



ILLINOIS GIS NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ILLINOIS GIS ASSOCIATION

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10 QUESTIONS FOR DAN WILCOX, ILLINOIS GIS COORDINATOR

By Mark Toolson, Assistant IT Director for GIS, City of Champaign

When did you become the first GIS Coordinator for the State of Illinois?

On April 2, 2009 Greg Wass, State CIO, announced that he was naming me State GIS Coordinator.

Could you tell us briefly of your professional history with the State of Illinois?

I began my career with the State of Illinois in 1985 working for the Department of Agriculture. In 1996 I took the position of Computer Services Bureau Chief with Agriculture and my indoctrination to GIS was almost immediate. Relatively speaking, Agriculture was a small agency with big GIS needs and the responsibility to support GIS fell on me. As GIS technologies evolved towards central geodatabases and server based platforms, I was in the advantageous position of overseeing both information technology and GIS. When the opportunity presented itself this past February (2009) to take a position with IDOT managing application development staff and GIS professionals – I jumped at the chance. One of my core beliefs is that GIS and Information Technology belong together as both exist to provide services to the organization.

What State department do you work within? – and do you foresee your position remaining in that department or some time?

My current position is Chief Development Officer with the Illinois Department of Transportation. Generally speaking, I would estimate that 50% of my time is spent on GIS Coordinator duties with the remaining 50% focused on IDOT issues. I do not foresee any changes that would move the GIS Coordinator position into a different agency.

What do you see as the primary mission of your position?

The primary mission for the State GIS Coordinator is to promote and facilitate geospatial technologies, resources and coordination for the benefit of State government.

Does your work involve inter-agency coordination? – and if yes, do you work with a standing committee representing multiple state agencies?

A significant portion of my work as GIS Coordinator will involve inter-agency coordination. Illinois State government has a tremendous community of GIS resources and data scattered throughout several agencies. And there are other state government lines-of-business, like human services, that are just beginning to tap the vast potential of geospatial technologies. Inter-agency coordination is important now, more than ever, for state government to effectively leverage the power of GIS. I plan to assemble a GIS Technical Advisory Group which will include both GIS and information technology leaders from multiple state agencies. There are several geospatial issues that need attention at the state level so subcommittees will be formed to address various subject areas.

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COGITATIONS

from your President

Pat Keegan

Recent survey results have indicated that ILGISA members place a high value on networking.

Many members have indicated that ILGISA is a social group and that the spring and fall conferences serve an important function of bringing us together. Certainly our membership is on the leading edge of technology and I am confident a large part of our memberships utilizes Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and some other cool social networking tools that I don't even know about yet. When appropriate, ILGISA will embrace these new social networking opportunities. As a member, you will soon be invited to ILGISA's LinkedIn group. This will provide another method for people to connect and for members to showcase their ILGISA membership. LinkedIn is a professional networking website and a quick search for people referencing "ILGISA" on their profile returns over 50 people. The ILGISA Board interprets this as proof that our membership wants ILGISA to have a presence on LinkedIn.

Even though we may embrace on-line social networking, there is no replacement for in-person social networking. The ILGISA conferences have become the "can't miss" networking opportunity for GIS professions in our state. The spring 2009 conference was held in a new location, the I Hotel in Champaign. The Board received over 60 pages of survey results from Spring Conference attendees that we use to evaluate the conference and to make decisions about future conferences.

What did you, the attendees, think about the Spring Conference?

What were the top themes that arose in the survey results?

- Facilities were top-notch
- Food was excellent
- Too many competing sessions at the same time
- Rooms changed, hard to find the right room
- Need more hands-on opportunities
- Too expensive for some

Was the exhibit hall important to attendees and why? Overwhelmingly, it is very important to attendees.

- It is the best GIS networking opportunity around.
- To see new products, advances in technology
- Build contacts for the future
- Over 90% of respondents visited the exhibitor hall
- 100% said the exhibitor hall is an integral part of the conference

What was missing from the conference?

- More opportunity and time to network
- A posting wall, for jobs, resumes and notices
- Hands-on activities - 43% of respondents said the preferred method of learning is hands-on
- Bring back the silent auction to benefit a good cause

How important is the keynote in your decision to attend? 54% indicated that it is not a factor when deciding to attend.

What did you think about the conference logistics?

- Love, love, love the free Wi-Fi
- Great location, accessible and easy
- Great food
- Too much switching of rooms

What did you think about the conference Cost?

- Costs for students have gone up too much

- 64% of respondents said student costs are too high
- 51% of respondents said non-member costs are too high
- Drinks were too expensive during open reception

Overall, the facility received the highest praises and the conference cost received the most criticism.

So, what will change based on the feedback?

You will see changes in the fall conference. For the first time in recent memory, we will not have a traditional keynote speaker. Instead we will have smaller plenary sessions that will aim to be more conducive to networking. We will have free Wi-Fi! We are proud to announce the rates for students will be reduced. We have moved to a new location that will be less expensive than last fall's facility and the cost of a hotel room will be significantly less than last year.

Special thanks to the 2009 Spring Conference Committee on a successful conference and to the 2009 Fall Conference Planning Committee for their hard work and dedication towards making the fall conference a success. It is important to remember that our committees and the Board are volunteers. Please support them and consider volunteering your time to an ILGISA committee.

I look forward to seeing you at the Fall ILGISA Conference on October 5th and 6th at the NIU Naperville campus. As always, thanks for your input!

Pat Keegan is the President of ILGISA and the GIS Manager for the City of Evanston

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GIS EDUCATOR'S CORNER



Welcome to the first installment of the GIS Educator's Corner.

RICH SCHULTZ, Ph.D.,
C.P.G.

As you may be aware, ILGISA has recently embarked on a mission to provide connections between the GIS community and the next generation of the geospatial workforce, namely those completing their degrees at institutions of higher education. To that end, ILGISA will be offering increasing opportunities for the GIS community to interact with students and consider possible relationships via job shadowing opportunities, internships, and potentially future employment with your organization. We, as members of the ILGISA Board of Directors feel this is a "win-win" for your organization and the student population as well as creating a means of sustaining the geospatial infrastructure for the future.

