

ILMF 2014: Global Platform for Lidar Community



The annual International LiDAR Mapping Forum (ILMF), held from 17-19 February in Denver, USA, attracted Lidar professionals from 30 countries who attended to learn about the latest advances in technology and hear about industry changes and developments first-hand from industry experts. The three-day conference and exhibition was focused on airborne, terrestrial and bathymetric Lidar used to support transport, urban modelling, coastal zone mapping, utility asset management, 3D visualisation and GIS applications.

ILMF 2014 included a technical programme of 60 technical papers, technical workshops and ASPRS "Hot Topics" sessions, as well as an exhibition of more than 50 organisations showcasing the newest technologies and services for the Lidar market, some of which was launched at ILMF. Additionally, new

research coming out of academic institutions was on display in the new university pavilion. Mobile mapping rigs were also available for demonstrating the latest in mobile data capture.

The programme provided Lidar professionals an excellent chance to learn about data capture systems, data fusion/classification and processing techniques, and the increasing integration of key technologies, said Lisa Murray, ILMF director.

Lidar certification

ILMF opened Monday morning 17 February with ASPRS (American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing) "Hot Topics" sessions. After an introduction by Lewis Graham, president and CTO of GeoCue Corporation, Dr. Michael Hauck, the new executive director of ASPRS, delivered a presentation on the future of Lidar, titled "From Galileo to Radiohead and Beyond..." In it, he posed the idea of certification for Lidar professionals. A poll of the audience showed overwhelming support for the idea. Dr Hauck's presentation was followed by two additional "Hot Topics" presentations and a Q&A session.

That afternoon, Alastair MacDonald, ILMF advisory board member and managing director of TMS International welcomed delegates and kicked off the ILMF programming. The keynote featured Zoller Fröhlich's Sven Kurz and Euclideon's CEO Bruce Dell, who spoke about new technologies and their ability to open new business opportunities for the scanning industry.

Game-changing technologies

Following the keynote, Lidar experts participated in a Plenary Panel Discussion led by Mr MacDonald. Participants were Lewis Graham, GeoCue; Amar Nayegandhi, Dewberry; Matt Bethel, Merrick & Co.; Roy Nelson, Ball Aerospace; and Leyton Hobbs, Woolpert. The discussion covered game-changing technologies, including flash mode Lidar and small Unmanned Aerial Systems (sUAS).

ILMF programming then continued with break-out sessions and technical workshops that ran through Thursday 19 February. ILMF tracks were Data Acquisition, Coastal Zone & Bathymetric Lidar, Recent Projects, Recent Projects/Emergency Response, Recent Projects/Challenging Environments, Forestry, GIS/Data Handling/Point Clouds, and Mobile mapping.

Good stewards

2014 was the first year ILMF was organised by SPAR Point Group, which is owned by Diversified Communications, a global media company based in Portland, Maine, USA. ILMF was acquired by SPAR Point Group in 2013. Their goal was to serve as good stewards of ILMF, which Versha Carter and her team ran exceptionally well for many years, said Ms. Murray. Based on feedback about this year's event, the organisation done just that.

Ms Murray said that her team will continue to work with key members of the Lidar community to shape the event as the market evolves and grows. With the recent report by MarketsandMarkets that the global Lidar market will grow by more than 15% annually over the next five years to reach USD551.3 million by 2018, chances are abundant for those in the market, said Ms Murray.

The next edition of International Lidar Mapping Forum will take place from 23-25 February 2015, again in Denver.

