



## Order in the Court!

After many, many months of preparation, we've finally launched our **Courthouse Pilot Project**! We hinted at it in our [September 2017 Newsletter](#), and recently sent out an email providing you with more detailed information. But if you missed the memo, here's what you need to know:

-We are now collecting two new structure feature types: **County Courthouses** and **State Supreme Courthouses**. The U.S. Supreme Court Courthouse has already been added to the map, so don't worry about collecting that one.

-We're jump-starting this project with a new [Mapping Challenge](#) to collect courthouses *only* in Colorado. Once we see that the project is going smoothly there, we'll instruct you to start collecting courthouses in another state.

-Since this is a pilot project, any courthouse data that is collected and verified will **not** go into any USGS products ([The National Map](#) or [US Topo maps](#)) *until* we have been granted approval to do so.

-Unlike other structures [The National Map Corps](#) collects, every courthouse will be added to the map by volunteers. Therefore, you will not see any courthouse points with a red border.

-We've added a new section to our [User Guide](#) titled '[Courthouse Pilot Project Guide](#)' to walk you through the courthouse data collection and editing process. We highly recommend reading through this section before collecting any courthouses because they can be pretty tricky. We've also updated our [Authoritative Sources List](#), our [Structures List](#), and our [Name and Address Formatting Guide](#) to include courthouses, so be sure to check those out.

We developed this project to test the ability of the TNMCorps' crowdsourcing model to collect a dataset from scratch. So if you're tired of editing the same old structures and you're ready for a challenge, start collecting those courthouses and help us show that our volunteers are up to the task! If you have any questions or feedback about the **Courthouse Pilot Project**, please reach out to us at [nationalmapcorps@usgs.gov](mailto:nationalmapcorps@usgs.gov).



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## New Updates to the Editor!

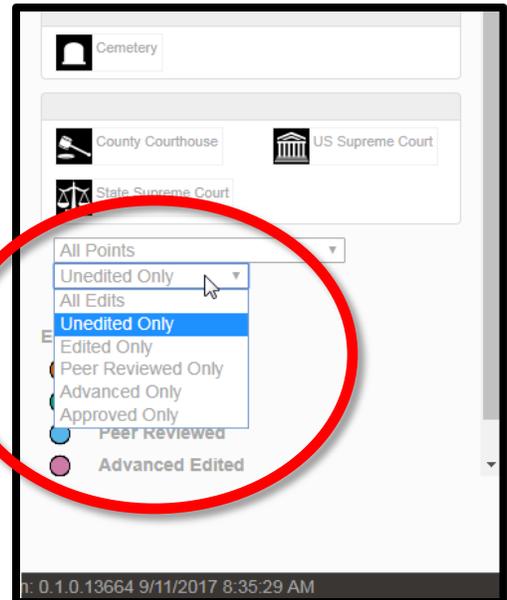
Our development team has been hard at work making some updates to the editor that we hope will make your editing experience much more enjoyable. In addition to a new feature type (courthouses!), you'll notice four changes the next time you log in to do some editing:

### Filter by edit status

Whether you are new to The National Map Corps or are an experienced editor, you may be having a hard time finding points to edit. Our new drop-down menu in the [Edit Tab](#) allows you to look for points by edit status!

By using this drop down menu you can tailor your editing session to focus on points that are unedited, or points that need to be peer reviewed. Currently there are over 100K unedited points, so there is plenty of work to be done!

1



### Possible Errors Have Occurred

The edit has been saved but will require additional review. The issues are listed below:

#### Formatting

- The field "Name" does not follow data convention: Please use the proper case in your words. (We are unable correctly check words like, McDonald.)

#### Invalid Character

- The field "Name" does not follow data convention: We've noticed you've added a period. Please check your entry and write out abbreviations.

#### Mandatory

- The field "City" does not follow data convention: A City Name is required..

#### Naming

- Please include one of the following in the "Name" field: Court, Courthouse
- The field "NAME" does not follow data convention: Please make sure the word "Court" or "Courthouse" is in the name, as found on an [authoritative source](#)

#### Review

- The field "Address 1" does not follow data convention: Data field can not be blank.
- The field "Zip-code" does not follow data convention: Data field can not be blank.
- All Courthouse features will be reviewed

#### Structures\_Required

- The field "GNIS ID" does not follow data convention: GNIS\_ID can not be empty.