As a springboard for helping this to come to fruition, ILGISA is increasingly making the student population aware of the GIS community and encourages student participation in ILGISA activities including conference attendance, job/internship and resume posting on the ILGISA website, the newly established ILGISA Scholarship Fund, student chapters of ILGISA, and Student Paper and Poster Competitions at both Fall and Spring ILGISA Conferences. The ILGISA Education Committee is comprised of nine ILGISA members who have dedicated their efforts towards creating the aforementioned connections and making the future one of sustainability in the GIS community.

In the near future, the following opportunities are planned for GIS practitioner and student interaction: a "Careers in GIS" panel discussion at the Fall Conference in October, a Student Paper and separate Student Poster Competition at the Fall Conference, several workshops geared towards students and those new to the GIS community at that conference, and the potential for published articles in future issues of GIS Notes.

As Chair of the ILGISA Education Committee and a current ILGISA Board Member, I invite you and your organization to take advantage of the possible interactions with students and help us, as a professional GIS organization, to strengthen the future workforce in the GIS community. If I or any of the ILGISA Board members can do anything to promote this connection, or if you have further suggestions to promote the cross fertilization of these groups, please contact me or any ILGISA Board member.

See you at the Fall Conference on October 5 and 6 in Naperville, Illinois!

Dr. Rich Schultz
Chair, Education Committee



15 YEARS
AND COUNTING



ILLINOIS
GIS
ASSOCIATION



2009 ILGISA OUTSTANDING STUDENT AWARDS

Recipients of 2009 ILGISA Outstanding Student Award as the Spring ILGISA Conference in Champaign were Jennifer Outcalt and Brian Firek.

This award may be presented to an undergraduate student of any major who has included GIS in their course of study. Individuals are nominated based on their demonstration of exemplary proficiency and understanding of GIS, potential contribution to the GIS Community, and general scholastic achievement. The nominations submitted for Jennifer and Brian are shown below. Congratulations, Brian and Jennifer!

Brian Firek, Elmhurst College

Brian Firek is known to be extremely trustworthy, ethical, diligent as a worker, and able to take direction well. Academically, Brian has a perfect 4.0 GPA and is in the top 1% of all geography majors in terms of academic achievements within the last five (5) years. He has the uncanny ability to learn new spatial technologies and apply what he has learned to "real world" scenarios. Brian comes to Elmhurst College from Roosevelt University and has flourished as a physical geography major and GIS minor. He has taken it upon himself to seek out four (4) recent job shadowing experiences in the GIS community, including cities, counties, private firms, and government institutions. His initiative will, without a doubt, pay future dividends as he will become a future contributor to the community of GIS workers.

Brian's interest and proficiency with geospatial technology, strong academic performance, and ability to learn quickly, coupled with his work ethic make him a fine candidate for a graduate school of his choice come Fall of 2010 after he graduates in Spring 2010, if he so desires. His long term objectives are intentionally left open for now, but his ability to successfully write code and program as well as apply spatial models may lead to a position in local, state, or federal government.

He has most recently interviewed for a Summer 2009 internship with a major utility firm and will complete most of his required geography coursework at Elmhurst College well in advance of his graduation date.

Brian is a student member and has presented his research in a poster at the Fall 2008 ILGISA Conference. He is also an officer in the Elmhurst College Geographical Society and has assisted in resurrecting that organization from a period of recent inactivity. He also serves as the Elmhurst College Department of Geography and Geosciences computer lab assistant and teaching assistant. All of this while maintaining a 4.0 grade point average in all of his coursework including his major area of study is quite the accomplishment.

Brian is highly recommended for the ILGISA Outstanding Student Award based on his performance in his coursework, contributions to the community, research in GIS, and service to the field of geography. He will be a future star to watch in the GIS community.

Brian Firek (center), junior geography major and GIS minor at Elmhurst College, is pictured with incoming Illinois GIS Association (ILGISA) President Curt Aber (left) and Dr. Rich Schultz, ILGISA Board member and Brian's academic advisor at Elmhurst College.



Jennifer Outcalt, Northern Illinois University

Jennifer is one of those rare students who not only excels in the classroom, but embraces every opportunity to learn and participate in the activities of the university. As a non-traditional commuting student, she has achieved a 3.4 overall GPA, and 3.67 in the major. She has served on the department's student nominating committee, and was a member of the 2008/09 soil judging team that took 3rd place in regional competition. She is currently completing a BS in geography along with a Certificate in GIS. Jennifer's independent mapping project utilizes information on state collected duck stamp revenue and shows states' contributions to the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Based on her success in the classroom, keen interest in GIS and mapping, and voluntary service to the department and university, we are confident that Jennifer will be an able and eager contributor to the mapping and GIS community of Illinois.

ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE GIS COMMUNITY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Is your organization looking for student interns for projects or for longer term experiences? Or are you a student seeking a GIS internship to gain valuable experience working for a professional organization? If either of these fits you or your organization, ILGISA has the answer for you.

Recently, the ILGISA Education Committee established as one of its numerous initiatives:

The establishment of a permanent discussion forum/posting on the ILGISA website for the purpose of making college/university students aware of opportunities, separated by type:

- Internships
- Educational opportunities and professional development (lectures, workshops, short courses)
- Job shadowing activities
- Scholarships and fellowships
- GIS employment opportunities
- Resume posting board for students and a separate one for GIS practitioners

