MR. DOYLE: Thank you Joe: I would like to introduce Juliana Blackwell.

MS. BLACKWELL: Good morning. My job here this morning is to welcome you and to say a few words briefly so we can get on with more of the details of what is to follow in the next two days.

First of all, thank you, Joe, for setting the stage here for framing the importance of what the National Geodetic Survey is, how it started, the importance of the National Spatial Reference System and the importance of having us all here together to talk about the way ahead. It is wonderful to see so many participants; it's wonderful to see our federal partners and our friends and associates that we interact with throughout the year, and to bring folks together on a day like today and tomorrow to focus primarily on the future on the way ahead for the vertical and horizontal datums of the future. So I think in this room, and via the web, having the past, the present and the future collectively thought-about so that we can bring the best together and avoid the concerns that we have had in the past; bring all that information together so we can chart the course for the future in the best way possible.

So while I'm doing my welcoming and thank you, I wanted to make sure that I take a moment to say thank to you Woodside Deli, who is here today for providing the food at this event. Hopefully, you have had a chance to enjoy the bagels, and the coffee and refreshments this morning, as they are providing the food for today and tomorrow, in the morning and at lunch time. This would not be possible if it were not for the contributions of our generous sponsors. So before I go on, I would just like to take a moment, and put the slide up (hopefully, it is loaded here) that will show us those folks who co-sponsored the food for this event. Let me mention them, even if they don't pop up on the screen. They are: the American Association for Geodetic Surveying, the Potomac Region Chapter of the American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing, the Coast and Geodetic Heritage Society, the National Society of Professional Surveyors, as well as our two corporate sponsors, ESRI and Topcon. So please, let's give them a round of applause for their contributions.

As Joe Klimavicz mentioned in his opening remarks, the National Geodetic Survey has a prestigious history, of which we are quite proud. We have a very exciting future in front of us, as well, and that's what we are here to focus on today, as well as to take from us the lessons of the past and help us along our way. So we are here to hear about the future of the geodetic control, and for us to hear from you and to share with you the information that we, internally, have pulled together, and are prepared to talk about today. But more importantly, we want to hear back from you the concerns and the ideas that you have for the National Geodetic Survey and the datums of the future.

NGS has got two main drivers, and we battle internally with ourselves on these two fronts. They are, one, scientific accuracy: being the best; having the best positions, having the best of everything available. But, two, customer service, and as a federal organization, we need to do both. We need to be able to provide the best of the best, and be able to pay attention and focus on what our customers need. So you will hear

both of those things come into play throughout today, and that's one of the reasons why we are all gathered here: to hear from our customers their concerns and their ideas.

Two years ago, the National Geodetic Survey was seeking a way for the future, seeking a plan. And in doing so, we came together, and we crafted the NGS ten-year plan. That’s available on our website. If you have not seen it, hopefully you will take a look at that. That's why we are here today. In that plan, the ten-year plan, we headlined two big changes, and they are: the horizontal datum of the future and the vertical datum of the future, those which will serve the United States. We will hear a little later on this morning more about the ten-year plan, so I'm not going into a lot of detail on that. But before we get to that point, I think it is important to reflect on the magnitude of the changes in store in changing the datums.

As we heard earlier, geodetic datums have always been the foundation of mapping, charting, surveying, and all geospatial activities. With technology the way it is today, and the way it will continue to grow into the future, it continues to be even more relevant and more of a component of (the work done by) the customers whom we serve. As more users tie their world to the datum, a strong legacy of constancy is built up, and changing the datums, themselves, despite any known issues that we have with the datum, must not be taken lightly.

It's been over 20 years since the official datums of the United States were last superseded. The challenges then were enormous, and we will hear more about that very soon. But so is NGS's drive to provide the most accurate datums possible to the people of the United States. That's where we are again today. We know it's going to be an enormous effort, we know it will take the work of a lot of individuals, and we know it's not going to be just NGS driving this way forward. We want to do the best possible job that we can.

Before we hear any more about NGS's plans over the next 10 years, I think it would be worthwhile to remind ourselves what everyone went through the last time there was a datum change. For this reason, we are honored to have with us today two former directors of the National Geodetic Survey who are here to give us their insight so that we can learn from history what to repeat, what to avoid, and how best to make the transition to new datums to make it as smooth as possible this time around.

With that, please let me introduce to you, Admiral John Bossler, former director of the Coast and Geodetic Survey, who led the transition from NAD 27 to NAD 83.