OK

### Error Message Links

If you get an error message while editing courthouses, you will have the option to check the Authoritative Sources List immediately by clicking the link in the error message pop-up box.

2



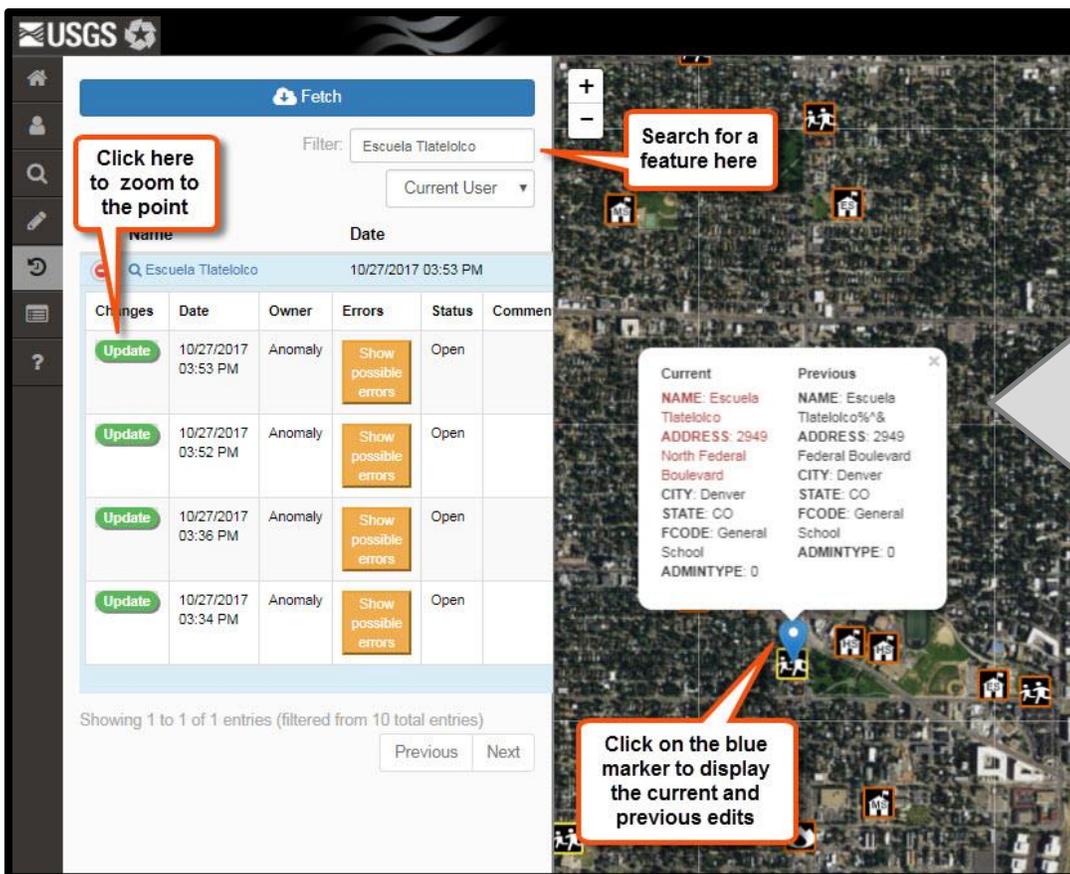
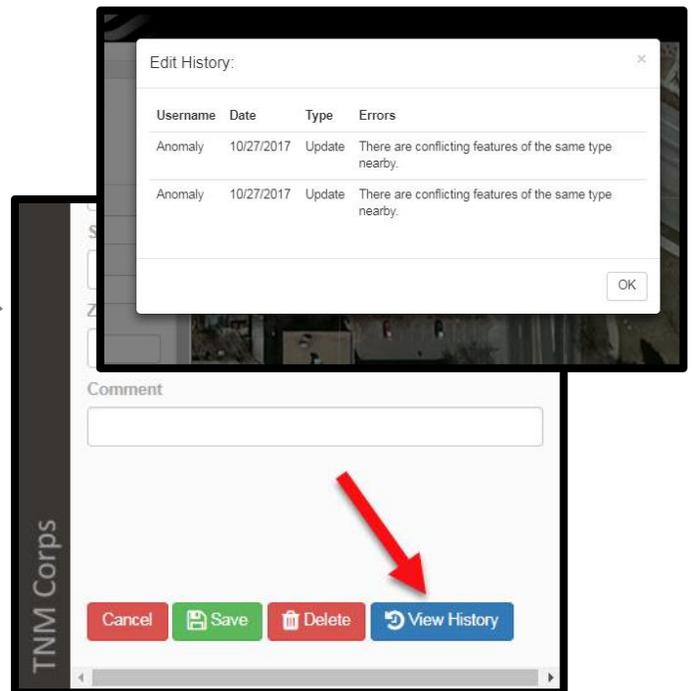
## New Updates to the Editor! (Continued)