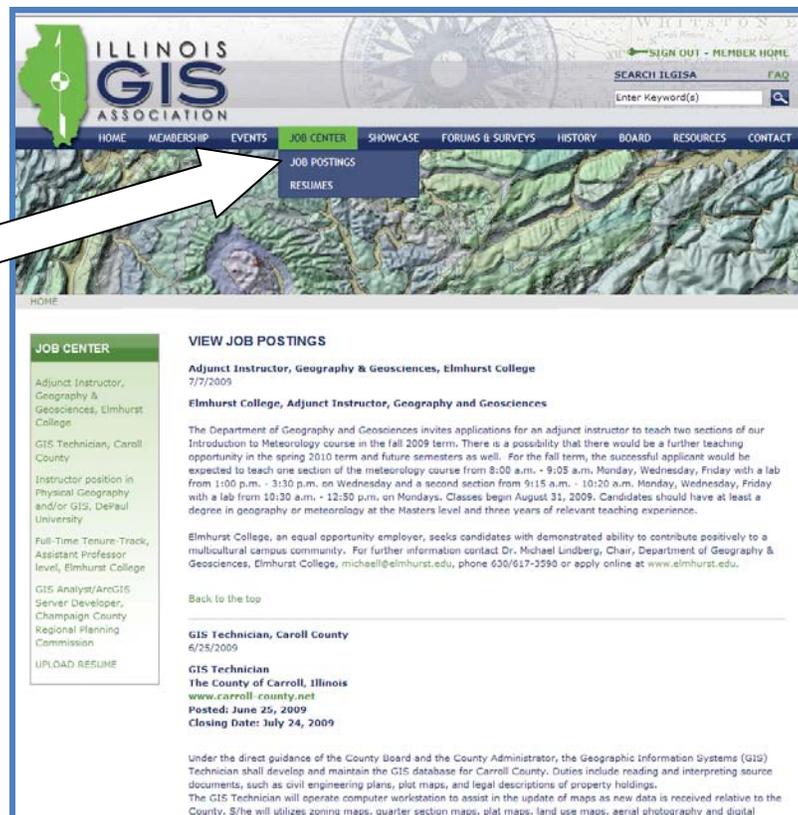
Led by a subcommittee of the Education Committee, this has come to fruition. It is hereby announced that a new section of the ILGISA website will be devoted to internships available across the entire

State of Illinois, available to current students and a location on the website whereby GIS organizations may post their needs for GIS interns. It is thought that organizations can have a virtual one-stop internship coordination office in which to make connections. The Chair of the Education Committee will be the point person in assisting to establish the relationships and can be contacted at richs@elmhurst.edu.

So, send those internship announcements and resumes to tlogers@niu.edu and make a connection!

See screenshot below as an example:

“Internships” to go here



DID YOU NOTICE ALL THE VOLUNTEER STUDENTS AT THE SPRING CONFERENCE?

ILGISA wants to thank the following students for volunteering at our Spring Conference:

Zahra Golshani (UIUC), Karishma Muntashir (UIUC), Danielle Ross, Zach Schmitt (NIU), Jared Butler (UIUC), Catherine Peters (Elmhurst), and Yingbo Zhou (UIUC). You probably noticed some of the students manning the conference registration booth. A few also volunteered to moderate some of our presentation sessions!

The Student volunteers were provided with a FREE conference registration (excluded meals) in exchange for their help. What a deal! Each student signed up early and received their assignment in advance of the conference.

There are numerous benefits to pursuing student volunteers for our conferences. As GIS professionals we hope to sustain professional connections between ourselves as well as the education community and those who will one day join our ranks. Please encourage students in the GIS Community to join our ranks and enjoy numerous benefits:

- Networking with GIS Professionals
- Low membership fees (\$10/year)
- Student Awards (Scholarship opportunity in the near future)
- Employment postings
- GIS Discussion Forums
- Free Conference attendance*

*If you know of a student who would be interested in helping with the next conference, please have the student contact the ILGISA Executive Director, Tracy Rogers at 815/753-2090 or contact@ilgisa.org.

(**Wilcox** continued from page 1)

Do you foresee being involved with county or municipal governments in Illinois regarding GIS issues? – and if yes, could you briefly tell us how you anticipate working with local governments?

While my initial emphasis will be towards State agencies, I do anticipate a lot of collaboration with county and municipal governments. It is widely accepted that some of the highest quality spatial data (transportation, administrative units, cadastral) exists at the local jurisdiction. In order for the State of Illinois to make progress towards a spatial data infrastructure, data sharing across jurisdictions must be improved and encouraged. A more immediate opportunity for state and local collaboration exists with the effort to collect 2010 statewide orthoimagery. I have already begun reaching out to counties seeking their participation in a 2010 collection.

Do you foresee a time when state wide GIS standards may be enacted in our state and supported by your office as well as other state agencies? – and if yes, has work begun toward this goal?

I am a firm believer in standards and my background in information technology has only reinforced that belief. However I think it is important to make a distinction between setting standards and conforming to existing standards. GIS is a data-centric technology and spatial data sharing is one of my high priorities. Data sharing and collaboration can only be effective within a framework of standards.

Can you tell us anything about the future of ILGIC?

At this point in time, I do not have any information about the future of ILGIC. Working groups have been formed, in conjunction with a statewide GIS strategic planning effort, to study the “governance” of GIS for Illinois. The GIS Technical Advisory Group mentioned earlier is structured to serve in an advisory capacity to someone or something at a policy-making or executive level. Successes in other states and best practices would suggest that a state GIS coordination council (what ILGIC is intended to be) would be the group for whom a Technical Advisory Group advises.

Is there anything ILGISA can do to help you fulfill your mission?

ILGISA already does a great job at fostering a climate of communication and cooperation within Illinois’ GIS community. I hope to leverage the spirit of cooperation that exists within the ILGISA organization as the State strives towards enterprise GIS.

Is there anything you would like to tell the ILGISA community?

I know everyone in the ILGISA community has more work and responsibilities than available time. And I’m sure most are being asked to “do more with less”. But I truly believe that there are vast opportunities and advantages to be gained by embracing the enterprise approach to GIS resources, data and technology. The wealth of knowledge and spatial data that exists in Illinois has value beyond traditional boundaries. When an opportunity comes along to share geospatial resources under your control, take into consideration the Enterprise approach and the contribution you can make.

MISSION STATEMENT: TO PROMOTE THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP, ENHANCE THE VISIBILITY OF ILGISA AND CONNECT THE GIS COMMUNITIES IN ILLINOIS.

