged in developing an enforcement presence throughout the state. After passage of the 1995 legislation, the Board developed regulations and enforcement procedures to guide our investigative efforts while protecting the rights of any acquiesced registrants. To improve our investigative efforts this past year, the Board created an enforcement task force. This task force includes a Board member, the Board's Executive Director, a representative from the Nevada Attorney General's Office, and two part time complaint individuals (one north / one south) that do follow up research for the Board on many complaints. We regularly share information on enforcement cases, when appropriate, with other state boards to provide better protection of the public.
6. Improvement in communication with its registrants and new applicants. The Board has sponsored workshops where we received comments and solicited support for our 2001 legislation package and are currently doing the same for developing the Nevada Administrative Code. Our new Executive Director has worked with the State of Nevada to develop and bring on line an award winning website that allows our registrants to have current information on Board activities. You can reach the Board's website by going on line at nsbla.state.nv.us
7. Our 2001 legislation provided for the establishment of a Landscape Architect in Training program to encourage the entry of young professionals into the Landscape Architecture profession. The legislation also included enabling language for the Board to require continuing education for our registrants. This was sought as a way to encourage professional advancement and to be sure that practicing Landscape Architects would have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to protect the public's health, safety, and welfare.

As you can see, your Nevada State Board of Landscape Architecture has been actively working to improve the profession of Landscape Architecture while regulating the profession to insure Nevada's Landscape Architects are practicing in ways that protect the public's health, safety, and welfare.

It has been my privilege to serve three terms on the Board. It has been an exciting time in the history of Landscape Architecture in Nevada. I will be leaving the Board knowing that it is in the capable hands of professionals who are committed to continuing what was started over ten years ago by many dedicated and forward thinking individuals.