### More Accessible Edit History in the Editing Tab

Our edit history feature has now been integrated into the editing section. You will be able to see the edit history of any point that you are currently editing, including the edit type (create or update), and any errors previous edits may have generated.

3

*\*\*FYI, you might notice that the dates listed next to each edit only display the current date and not the date on which the previous edits were made. We are currently working to resolve this issue, but in the meantime we greatly appreciate your patience!*



### New and Improved Edit History Tab

Don't forget that you can still use the old [Edit History Tab](#) to search for and view the editing history of any point! We've improved it by allowing you to concurrently view the current and previous edits made to the point.

4

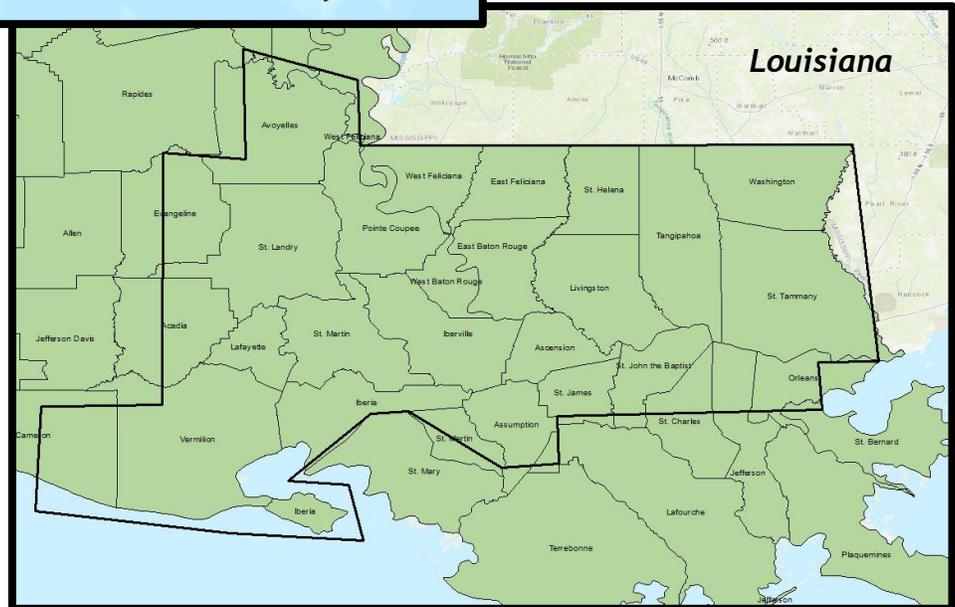
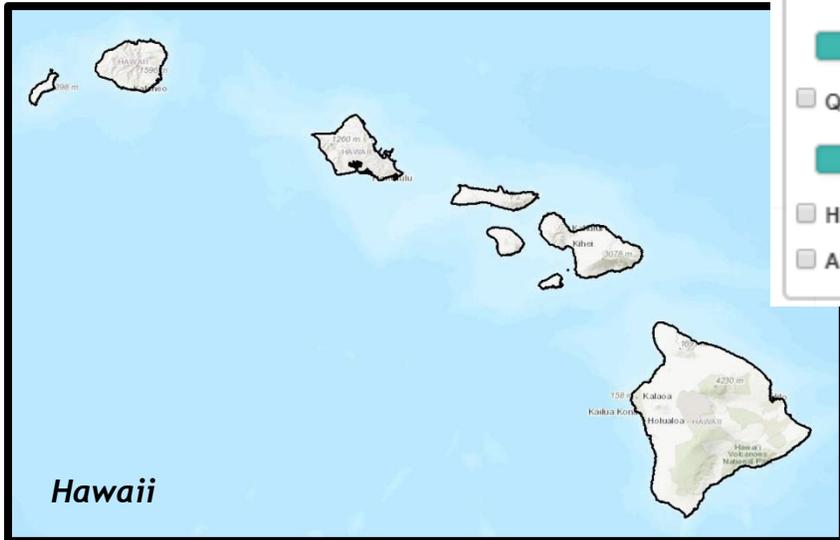
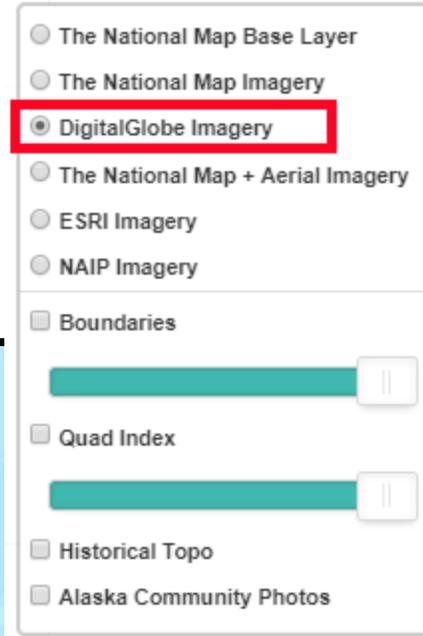
## New Updates to the Editor! (Continued)