Shelley Silch, USGS

Many of us have entered the GIS profession through other disciplines and have found ourselves in roles that we may not have anticipated. Perhaps we were attracted to GIS because it provided a unique way to solve a complex problem or because the cartographic process flexed our right brain and the output was satisfying and beautiful. Most of us could probably agree that we have worked hard to get where we are at and that we are in a unique and rewarding career. We are professionals, and as professionals we have the pleasure and responsibility to participate in a dialogue with others to advance our chosen profession. Becoming a member of ILGISA is a great way to do this.

Some benefits of membership:

- Conferences and Seminars
 - ILGISA offers Fall and Spring conferences
 - Meet the vendors
 - Earn Continuing Education Credits for GISP
 - Low membership and conference fees relative to other professions
- Education
 - Learn from your peers and stay informed of industry advancements
 - Workshop instruction
- Professional development
 - Advance your career and contribute to the profession
 - Stay informed
- Leadership
 - Develop your leadership skills and serve
- Networking opportunities
 - Get to know your fellow GIS professionals in the State, regionally, and locally
 - Make valuable professional contacts
 - Gain access to a wealth of useful information
 - Be part of a community of other professionals
- Mentoring
 - Consider helping those new to GIS through professional coaching
- Exclusive online resources
 - New ILGISA website
 - Forums
 - Centralized GIS links and resources in the State
 - Job opportunities and resume posting
- Newsletters
 - GIS Notes is a newsletter distributed three times per year
- Voting privileges
 - As member you are entitled to vote to fill board positions
- Political clout
 - ILGISA helps protect your profession by keeping you informed of pending legislation
- Enhance credibility and foster ethical responsibility among our members

It's the right thing to do for your profession, yourself and your career!

PROPOSAL FOR PUBLICATION OF EXTENDED ABSTRACTS AND POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS

Dr. John Kostelnick, Dept. of Geography and Geology, ISU

The ILGISA Education Committee is proposing new ideas for the dissemination of presentation materials as "proceedings" from ILGISA conferences. In addition to the short abstract required for all presentations at the ILGISA conference, all conference presenters at future ILGISA conferences will be encouraged to submit an extended abstract for publication consideration in GIS Notes. The extended abstract (approximately 500-2000 words) is an opportunity for presenters to provide additional information about their projects including methods, discussions, results, and conclusions. The inclusion of digital maps, images, figures, and website links will be encouraged. Upon submission, extended abstracts will be editorially reviewed by the GIS Notes editor. Extended abstracts that are accepted will appear in GIS Notes prior to the ILGISA conference (if submitted in time) or subsequent to it being presented at the conference.

In addition, all presenters at future ILGISA conferences will be encouraged to submit their PowerPoint presentation slides for posting on the ILGISA website following the conference. The goal of both proposals is to further ILGISA's role as a center for the exchange of information, ideas, and project results by GIS practitioners and researchers in Illinois and have a "go-to" central depository by way of the ILGISA website.

DETAILS OF AN NSF GRANT CONCERNING GEOSPATIAL EDUCATION

*Dr. Mike Rudibaugh, ILGISA Education Committee
Lake Land College, Mattoon, IL*

Lake Land College (Mattoon, IL) is a partner in a \$5 million grant to develop academic and workforce programs for training in geospatial technology. The college will receive \$360,000 over the next four years, as a partner in the National Science Foundation Advanced Technological Education Program. Dr. Mike Rudibaugh, geography instructor, will lead the project on Lake Land's campus as well as serve as a co-principal investigator for the grant. Seven colleges and two universities nationally will share the funding, which aims to widen and enhance the pipeline of students, faculty and industries using geospatial technologies.

Learning how to construct, extract, assess, and display digital information from mapping databases are likely to become standard skills workers will need in future careers. As a partner in this grant, Lake Land will work with Del Mar College in Texas and other project partners to establish the GeoTech Center as a means to increase the number and quality of educated geospatial technicians for rapidly expanding fields among geospatial technology industries.

The GeoTech Center has five goals:

- 1) Create a web-based curriculum clearinghouse serving as an educational resource with data, curriculum, and training supporting geospatial technology integration into elementary, secondary and community college learning environments;
- 2) Promote workforce and economic development opportunities for the region through internship opportunities for regional employers;
- 3) Increase the diversity and quality of geospatial technicians through targeting historically underserved demographic groups, such as women and minorities;
- 4) Provide a unifying voice for community colleges relative to geospatial technology with educational organizations and professional societies shaping the growth of this new occupational sector; and
- 5) Increase the number of community and technical college geospatial faculty and secondary school teachers participating in geospatial technology professional development. The URL for the GeoTech Center website is: <http://www.geotechcenter.org/>

The primary goal of this project was to develop a vision and plan for a national geospatial technology resource center in order to facilitate the development of curriculum, network technical expertise, and serve as a clearinghouse for products and services that will meet the needs of students, educators, government, business, and industry across a wide spectrum of disciplines. This project formed a steering committee of leaders in geospatial education to research issues critical to industry and education. These issues included: workforce needs, geospatial core competencies, certification, curriculum, pedagogy, educational pathways (including articulation and internships), professional development, communication, geospatial awareness and diversity, globalization and regionalize, future trends, and the qualities of a successful ATE Center.

Dr. Mike Rudibaugh is a member of the ILGISA Education Committee and was a presenter at the ESRI Educator's Conference in San Diego the weekend of July 11. He is a faculty member instructing Geography and Geographic Information Systems courses at Lake Land College (1996 to Present). Currently, he serves as the Co-PI for the GeoTECH Center for the National Science Foundation. He holds B.A. from Eastern Illinois University and a M.A. and Ph.D. from Indiana State University in Economic Geography. His doctoral research focused on linking how location (rural vs. urban) impacts how community colleges impact regional economic development. His role with the GeoTech Center is to support DACUM and Body of Knowledge alignment and uses of GIS in community college administration initiatives.

