



## Editorial

>> Marc Cheves, PS

# THE American Surveyor

A FOOT IN THE PAST... AN EYE TO THE FUTURE

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**PUBLISHER** Allen E. Cheves  
allen.cheves@chevesmedia.com

**EDITOR** Marc S. Cheves, PS  
marc.cheves@chevesmedia.com

**ASSOCIATE EDITOR** Joel Leininger, PS  
**ASSISTANT EDITOR** Jacalyn Cheves  
**ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER** Jason Metsa

### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

|                              |                          |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Joe Betit, PS                | Jerry Penry, PS          |
| Shawn Billings, PS           | Al Pepling, PS           |
| J. Anthony Cavell, PS        | Walt Robillard, Esq., PS |
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| Dan Martin                   | Robert Young, PS         |
| John Matonich, PS            | Rj Zimmer, PS            |

The staff and contributing writers may be reached via the online Message Center at [amerisurv.com](http://amerisurv.com)

**GRAPHIC DESIGN** LTD Creative, LLC

**WEBMASTER** Joel Cheves

**AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT** Edward Duff

**ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE** Richard Bremer

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# The Survey Summit

**T**he Esri/ACSM Survey Summit was excellent as always. Attendance was down, but attendees came away with more ways to improve their work processes. **Brent Jones** made opening remarks and listed the challenges facing the mapping industry: less mapping, faster delivery, specialized geospatial apps, and managing vast amounts of data. As in years past, cloud computing was a big item on the agenda. Says Jones, "Cloud computing is changing everything, both with data and processing."

**Curt Sumner**, executive director of NSPS, implored the audience to support the NSPS initiative to represent all surveyors, not just licensees. As always with the political process, numbers are needed to get attention from government agencies, NCEES and educational accreditation. **Rich Vanzo** spoke about the NSPS Student Competition and called for the kind of support ASCE receives for its Concrete Canoe Competition.

**Don Buhler** from BLM discussed the 200th anniversary of the GLO, the 150th anniversary of the Homestead Act, and the upcoming GLO Symposium in Boulder. **Ronnie Taylor** from NGS discussed the new 3D Datum and said it will provide millimeter accuracy, not just centimeter accuracy. **David Clark** from USF&WS discussed boundary maintenance for its 556 refuges comprising 150 million acres.

**Mike Beavers** used his company, Frontier Surveying in Texas, to illustrate dozens of ways his firm uses GIS to make money and keep their oil company clients happy. With presenters from all over the globe, we were once again reminded by FIG President **CheeHai Teo**, "80% of all decisions have a spatial element," and because "information is geospatial," surveyors have a place.

**Tom Greaves** from CyArk discussed efforts to digitally document the world's heritage, citing the current El Camino Real Mission project in California as an example. He said 400,000 4th-grade students study this and five million tourists visit the missions annually. Many of the missions are under a direct threat from earthquakes. Says Greaves, "We want CyArk to be the equivalent of the Alexandria Library, the most significant library in the ancient world."

Of the sessions I attended, the one on Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) garnered the most interest. One of the presentations during the Plenary was by **Rowland Harrison** of Hawkeye UAV, a New Zealand company that is doing all kinds of cool things with UAVs. Rowland said they need 4-5 square kilometers, flown at 400 ft, to be economical. While I think we still have a while before UAVs are prevalent like they were in the movie *Minority Report*, it may not be a long shot to imagine UAVs one day being able to deliver a pizza.

As it stands now, the FAA won't allow the civilian use of UAVs. It says it'll have a ruling by 2014. Currently, government agencies can apply for a waiver, and according to some reports, have done so 106 times. Privacy advocates are up in arms, with talk of introducing the Preserving American Privacy Act in Congress. I find it interesting that the very ones the privacy advocates are concerned about can easily get a waiver. Look for more about this subject in the future.

As in years past, Esri is continuing its close alliance with NGS in its ongoing effort to infuse GIS with geodesy. Unfortunately, an NGS side meeting at the Summit had to be canceled due to the travel ban enacted in the wake of the GSA scandal. Even so, NGS was well-represented and several geodesy sessions were presented. Summit organizer **Donny Sosa** from Esri announced that it will host the Summit again next year, July 6-9. Hope to see you there!