5

Click in the top right corner of the editor to change the map background

### DigitalGlobe Imagery Base Layer

You now have the option to select DigitalGlobe Imagery as a base layer! Currently, this option is only available for Hawaii and a limited extent of Louisiana, but we hope to extend coverage of this imagery in the future.



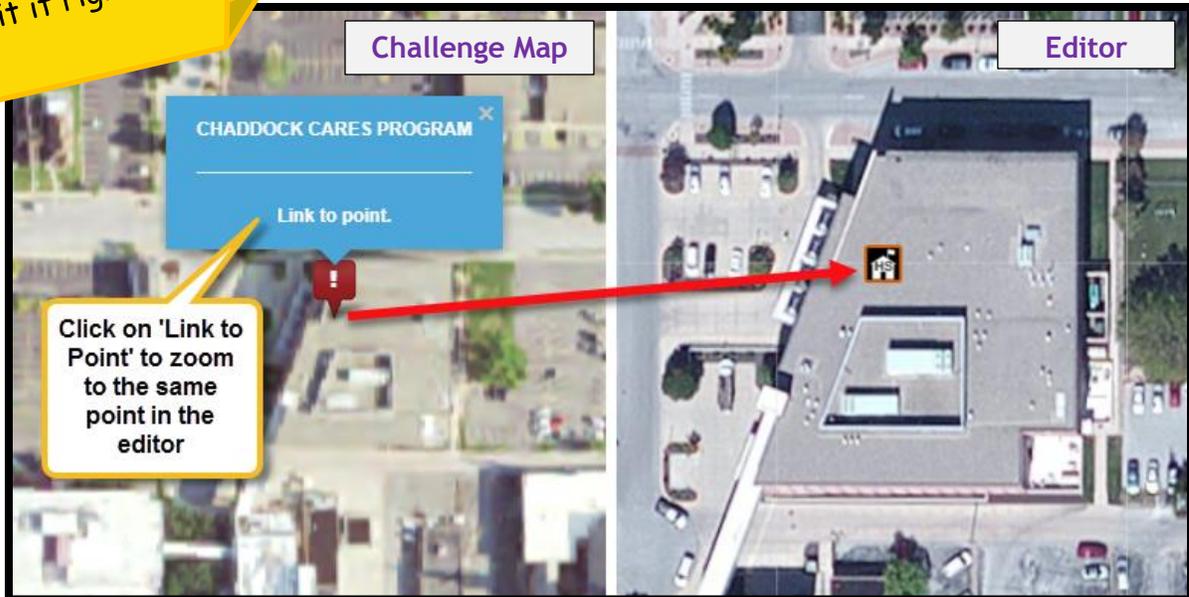
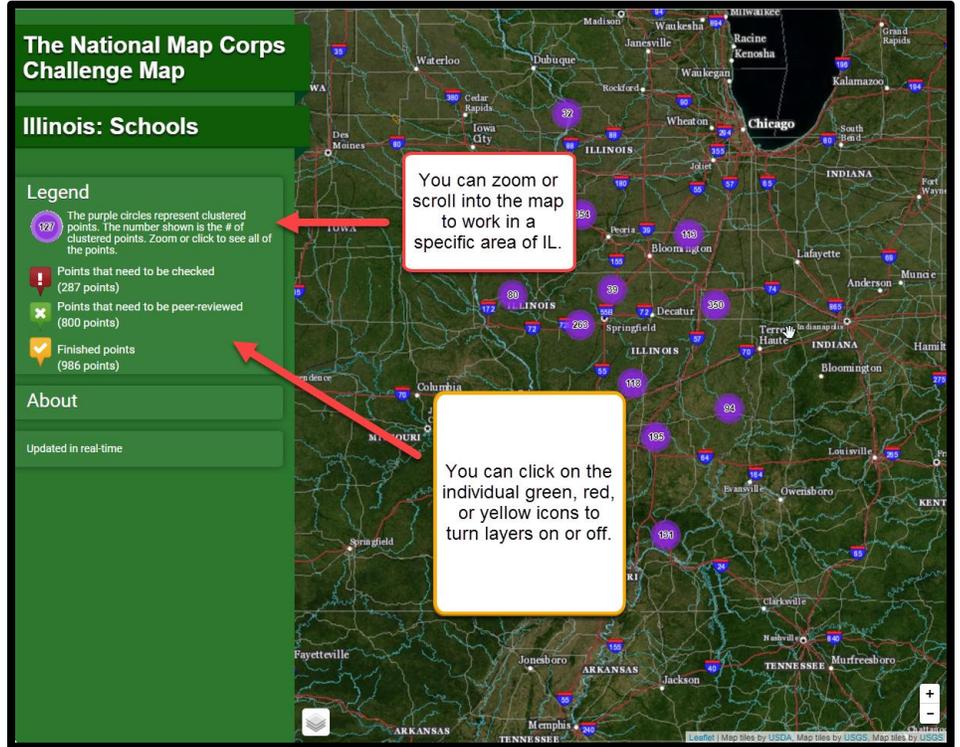
The solid black boundaries in these images represent the approximate extent of the DigitalGlobe imagery.