DUPAGE COUNTY, ILLINOIS 2009 NSDI GIS DATA AND STANDARDS

Coordination Demonstration Project

William J. Faedtke, GISP

DuPage County Manager of GIS

The DuPage County, Illinois GIS Division has embarked on a one year project that will prototype a new system of coordinated data sharing between local, state, and federal levels of government. This new system will also provide an unprecedented level of access to everyone for specific themes of the County's GIS data.

In March of this year, the County was the recipient of one of the four nationwide Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) 2009 Category 7 CAP Grant awards. The purpose of the Category 7 grants is to partially fund the development of model systems that will promote the availability of common GIS data across all levels of government. The FGDC is particularly interested in the development of systems that will support the concept of local and state agencies contributing to the ongoing maintenance of the National Map and the National Spatial Data Infrastructure.

For the 2009 Category 7 CAP award, FGDC required that that grant recipient provide boundary, structure, and transportation network GIS data for inclusion in the National Map that meets FGDC data standards.

A key component of the County's grant proposal is the partnering with the University of Illinois (U of I) to utilize the State GIS Clearinghouse to provide the mechanism for distributing data between the various levels of government and to the public. Dr. Don Luman, Principal Geologist of the U of I's Institute for Natural Resource Sustainability is managing the University's portion of the grant work.

While the U of I GIS Clearinghouse has been serving up data to the GIS

community since 1997, work being done under this grant will be the first time that such highly detailed county level data will be made available through this system.

The concept of expanding the services of the Illinois GIS Clearinghouse has its origins in the consortium of Northeastern Illinois counties (NEIL) GIS departments in the Chicago metropolitan area. During the past five years, these counties have been working together to develop common standards for data sharing and have been supporting each other during region wide emergency operations. While great progress has been made in the development of standards for the sharing of address, parcel, and transportation data between these counties, until the proposed use of the Clearinghouse, there has been no publicly available online system to access this data. Under our existing system, each county (and all other units of government) would still have to obtain this standardized data from each separate county, usually through the use of physical media such as CD's and DVD's.

A couple of years ago, Richard Hilton, the now retired director of the Lake County, Illinois GIS Division, proposed utilizing the Illinois GIS Clearinghouse to provide widespread access to detailed local GIS data. Although the concept proposed by Richard was not implemented at that time, the idea was so good that it became the cornerstone for the DuPage County FGDC 2009 CAP grant proposal.

The County is also working with other key partners in the development of this prototype data sharing system. Shelley

Silch, the Illinois liaison of the United States Geological Survey (USGS) is providing assistance in the use of the federal GIS standards including the implementation of the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) database standards for the structure data requirement of the grant.

DuPage County has retained the firm of GIS Solutions, Inc. of Springfield, Illinois, led by principals Robert Lindquist and Tim Johnson to work with Mark Kincaid and the staff of Illinois Department of Transportation to determine which categories of GIS transportation data will be maintained by each level of government.

One of the most important objectives of this model program is to dramatically improve the availability of GIS data produced by County government. Typical access today to most local government GIS data is via read-only viewing on a web map site, or by purchasing selected portions of the countywide data. Access to an entire set of countywide data has usually been cost prohibitive, limited by complex licensing agreements, or subject to long ordering lead times.

When this pilot program is completed in mid-2010, it is hoped that it will serve as the model for direct, no cost access by everyone to the valuable GIS data maintained by the various levels of government in Illinois. In light of the goals of the Obama administration and the State of Illinois for improved access to government data, we believe that this proposed system will provide the best means to obtain the vast quantities of essential GIS data.

THE FOUNDING OF ILGISA

*Richard Hilton, Retired Lake County GIS Manager and Founding Member of ILGISA
[Reprinted with permission of Richard Hilton, originally published Summer 2004]*

ILGISA celebrates its fifteenth anniversary this year. The long-term success of volunteer organizations is by no means guaranteed – many have come and gone. A number of things have to be gotten right to survive and flourish. It's a measure of the success of ILGISA that we take it for granted, and that it continues to attract new membership and volunteer involvement at higher levels over time. All of this brings great satisfaction to those of us who laid the foundation more than a decade ago.

ILGISA didn't just start at an instant in time; it evolved from an existing tradition. Here are the major factors and events that contributed to the birth of ILGISA.

The Role of IMAC

The Illinois Mapping Advisory Committee (IMAC) was, and is, a voluntary group of agencies and individuals interested in the mapping programs of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). IMAC members encouraged the development of USGS mapping programs in Illinois through joint funding opportunities and by providing suggested priorities. As an advisory committee, IMAC has no budget.

IMAC provided the only regular venue for Illinois public sector mapping professionals to gather, network, and exchange information. The group was chaired by Dr. Richard Dahlberg, Professor of Geography at Northern Illinois University (NIU) and Director of the NIU Laboratory for Cartography and Spatial Analysis. IMAC meetings consisted of program updates by the USGS liaison to Illinois and presentations by members and invited guest speakers. They took place in Springfield and Champaign at government agency offices or university facilities where the space was free.

As interest in GIS accelerated in the late 1980s, more GIS-related presentations were given. We put together several single-topic, full-day IMAC meetings at the Levis Faculty Center on the campus of the University of Illinois in Champaign in order to explore these topics in more depth. A full-day meeting in June 1989 focused on soil mapping and was the predecessor for a much larger meeting to take place the next year in DeKalb.

These IMAC GIS-oriented meetings reached their peak with a two-day event in Champaign in June, 1993, involving more than 20 speakers, an evening symposium on the National Spatial Data Infrastructure, and agency tours.

The Role of Illinois GIS and Mapnotes

A publication called Illinois Mapnotes (later renamed Illinois GIS and Mapnotes), began in June, 1981. It was edited by Dick Dahlberg and published by the Laboratory for Cartography and Spatial Analysis at NIU, later with the financial support of NIU's Center for Governmental Studies (CGS). Mapnotes

and its successors have been published annually (sometimes more frequently) from 1981 to the present. Its present incarnation is Illinois GIS Notes, which is published by ILGISA.

The early issues of Illinois Mapnotes document the beginnings of GIS in state and local government in Illinois. Mapnotes began as a 12-page black-and-white document. The September 1989 issue had a full-color cover, 20 pages, and a name change. It became Illinois GIS and Mapnotes – reflecting the emergence of GIS.

