



## National Surveyors Week, 1984

*By the President of the United States of America*

### A Proclamation

In the development of our country, the role of the surveyor has been of vital importance. In colonial days, surveyors were among the leaders in the community—statesmen, influential citizens, and shapers of cultural standards, including people such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. It was the surveyor's work that determined the boundaries of land, the greatest economic asset in the colonies. Thomas Jefferson chaired a committee in 1784 to devise a plan for disposing of lands west of the Thirteen Colonies. He argued that surveying before sale was necessary to prevent overlapping claims and to simplify deeds and registers. He reportedly wrote a plan which was debated in Congress, and in modified form was adopted as the Land Ordinance of May 20, 1785. The ordinance established the Public Land Survey System (PLSS)—the rectangular system that continues in effect today in 30 midwestern and western states.

Since 1785, the nature of surveying has changed dramatically. No longer is surveying limited to the description and location of land boundaries. Today, hydrographic surveys are important to the use of all our bodies of water; engineering surveys are utilized in the study and selection of engineering construction; geodetic surveys determine precise global positioning for such activities as aircraft and missile navigation; and cartographic surveys are used for mapping and charting, including the use of photogrammetry, the science of using aerial photographs for measurement and map production. Many services are provided through the use of sophisticated equipment and techniques, such as satellite-borne remote sensing devices and automated positioning, measuring, recording, and plotting equipment.

In recognition of the significant contribution made by surveyors to the United States, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 44, has authorized and requested the President to designate the week beginning on March 11, 1984, as "National Surveyors Week."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning March 11, 1984, as National Surveyors Week. I urge the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities paying tribute to professional surveyors and their contribution to society. I invite all Americans to look back at the historic contributions of surveying and look ahead to the new technologies which are constantly modernizing this honored and learned profession.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 13th day of Feb., in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighth.

*Ronald Reagan*



# Tribute to Ronald Reagan



**M**APPS joins all Americans, and freedom-loving people around the world, in mourning the passing of our 40th President. The intersections between Ronald Reagan and the surveying and mapping community are many.

In his autobiography, *An American Life*, Mr. Reagan recalls that at the end of the summer of 1929, after he had completed his freshman year at Eureka College, “most of my savings were gone and I didn’t have enough left for another year at Eureka.” He went on to recall, “I had a high school chum who worked as roadman for a local surveyor and sometimes their work brought them around to Lowell Park [where he had worked as a lifeguard] ... When the local surveyor heard I was interested in the job, he not only gave it to me but offered to get me a college scholarship the following year.”

On the day Reagan’s girlfriend Margaret was returning to Eureka College, without him, Reagan said, “when I got up, Dixon was being soaked by a rainstorm, which meant our crew couldn’t work ... Margaret asked me if I wanted to go along for the drive since I had nothing to do for the day.”

Back on campus at Eureka, Reagan stopped by to see Mac McKinzie, the football coach. “When I told him I was broke and couldn’t afford another year at Eureka, he promptly went to bat for me; within an hour or two, the college had renewed my Needy Student Scholarship ...”

“There it was, all of a sudden I was back at Eureka again. I’ve often wondered what might have happened to me if it hadn’t been raining that day.” (pages 48-50)

Later in the book, Mr. Reagan recalls that during World War II, he was denied combat duty because of poor eyesight. He was assigned to a Hollywood studio, making films and other media in support of the war.

“Our greatest and most unusual achievement was developing a new method for briefing pilots and bombardiers before their bombing missions.

“Under the old method, a briefing officer stood in front of a map with a pointer, describing to the crew the route of their mission and the targets of the attack.

“Our uniformed special-effects magicians took over almost the entire floor of a sound stage and, working from pre-war photographs and intelligence reports, created an amazing replica of Tokyo complete with thousands of buildings and its nearby coastline; then they mounted a camera on a movable overhead truck from which they took motion pictures simulating what flight crews could expect to see as they approached and passed over Tokyo; after each bombing raid, new aerial photos were taken and our replica was updated to show the latest damage inflicted by our planes.

No more map and pointer. The films were airlifted to our member bases in the Pacific and replaced the old-fashioned briefings. My job was to narrate the films, identify features by which the pilots could reach their targets, then say “Bombs away” at the appropriate time.” (pages 98-99)

In 1984, President Reagan paid tribute to the surveying and mapping profession when he issued a proclamation designating National Surveyors Week.

MAPPS worked with the Reagan White House on the issue of government competition. In 1987, Mr. Reagan created the first-ever (and to date, only) Office of Privatization in the Executive Office of the President. The Office conducted a study of Federal mapping activities for more than six months. When the last Reagan budget was sent to Congress prior to Inauguration Day in January 1989, that budget included the following initiative:

*“[Utilization of the private sector] is an important management tool to raise productivity, cut costs and improve the quality of government services [the advantage of which is] efficiency, quality and innovation in the delivery of goods and services ... specific areas where the Government could place greater reliance on private sector providers include ... map-making activities.”*

Since Mr. Reagan announced that plan, the number of Federal employees engaged in mapping related activities has decreased by approximately two-thirds and contract dollars for private sector mapping services has grown by several hundred percent.

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Submitted on behalf of MAPPS, by  
John Palatiello, Executive Director.