# New Interactive Challenge Map

Exciting news! We now have an [interactive status map](#) for the Illinois Schools Mapping Challenge!

You can use this map when working on the [challenge](#) to see which points still need to be edited.

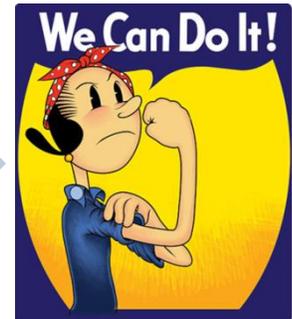
You can also see which points still need to be peer reviewed!



For more information about the interactive web map please visit [our confluence page!](#)

## Illinois Schools Mapping Challenge Extended

We greatly appreciate those of you who have put lots of time and effort into our [Illinois Schools Mapping Challenge](#), but there is still work to be done! We are extending the challenge to mid-November so that we can get as many schools edited as possible before the [US Topo](#) revisions for Illinois are complete. Check out our [Interactive Status Map](#) to see what still needs to be done, and help us complete this challenge!



## How to Spot an Authoritative (Re)Source



### Why are Authoritative Resources So Important?

Have you ever played 'Telephone' where one person whispers a secret to the person next to them, and so on until the last person reveals the message? Sometimes the secret reaches the other end intact and sometimes the secret takes creative twists and turns.

The same can happen in the "real world" (and yes, even at The National Map Corps!). As information transitions from one source to another, it can get distorted either accidentally or intentionally.

This is why we ask our volunteers to identify an authoritative source before updating information in the Editor. By going directly to an authoritative source, we can be pretty sure that the information incorporated into The National Map is accurate and up to date.

An **authoritative (re)source** is a website or publication that has been created directly by an entity or service provider, by service recipients, or by regulators governing an entity's operations. Authoritative r(e)sources come in many forms, including official websites, meeting minutes on an organization's official letterhead, school handbooks, and even Facebook pages (see [Page 6](#) of our [July 2017 Newsletter](#) for more information on using Facebook as an authoritative source).

Because authoritative sources come in many forms, it can sometimes be difficult determining whether or not a source is authoritative. To help make this determination, you can ask yourself two questions: **Who authored this document?** and **Who compiled this information?** (Was it the organization itself, a regulator of the organization, or a third party?) The answers to these two questions will shine light on whether a document is authoritative. Just like telephone, the fewer hands the information passes through, the better, because we want to make sure any points plotted on The National Map represent organizations that are open and available for business.