Similarly to IMAC, Mapnotes evolved in response to the level of interest in GIS. What started as a manageable volunteer project became an expensive and very time-consuming effort. The publication grew to more than 60 pages and took on a very polished appearance by the mid-1990s. Over time, the cost of publication rose substantially, although Mapnotes was distributed free of charge.

The Transition to ILGISA

The first truly statewide GIS meeting took place in August 1990 in facilities provided by the DeKalb County Farm Bureau. The same core group of volunteers that grew up with IMAC put this meeting together. A full day of presentations on digital soil mapping and tax parcel mapping drew an audience of 220 from 43 counties. The attendance at this meeting was further confirmation that interest in GIS was growing and that there was a need for Illinois GIS users to be able to meet each other and share experience on a regular basis. Like IMAC, this meeting took place in free facilities and lunch was on your own. There was no registration fee.

The Role of the Center for Governmental Studies

Realizing that the scale of these meetings had outgrown the available free meeting spaces and that there were growing costs, such as printing and mailing, we approached the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University for assistance. CGS performs a number of functions, including public opinion surveys, research, public policy development, and data and mapping services. They also serve as the secretariat for a number of professional groups.

We met with the then-Director of the CGS, Dr. Pete Trott, a colleague and longtime friend of Dick Dahlberg. He was willing to work with us, as unstructured as we were. Our volunteer group had no bank account, no income, and no organizational structure. We had no way to book hotel facilities for a conference. Dick and I worked on the programs with Ruth Anne Tobias acting as conference coordinator on behalf of CGS. Many volunteers participated to make these conferences a success.



The second statewide conference was held in December 1991. This first “GIS in Illinois” conference was our first meeting in paid hotel facilities and our first meeting that charged a registration fee. We continued this annual conference arrangement for the next two years.

The 1993 conference attracted more than 300 attendees. While the conference income managed to pay for direct costs – including meeting space, food, printing and postage – it didn’t cover the indirect costs incurred by CGS staff, nor did it resolve the growing financial challenge of publishing Mapnotes.

Dick and I had a dinner meeting at the 1993 conference to discuss these issues with Pete Trott and Carol Zar, executive director for several professional associations at CGS and later our first Executive Director. We explored for the first time the possibility of forming a non-profit association. At a planning meeting later that year the CGS we discussed the general plan for the 1994 conference and the mechanics for forming an association. That was the first occasion we used the term “Illinois GIS Association.”

The Founding of ILGISA in 1994

Throughout the spring of 1994 I worked with Dick to develop a business plan and an organizational structure for what was to become ILGISA. Most importantly, we knew we wanted to create what Sheryl Oliver was later on to describe as “a safe place”: meaning an organization that had nothing to sell and no agenda to push, where all would be welcome to come, meet, and share experiences in the tradition of IMAC. ILGISA was to be incorporated as a non-profit corporation under a provision that does not allow it to lobby or be involved in politics in any way.

We also believed that vendor user groups are best left to the vendors and that we would discourage conference presentations or articles for publication that center on the products or services of any single vendor. Our focus was meant to be on applications, problem solving, management issues, and concepts.

Vendors are important to GIS, and have always been welcome to exhibit or put on pre-conference workshops.



But by separating these activities from the conference presentations, attendees are able to choose whether they wish to encounter these vendors or not – they are not a captive audience.

The operating philosophy and structure were embodied in the draft bylaws and accompanied by a financial plan. I proposed to Dick an initial Board that included seven people: Dick Dahlberg (NIU), Richard Hilton (Lake County), Sheryl Oliver (IDNR), Don Rich (IDOT), Robert McLeese (USDA), Don McKay (ISGS) and James Carter (ISU). These individuals were drawn from federal, state, and local government and universities – we wanted all those viewpoints to be represented. We all agreed to participate, and the initial ILGISA Board was created. We met for the first time as a founding committee at the Illini Union in Champaign in August, 1994. We reviewed the reasons for establishing ILGISA and for forming a non-profit corporation. We discussed the kind of organization we wanted to be, confirming our values and our style. We recounted the legal steps that were required to come into existence and when we would make a public announcement. We discussed how ILGISA would relate to other organizations, such as IMAC, and the role of vendors. We reviewed an initial financial plan. The meeting ended with a strong feeling of enthusiasm and consensus.

A few months later, at the 1994 “GIS in Illinois” conference, we announced the formation of ILGISA. The Board elected its initial slate of officers, with Dick Dahlberg as President and Richard Hilton as Vice President. We concluded our first contract with the CGS to act as our secretariat.

ILGISA owes much to the Center for Governmental Studies and to its emeritus Director, Pete Trott, whom we honored a few years later with an ILGISA special recognition award for his vital contribution to our founding.

It’s not possible in this brief account to give adequate recognition to the many additional individuals who contributed to the early success of ILGISA. A number of them served on the Board in later years and many continue to be active participants today, more than fifteen years later. Together we’ve built an organization that continues a tradition going back a quarter of a century – a safe place for sharing experiences and networking.



ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE OF THE ILLINOIS GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS ASSOCIATION

Join your colleagues at the Annual Fall Conference of the Illinois Geographic Information Systems Association. This year we move to a brand new facility, NIU Naperville, located on the Naperville campus of Northern Illinois University. This facility is entirely wireless, offering new opportunities for attendees, presenters and exhibitors alike in utilizing the state of the art technology available--all FREE! If you attended the Spring 2009 Conference, you know how wonderful this new, free access is! Please join us as we move into this new facility and look to expand the educational offerings of ILGISA. We hope to offer to you quality learning, networking and socializing experience.

Conference Highlights

The Illinois Geographic Information Systems Association will be holding its nineteenth annual Fall Conference on October 5-6, 2009, at the campus of Northern Illinois University (NIU Naperville) in Naperville, Illinois. The era of innovation and integration has influenced the GIS Community forcing new methodologies, solutions and creativity to keep up with this constantly demanding world in which we live. Join us as ILGISA moves into the future...New Beginnings for GIS—throughout the state of Illinois! This event will feature structured workshops, technical sessions, panel discussions, technology demonstrations, project updates, as well as national and state speakers.

