

InfrastructureUSA

Guest on THE INFRA BLOG

Charlene Wheelless, Principal Vice President, Global Corporate Affairs, Bechtel Corporation

Conversation with Steve Anderson, Managing Director, InfrastructureUSA

Dream Big: The Huge-Screen Engineering Experience

Dream Big is a film. It's a film that we like to say provides a fresh perspective on STEM, and it was really created to help inspire kids from diverse backgrounds to pursue engineering, or careers in science, technology, engineering and math. If you just look at some of the numbers, we're producing fewer engineers, and that's a problem for the future. But you have to engage this new generation that's coming through in a different way. So the producers put together this film with ASCE, the American Society of Civil Engineers, as a way to attract students to engineering. As an engineering company, we are of course very interested in growing the next generation of STEM talent. But beyond that, I think that STEM talent will fuel future generations and impact all aspects of society, and we really wanted to be a part of that.

How Bechtel Supports Future Engineers

This project is all about engineering, and infrastructure restoration can't happen without engineers. It would be very difficult to separate them. *Dream Big* showcases the amazing work that engineers do around the world, and from the start the producers connected with leaders in the engineering world, like Bechtel. We like to say this project is part inspiration and part education for the next generation of talent. We also are very proud of the fact that for 25 years Bechtel has played a key role in creating and growing DiscoverE, which was previously known as Engineers Week. And what a lot of people don't know is that in 1990 our then CEO and Chairman Steve Bechtel, Jr. chaired the first U.S.-wide Engineers Week. Bechtel is very supportive, obviously, of the need to improve our infrastructure and we're really pleased that there's ongoing dialogue about the need to update our infrastructure and to take action. So that's very exciting for us as a company, but also for us as citizens.

Growing Awareness of Infrastructure

I think people are more focused on infrastructure; there's more dialogue, and as a result people are starting to see a problem and, of course, you can't find a solution or act on a solution until you acknowledge or recognize that there is a problem. So this dialogue that's been going on, and it's been bipartisan, has been very exciting because we have crumbling infrastructure in our country. While infrastructure is not a daily conversation—at least it didn't used to be—I don't think that Americans don't focus on it. I think that we're faced every day with infrastructure issues: if you think about our roadways, our bridges, buildings, our power plants, they all fundamentally affect everyone living in the country. We might not talk about it daily, but certainly it's something we care about. I don't know why it is suddenly at the forefront, but I'm very happy that it is.

**www.InfrastructureUSA.org
212.414.9220
info@infrastructureusa.org**

February, 2017