### New Authoritative Sources Documentation

To help you identify authoritative sources, we recently updated and expanded the [Resources](#) section of our [User Guide](#) (a [PDF](#) version is also available). This document walks you through each type of structure we collect and identifies the sources you might come across when researching an organization. Check it out!



## Aerial Photo Interpretation Part 2: Post Offices

*This article is the second in a series of newsletter articles highlighting aerial photo interpretation for different structure types. This month we will focus on Post Offices.*

*Check out our [September Newsletter](#) for Part 1, which focuses on identifying cemeteries.*

You may not realize it, but every time you participate in TNMCorps you are conducting [aerial photo interpretation](#). This part of the process of editing structures can be quite fun and interesting. In order to identify the correct building associated with a structure point, you must do a little bit of detective work by searching for clues in the imagery. You may be an expert at this, or you may be new to it. Either way, here are some helpful tips and tricks for interpreting the aerial photography background layers and identifying building types.

### Post Offices:

Post Offices are one of the easiest structure types to research, as there is one [authoritative resource](#) for all Post Offices: the [USPS® locator tool](#). This makes confirming the existence, name, and address of Post Offices quite simple. However, locating the correct building is often a different story. Here are some tips for locating post offices using aerial imagery. And don't forget, if one imagery source isn't helping, check the others.

### Flag Poles:

*Post Offices almost always have a flagpole with the USA flag flying. Look for signs of a flag or flagpole at the entrance to the building. Sometimes this will only be distinguishable by the shadow it casts, as seen on Google Maps™ imagery and in the editor:*

*Obviously many types of buildings have flags, so this tip should only be used in conjunction with other clues.*



*Remember, commercial imagery sources such as Bing® and Google™ should only be used as supplementary resources to confirm the correct building. You should never take the location of a structure directly from Google™.*

## Aerial Photo Interpretation (Continued)

### Blue mail boxes:

These can be hard to spot, but sometimes you can see the distinctive USPS blue mailboxes.



### Square white trucks/mini vans:

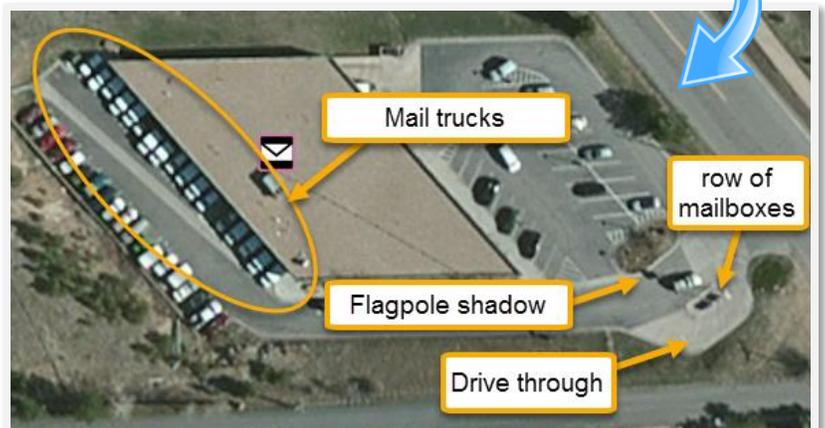


### “Drive through” area:

Many Post Offices have a “drive through” area where the blue mailboxes may be located. You may even be able to see the shadows from the row of mailboxes.



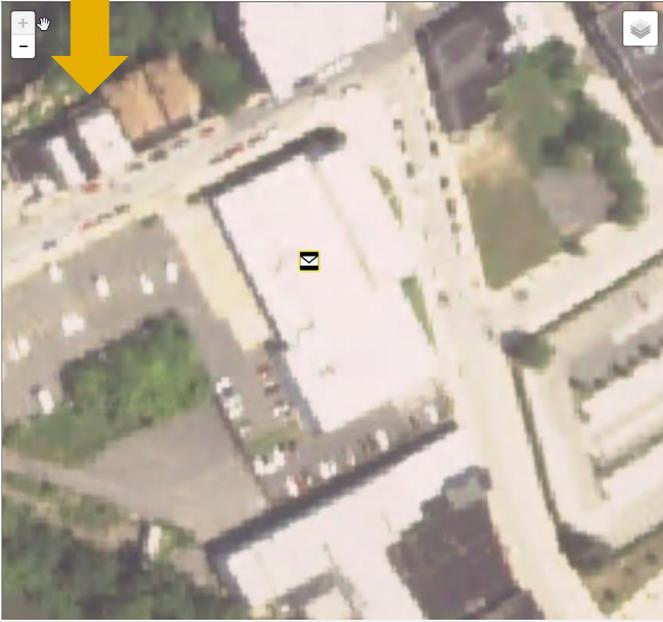
### This one has got it all:



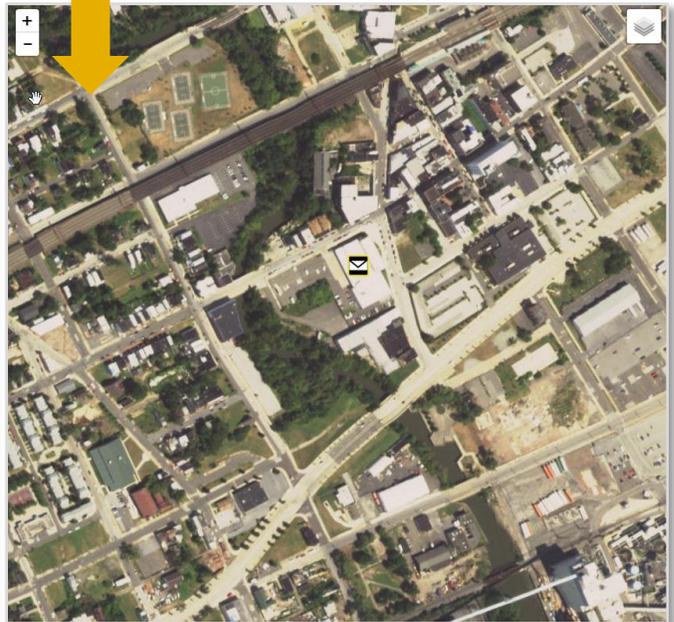
## Aerial Photo Interpretation (Continued)

*Don't forget to check multiple aerial imagery sources at multiple zoom levels, if needed. The quality varies depending on the imagery and the geographic area. In addition, depending on when the imagery was collected, it could contain clues that other imagery doesn't.*

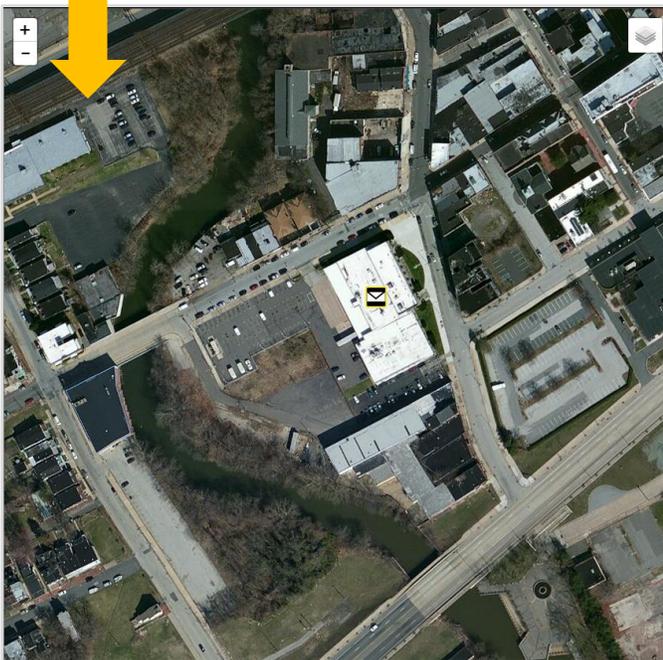
The National Map Imagery, zoom level 19:



