

THE SUMMIT

News From and For The Washington GIS Community

WAURISA

The Washington State Chapter of
URISA – The Association for GIS Professionals



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WASHINGTON STATE GIS PROGRAMS RESPOND TO BUDGET CUTBACKS

By, Greg Babinski, GISP

The international financial crisis that began in 2008 on Wall Street and with the bursting of the housing market bubble has impacted GIS programs across Washington State. GIS development money and funds for ongoing operation of municipal GIS has always been difficult to justify, acquire, and retain. The crisis has resulted in significant new challenges for GIS. Money to expand existing programs (let alone develop new ones) is now almost impossible to come by and many programs have had to cut back, in order to help city and county budgets live within the reality of post crisis revenue.

How serious can this problem get? Recently, one of the most respected and innovative GIS programs in the country – Chester County GIS in Pennsylvania – was forced to lay off more than half its staff, including its highly respected and widely known manager, Peirce Eichellberger.

This article outlines how municipal GIS programs are typically funded, looks at the impact of the financial crisis on city and county GIS programs in Washington, and outlines some of the ideas and strategies that managers have developed to try and maintain viable GIS programs.

How do GIS programs get funded?

To understand the problem we have to understand how and where our GIS programs get their funding. The short answer is 'it depends.' There is no standard method for funding municipal GIS but a few basic models or combinations of models cover most programs.

Initial development or major expansions of GIS are often funded by grants or as capital projects. More rarely, general fund or department operational budgets are used for initial GIS development. Fortunately, GIS development is a one time (though very costly) event that for most large and many medium and small sized municipalities is a thing of the past.

See: GIS Budgets, page 2

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

WAURISA Cartography Workshop	p. 9
WAGIC 2009 Listening Sessions	p. 10
WAURISA Call for Workshop Presenters ...	p. 11
NE WA / SE OR GIS User Meeting	p. 13
Jeff Holm	p. 13
Opinion Page	p. 17

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Dear GIS friends and colleagues - Fall is in the air and we are all now getting re-accustomed to rain, colder temperatures, and a fire in the fireplace. But that doesn't mean that WAURISA committees and volunteers have decided to hibernate. On the contrary momentum is increasing and our committees have excellent programs planned for the remainder of 2009 and into 2010.

Our committees are very active and are working on planning our next conference and workshops as well as marketing our organization and what GIS can do in our communities. Through these outreach activities, now is a great time to volunteer some of your time with the organization. I have had the pleasure of meeting with many of you and through those meetings I know how talented and energetic our members are. By volunteering you can learn new skills and try new things or demonstrate your talents, all while working with a wonderful team of dedicated professionals and getting credit toward your GISP certification. I encourage you to reach out and volunteer with our organization by contacting any of the committee leaders shown on the web site or contacting me at president@waurisa.org.

We are pleased to present a fall Cartography workshop this month at the Edmonds Conference Center. This is a new workshop developed by many of the talented individuals at the King County GIS Center. The workshop is URISA certified and has already seen great success at the URISA Conference in Anaheim, California earlier this fall. Registration is now open for this workshop and space is limited to 60 so I encourage you to register early for this great educational opportunity.

Our board is active in the coordination with our parent URISA organization and other chapters throughout North America. Many of our board members recently attended the chapter leaders meeting and URISA conference earlier this fall in Anaheim. Through this coordination the board is considering new directions for our organization and its members through new professional growth, outreach and collaboration opportunities. As you read through this issue of the Summit you will notice some of these opportunities such as the URISA Leadership Academy in Seattle. Please take advantage of these opportunities if you can and let us know what you would like to see in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as the Washington URISA chapter president. If you have any questions or comments please don't hesitate to contact me.

Cheers,
- Don Burdick, President.



GIS BUDGETS

Continued from page 1

As GIS operations begin to mature, adequate staff and annual operational funding is the fuel required to reap the benefits of the technology, while also maintaining the system and making incremental additions or improvements. Where do operating budgets come from? Some capital budgets are designed to provide a year or two of GIS operating budget, but this is not a long-term answer.