Highlights Include:

- A varied selection of workshop both hands-on and lecture style.
- Over a dozen full tracks of conference sessions covering a wide range of topics, including a track devoted to student research, GIS Q&A's and a career panel discussion. Numerous individual presentations to choose from to attend!
- A poster competition among GIS users, both professional and student level.
- A student presentation competition for both undergraduate and graduate student competitors will take place on the second day of the conference with valuable prizes awards to the outstanding presentation as judged by a panel of GIS experts.
- An exhibit hall featuring a variety of Exhibitors showcasing their latest GIS related hardware, software, products and services. Please make sure to spend time with them as they are the leading edge of GIS applications and upcoming technology.
- Silent Auction benefiting the newly formed ILGISA Endowment Funds.

Who Should Attend?

- Government officials who implement GIS for a variety of applications. Federal, State, County, City and local officials are all welcome.
- Surveyors, engineers and land management specialists who use GIS technology.
- People want to utilize and/or publish GIS data over the Web.
- Business, real estate, banking and insurance specialists who need to understand and access GIS data.
- Public and private utility representatives who use GIS technology for infrastructure management.
- Consultants who provide GIS services, hardware or software.
- People in precision agriculture, health care and other fields just starting to use GIS.
- University faculty and students interested in new GIS technology and research applications.
- Individuals interested in obtaining GISP certification credits towards their GIS professionalization.
- Individuals or organizations interested or concerned with homeland security or emergency preparedness.
- Managers who supervise GIS technology or staff
- GIS professionals in any discipline.

Come network with your peers and exchange ideas! Sometimes the best ideas begin with a simple conversation or a single Power Point slide during a presentation. The only thing holding you back is the parameter of your own imagination! So come join us and explore the endless opportunities. There will be at least twenty exhibitors on display with lots of goodies! There is plenty of room to visit with each of the exhibitors, along with convenient tables and good food. These conferences would not be possible without their participation, so please spend time with them to learn about the latest and greatest in the market today. Poster prizes and announcements will take place within the exhibit hall.

If you have any questions, please give Tracy Rogers a call at 815-753-2090 or send an e-mail to trogers@niu.edu. We are always glad to help, and speaking for the Board of Directors and the Conference Planning Committee, we value your feedback and input on the planning of these events.

Thank you and hope to see you in October!

CONGRATULATIONS TO NEW GISP'S!

Congratulations to the following five individuals who recently completed their requirements for certification as a GISP!

Amy Ahner, Village of Glenview

Michael Schultz, CDM – Camp Dresser & McKee, Inc.

Edward Amoo, McHenry County

Sheena Beaverson, State of Illinois

Timothy Gansen, City of St. Charles

WELCOME TO ILGISA'S NEW MEMBERS!

First Name	Last Name	Title	Company
James	Baker	Survey Manager	Bollinger Lach & Associates
Mark	Belding	Database & System Administrator	Illinois State Water Survey - University of Illinois
Susan	Bieszczat	N/A	
Dennis	Bowman	Extension Educator	University of Illinois Extension
Tad	Britt	Researcher/ Program Manager	Compass Systems Inc.
Greta	Buckley	GIS Specialist	Illinois State Water Survey
Larry	Callant	GIS Corrdinator	Ogle County GIS
M.E.	Collins		
Milan	Cukvas	Student	College of Elmhurst
Jordan	Decker	GIS Manager	Geosyntec Consultants
Robins	DeShawn	GIS TEchnician	City of Champaign
Jarred	Dexter	Technician	Huff & Huff
William "Max"	Dieber	Co-Director UDVL	College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs
Charles	Ehlschlaeger	Geographer	Engineering Research Development Center - Construction Engineering Research Lab
Pete	Fandel	Crops Educator	University of Illinois Extension
Brooke	Ferguson	GIS Specialist	Lake Land College
Robert	Fitzgerald		
Todd	Freer		
Charles	Fuller	Lecturer	Triton College
Kris	Gilbert	GIS Specialist	Ogle County
Britt	Gill	Mapping Sales Representative	Seiler Instrument
David	Gilleland	GIS Planner	Illinois Army National Guard
Renee	Gilleran	Design Sales Executive	Seiler Instrsument
Andrew	Gossrow	Highway Data Manager	IDOT
Philip	Graff	GIS Coordinator	Illinois State Water Survey
Patti	Grove		University of Illinois GSLIS
Abby	Hahne	Graduate Public Service Intern	Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Dan	Harms	Instructor	Jo Daviess Carroll Area Vocational Center

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Randall	Heggen	Technical Services Assistant	City of Rock Island
Jodi	Heitkamp	Cartographer	Northern Illinois University
Cole	Henderson		Ploughman Analytics
Sam	Hildebrand	GIS Technician	Forest Preserve District of Will County
R Timothy	Hopper		
Melinda	Hoskin	Technical Services Assistant	City of Rock Island
Dawnell	Hubbert	Cartographer III Supervisor	IDOT
Andrew	Hulin	Geographic Analyst	IDNR
Susan	Hultgren	Sr. GIS Mapping Technician	City of Naperville
Scott	Immel	Land Surveyor	Fehr-Graham & Associates
Monte	Johnson	GIS Administrator	City of Sullivan
Hogenboom	Karen	Asst. Government Info Librarian	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Emily	Kelley	Research Assoc. / Atlas of Historical County Boundaries Project	
Cassidy	Killian	GIS Coordinator	Town of Normal
Gretchen	Knapp	Research Associate	GEOMAP
Joshua	Knight		
Joseph	Kopinski	Mapping Technician	Village of Oswego
Dustin	Kosmach	IS Technician	Village of Algonquin
Mike	Koutnik	Account Manager	ESRI
Chad	Krater	GIS Specialist	MGP Inc.
Stephen	Kwiatkowski	GIS Specialist	URS
Ryan	Leonard	Sales Manager	Kara Company Inc.
Yu-Feng	Lin	Coordinator ESRI-GIS Development Center; Hydrogeologist Illinois State Water Survey	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Deette	Lund	GIS Specialist	Illinois State Geological Survey
Catherine	Lutz	GIS/Data Analyst	Northwest Central Dispatch System
Stephanie	Macuga	GIS Analyst	Scott County
Garrett	Malcolm	GIS Analyst	The City of Lake Forest
Janice	Maliska	GIS Processor	DuPage County GIS
Jenny	McBride	Research Assistant/GIS Specialist	The Morton Arboretum
Brad	McVay	GIS Specialist	Illinois State Water Survey
Dawn	McWha	Senior Enterprise GIS Consultant	ESRI
Tim	Mescher	GIS Mapping Coordinator	Kane County
Emily	Miller	GIS Analyst	Wills Burke Kelsey Associates
Daniel	Milz	GIS Analyst/Environmental Specialist	Applied Ecological Services
Jeff	Mitzelfelt	GIS Coordinator - Bureau of Water	Illinois EPA

