

Trump's Infrastructure Plan Represents Good News for Surveying Industry



Several statements by President Donald Trump during 28 February's joint session of Congress underlined his commitment to invest in large infrastructure projects in the USA. The geospatial sector will no doubt be keen to embrace the opportunities presented. But is there a snag?

"Crumbling infrastructure will be replaced with new roads, bridges, tunnels, airports and railways gleaming across our beautiful land."

"Dwight D. Eisenhower initiated the last truly great national infrastructure programme – the building of the interstate highway system. The time has come for a new programme of national rebuilding."

"To launch our national rebuilding, I will be asking the Congress to approve legislation that produces a one trillion (*dollar, Ed.*) investment in the infrastructure of the United States – financed through both public and private capital, creating millions of new jobs."

These are just three quotes by President Donald Trump during 28 February's joint session of Congress. I assume the geospatial sector will embrace the opportunities presented by Trump's commitment to invest in large infrastructure projects. The state of the USA's infrastructure has been slammed in several extensive reports. Many dams, bridges and roads in the country are in [desperate need of improvements](#).

The USA's National Spatial Data Infrastructure is completely out of date and needs enormous improvement. Necessary steps include replacing outdated references, expanding interoperability, improving collection methodologies and developing geodetic surveying standards, according to Mike Vanhook, then-chair of COGO, in an [interview](#) with *GIM International* in 2015. There are millions of kilometres of roads and railways and thousands of bridges, dams and tunnels to maintain. This requires a lot of accurate and up-to-date geospatial information. A revised plan for developing the USA's infrastructure in 3D seems to be a logical next step. Land surveying and 3D laser scanning are vital tools to keep costs relatively low when building new roads and bridges, but also to find weak structural areas when repairing sites. Hence, land surveyors will play a key role in Donald Trump's trillion-dollar infrastructure plan.

Companies such as Trimble, Topcon and Hexagon will surely welcome the Trump administration's national rebuilding initiative. [State-of-the-art geospatial solutions](#) are definitely necessary to bring Trump's plans to fruition. Software solution providers such as Bentley will no doubt be enthusiastic too: the use of BIM and data is transforming the infrastructure sector and companies like [Bentley](#) are at the forefront when it comes to new solutions for infrastructure engineering.

There's one potential snag though; Trump stated that this effort will be guided by two core principles: Buy American, and Hire American. I'm not sure how literally this will be applied, but foreign geospatial companies will definitely be eager to play a part in the infrastructure revolution announced by President Trump in his first-ever address to the joint session of Congress.

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