GIS has to find a source of funding within city and county budgets. Municipal revenue sources include property and sales tax revenue (which usually goes into a 'general fund'), fees for specific government services (permitting, E911, utilities, recording, etc.), voter-approved levies for specific purposes (parks, libraries, etc.), contract service revenue (for example a county providing police services for a city), bond funding (borrowed money – usually for major capital projects), and some grant funding.

This catalog of municipal revenue sources might make it seem that any municipality should be able to come up with adequate funding for a wide-array of government services. Washington State of course has a variety of voter-imposed revenue and spending limits that hamstring municipal budgets. For many years general fund revenue for most counties and many cities has been severely impacted. Many non-discretionary government services depend of general fund revenues, including public safety (police, fire, and EMS), jails, courts, public defender, public health, etc. Costs for most of these services have been growing much faster than the general fund revenues available to support them.

Fee based government services have fewer statutory limits but city and county councils are still sensitive to political pressure to keep these fees low. And fee based services can be subject to dramatic declines. For example, the 2008 collapse of the housing market has reduced municipal permitting and recording fees across the state.

Many city and county budgets have been hurt also by big cost increases for fuel beginning in 2007 and into 2008. When gasoline and diesel prices soared to \$4 per gallon, agencies with big transit fleets had to cut costs across the board to maintain service levels.

In addition to source of funding, GIS has to find a place within the agency's organization and funding model. The organizational location of GIS can impact its funding. In some cases GIS may be located in the mayor or county executive's office, recognized as a key enterprise resource. While this may provide political clout within the agency, it typically means that the budget comes from the general fund. In some cases GIS may be located in a sponsor department, like public works, planning, or assessments. In this scenario, GIS is funded via utility or permit fees, with services provided to other agency departments on an 'as-available' basis. In other agencies GIS may be part of the IT division, with its budget rolled into the IT cost recovery model. King County GIS may be unique in the state as a separate internal service fund, with its own budget, financial plan, and fund reserves.

Regional consortiums are another funding option – like the E.gov Alliance of suburban cities to the east of Seattle – which contract with the city of Bellevue to provide some GIS and related capability. Some counties (King, Yakima, Pierce, and Clark) generate considerable revenue providing GIS services to outside customers.

How does the financial crisis impact agencies and their GIS programs?

Budgets are society's way of allocating scarce resources to meet the needs of the citizens we serve. When municipal revenues decline (or don't keep up with inflationary pressures) the job of department directors, municipal executives, and councils is to decide what the most critical needs of society are and what resources are available to meet them. The competition for a share of municipal budgets is intense under the best of conditions...when budget resources decline, we as GIS managers face our most critical challenge.

The financial pressure on GIS is determined by how the GIS program is funded and where it is located within the organization. There is another important factor too – the ability of the GIS manager to deploy leadership and marketing skills to ensure that the decision makers have a clear and full understanding of the benefits of GIS and of the consequence for the entire organization (and the public at large) of cutbacks in the GIS Program.

Budget cutbacks can be an opportunity too, to re-examine how the GIS program does its work, to identify efficiencies and cost savings, and to develop a culture that continually seeks to implement cost-effective best practices learned from others.

City and county survey

In late September 2009, The Summit sent a questionnaire to 63 municipal GIS managers (25 counties and 38 cities) in Washington State to determine how their programs have been affected by agency budget cutbacks and learn how they have reacted.

Budget reductions

Pierce County GIS:

Linda Gerull and Art Seeley from Pierce County GIS reported that they have been told to cut staff and they have also been given target dollar amounts for additional cuts from their GIS budget.

Art Seeley identified a key problem for municipal GIS budgets:

'...when budget cuts start to occur the "protect thyself first" mentality comes into play. Departments start to look at protecting their own staff, programs and instantly forget that much of their business processes are technology based and were put in place to limit the need for additional staffing by increasing the efficiency of current staff. By cutting their IT budget and IT support, they create their own vicious whirlpool of too much work, with fewer staff, the decreased ability of IT to integrate more technology to increase staff efficiency so the department backlog grows exponentially...'

