What does one TRILLION dollars look like?

What does that look like? I mean, these various numbers are tossed around like so many doggie treats, so I thought I'd take Google Sketchup out for a test drive and try to get a sense of what exactly a trillion dollars looks like.

We'll start with a $100 dollar bill. Currently the largest U.S. denomination in general circulation. Most everyone has seen them, slightly fewer have owned them. Guaranteed to make friends wherever they go.

A packet of one hundred $100 bills is less than 1/2" thick and contains $10,000. Fits in your pocket easily and is more than enough for week or two of shamefully decadent fun.
Believe it or not, this next little pile is $1 million dollars (100 packets of $10,000). You could stuff that into a grocery bag and walk around with it.

While a measly $1 million looked a little unimpressive, $100 million is a little more respectable. It fits neatly on a standard pallet...
And $1 BILLION dollars... now we're really getting somewhere...

Next we'll look at ONE TRILLION dollars. This is that number we've been hearing so much about. What is a trillion dollars? Well, it's a million million. It's a thousand billion. It's a one followed by 12 zeros... 1,000,000,000,000 . . .
(And notice those pallets are double stacked, and the guy standing at the lower left corner.)

So the next time you hear someone toss around the phrase "trillion dollars"... that's what they're talking about.