Susan	Monte	Planner	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
Michael	Morris	GIS Technician	Illinois Dept. of Transportation Division of Traffic Safety
James	Mortland	Visiting Outreach Assistant	University of Illinois Extension
Marc	Nelson	Development Manager	Village of Manhattan
Jonathan	Oelschlager	GIS Analyst	Kendall County Illinois
Norman	Padalino	Police Officer	Chicago Police Department
Kyle	Parker	GIS Specialist	UGL Equis
Anna	Paul		
Garrett	Phillips	GIS Intern	US Environmental Protection Agency
Philip	Pittman	GIS Coordinator	Illinois Department of Public Health
Neal	Pleskunas	GIS Specialist/Planner	Klingner & Associates P.C.
Mike	Pordes	GIS and Enterprise Management Team Leader	Patrick Engineering Inc.
Robert	Queer III	Geographic Specialist	US Census Bureau
Rafael	Quiroz	Corporate Recruiter	NAVTEQ Inc.
Amrita	Ranjan	GIS Intern	DuPage County GIS Division
Dan	Ridenour	GIS Specialist	Gewalt Hamilton Associates Inc.
Rogers	Ristow Jr.	Hazard Modeler	5th Civil Support Team
Barbara	Roberts	Youth Development Educator	University of Illinois Extension
Andrew	Rooyackers	GIS Technician	Will County GIS
Mike	Rudibaugh	Faculty	Lake Land College
Marilyn	Ruiz	Director GIS and Spatial Analysis Lab	Department of Pathobiology University of Illinois
Danielle	Scarfe	President	SCARFE Consulting LLC
Shelley	Schindler	Research Climatologist	University of Illinois-Illinois State Water Survey
Marshall	Schrader	Director of Engineering and Maintenance	The Galesburg Sanitary District
Tim	Schroll	GIS Center	Western Illinois University
Mamie	Scott	GIS Analyst	Cook County Dept. of Technology
Mike	Scott	GIS Analyst	Lake County Division of Transportation
Mark	Shell	Industrial Tech Instructor	Wilmington High School
Paul	Sill	President	Forum Analytics LLC
Lesia	Simon	Research Coordinator	Waubensee Community College
Hersh	Singh	Research Assistant	Urban Transportation Center
Christopher	Smith	Assistant Professor	Northern Illinois University
Todd	Sobieck	GIS/Crime Analyst	Cook County Sheriff's Dept.
Kenneth	Soyemi	AMD	IDPH
Bob	Spelich	HEIV	Cook County Highway Dept.
Douglas	Splitt	Engineering Technician	City of Naperville
Dan	Stevenson	GIS Specialist	Illinois State Geological Survey
Scott	Stocking	Project Director	Woolpert

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Kris	Stout	Manager of Institutional Research	Waubonsee Community College
Jessica	Stowell	GIS Systmes Analyst	Cook County 911
Eric	Stromberg	Parcel Maintance Manager	Winnebago County
Daniel	Thurston	Geospatial Analysis & Modeling Section Head	Illinois State Geological Survey
Lisa Rothschild	USDA-FSA Diane Mason	Contracting Officer	USDA-IL State FSA Office
Tara	Vanduyne	Technology Instructor	Wilmington High School
Howard	Veregin		
Amy	Wagner	Assistant City Engineer	City of Lockport
Garret	Wais	GIS Specialist	Forest Preserve District of Cook County
Patrick	Walker	Captain/Shift Commander	Greater Round Lake FPD
Michael	Wallace	GIS Specialist	American Surveying & Engineering PC
James	Westervelt	Research Scientist	Army Corps ERDC
Elizabeth	White	Web Specialist	Elmhurst Park District
Daniel	Withers	Cartographic Tech.	USDA-NRCS
Jennifer	Wollenweber	Soil Scientist	DuPage County Stormwater Management Division
Jennifer	Woodrick	Engineering Assistant	United City of Yorkville
Kristine	Wright	Environmental Scientist	V3 Companies
Song	XU	GIS PC Support Analyst	DuPage County GIS
Emily	Yates	Seed Bank Coordinator	Chicago Botanic Garden
Jon A	Yonamine		
Carey	Zinck	Senior GIS Specialist	HDR Engineering
Emily	Zvolanek		Village of Burr Ridge Public Works

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW STUDENT MEMBERS!

Kelsey	Caldwell	Student	
Mark	Cox	Student	
Kevin	Donovan	Student	Northern Michigan University
zahra	Golshani	Student	
Heather	Hall	Student	Elmhurst College
Catherine	Peters	Student	
Nathan	Rold	Student	
Linas	Saulys	Student	
George	Stoyanov	Student	Elmhurst College
Jelena	Sudar	Student	Elmhurst College
Jason	Tinkey	Student	Northeastern Illinois University
Luke	VanLandegen	Graduate Student	Northern Illinois University
Cynthia	Vogel	Graduate Student	
Maggie	Yagen	Student	