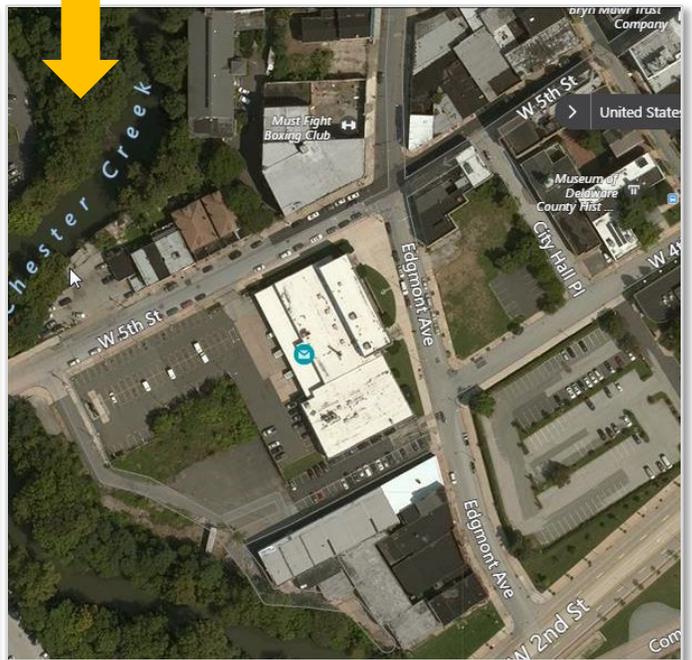
ESRI® Imagery, zoom level 17:



ESRI Imagery, zoom level 18:



Bing™ Aerial Imagery:



## Aerial Photo Interpretation (Continued)

Bing™ Bird's Eye:



Google™ Aerial Imagery:



*Do you have tips and tricks for aerial imagery interpretation? Send them to us and we might feature them in an upcoming newsletter.*

## TNMCORPS WORD SCRAMBLE

In honor of the release of our Courthouse Pilot Project, this month's puzzle is courthouse themed! Most of the words used in this scramble can be found in the [Courthouse Pilot Project Guide](#) section of the [User Guide](#), and include the names of several states, counties, court related words, and some general TNMCORPS terms:

- 1. ROOLCOAD \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. IDARFOL \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. UEGJD \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. IUIEOVTTHATRA \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. EUUOORCSHT \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. THUA \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. OLERLINLAB \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. LADWEERA \_\_\_\_\_

- 9. ARLIT \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. UJYR \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. NTUYCO \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. EUPMERS \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. ETATS \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. RSEDDAS \_\_\_\_\_
- 15. MICNALIUP \_\_\_\_\_
- 16. CSRITDIT \_\_\_\_\_

<https://www.education.com/worksheet-generator/reading/word-scramble/>

Answer key: 1. COLORADO, 2. FLORIDA, 3. JUDGE, 4. AUTHORITY, 5. COURTHOUSE, 6. UTAH, 7. BERNALILLO, 8. DELAWARE, 9. TRIAL, 10. JURY, 11. COUNTY, 12. SUPREME, 13. STATE, 14. ADDRESS, 15. MUNICIPAL, 16. DISTRICT

## Have a story or photo you'd like to share?

We want them! This could be anything from a photo of you verifying a structure or an interesting story that you discovered while editing. Photos, graphics, and stories may be used in future news releases and social media posts. All materials submitted become part of the "public domain," and can be used by USGS in the future unless otherwise specified.

Please email them to [nationalmapcorps@usgs.gov](mailto:nationalmapcorps@usgs.gov)



## New Recognition Category Members



**Squadron of Biplane Spectators (6000-6999)**



**Family of Floating Photogrammetrists (3000-3999)**



**Theodolite Assemblage (2000-2999)**



**Stadia Board Society (500-999)**



**Ring of Reconnaissance Rocketeers (5000-5999)**



**Flock of Winged Witnesses (4000-4999)**



**Alidade Alliance (1000-1999)**



**Circle of the Surveyor's Compass (200-499)**



**Pedometer Posse (100-199)**

- GeoMap
- D.Sakurai
- virgilturner
- alexhildebrand
- nbingham
- Karen
- Rlf1941
- BShaw10DSU



**Society of the Steel Tape (50-99)**

- virgilturner
- Rlf1941
- entzi
- alexhildebrand
- cplank
- AKushner
- Starr
- Karen
- nbingham
- genovt



**Order of the Surveyor's Chain (25-49)**

- Rlf1941
- virgilturner
- Cabding
- entzi
- alexhildebrand
- AKushner
- Andrew Millar
- alindgren23
- cplank
- genovt
- Karen
- nbingham
- Ashley\_R
- FikeN
- JG2017
- crj129

CONTACT US AT: [nationalmapcorps@usgs.gov](mailto:nationalmapcorps@usgs.gov) for suggestions, questions, additions to the next newsletter, or if you would like to be removed from the email list.