Budget cutbacks can be an opportunity too, to re-examine how the GIS program does its work

See GIS Budgets, Page 3

GIS BUDGETS

Continued from page 2

Pierce County GIS anticipated budget issues in 2008 as they were preparing their 2009-2010 budget, so they limited filling vacant positions throughout 2009. As further staff reductions were anticipated, they evaluated each staff person and developed a matrix of their skill sets. Then they analyzed both short and long term direction for the group and created a matrix of all skill sets that were needed to ensure that their staff could successfully support their long-term objectives by rating each staff member against the matrix of needed skills.

Non labor budget reductions at Pierce GIS included leasing capital equipment instead of purchasing and they are looking at doing the same for some software. They are also planning to keep computing equipment longer to reduce replacement costs and they have also limited training and supply purchases.

Art and Linda indicated that they have been able to argue their case with upper management to reduce budget cutbacks. Art Seeley described it this way:

"...it takes documentation, analysis, and outlining the pros and cons of the decision from a neutral position so the decision makers have all the facts. We had a situation where a cut was requested and we were able to reduce the amount of the cut with documentation on the previous year's level of use, current demands for service and projected resource needs for future projects. So we went from a 2.5 FTE cut to a 1 FTE cut."

King County GIS Center:

The King County GIS (KCGIS) Center 2009 budget included 10 mandatory unpaid furlough days for all county employees. The budget also saw the reduction of one vacant FTE assigned to Metro Transit GIS and minor reductions in budget for office supplies. The elimination of the FTE was directly related to the financial crisis and especially to the mid-2008 spike in oil prices, which increased Metro's bus fleet fuel costs and led to wide spread cost cutting to help mitigate the problem and preserve transit service levels.

For the 2010 budget, the KCGIS Center actually increased its software maintenance budget by about 25% related to the consolidation of GIS software licenses from other county agencies. This increase (about \$32K) will be offset by cost reductions for those agencies that migrated their licenses, for a net zero budget impact countywide. This consolidation involves ArcInfo, ArcEditor, ArcView, and ArcGIS extension licenses which will be managed on KCGIS Center servers and checked out to users anywhere in King County. Because actual license use at any given time is much lower than the total number of licenses available, software consolidation will slow or eliminate the need for additional licenses in the short term and may allow the county to reduce software maintenance costs in the future.

For the 2010 budget, county agencies were told to include another 10 unpaid furlough days for all employees. In addition, the KCGIS Center proactively decided to eliminate another vacant FTE position, but added a term-limited temporary (TLT) position for two years of funded GIS work for the Wastewater Treatment Division.

However, as *The Summit* was going to press, King County agencies were instructed to come up with alternate cost savings if labor unions do not agree to another year of unpaid furlough days. For the KCGIS Center this meant eliminating another vacant FTE, plus some additional minor reductions in supplies and services.

San Juan County GIS

Melissa Crane, San Juan County GIS Coordinator explained that San Juan County's GIS program is located in the Public Works Department, which is primarily funded through State shared revenues rather than the typical funding sources of the General Fund/County Current. The other significant funding source for San Juan GIS is E911, which is also State funded.

As a result, the primary focus of San Juan County GIS is to provide GIS services to the Public Works Department and E911. They do however provide technical support and basic GIS services to all County departments. Larger projects for other departments are funded on an as needed basis by the requesting department. As a result of this funding structure, San Juan County GIS has not had any budget cuts while the rest of the County (other than Public Works) has been hit pretty hard.

See GIS Budgets, Page 4



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GIS BUDGETS

Continued from page 3

They have also not seen much of a drop in funding from other San Juan County departments because the GIS program is still young and they are still educating people about the benefits of GIS. The amount of funding they have received from other departments since the inception of the GIS Program three years ago has been minimal as the departments that buy into GIS are already supporting it. While significant progress has been made to get other departments on board with GIS, they still have a ways to go to get them to budget money for GIS support and services. This has created some problems for San Juan County GIS in terms of data maintenance because most departments do not have staff or funding to maintain their data. Also, decisions are made about software applications that could integrate with GIS without any planning or involvement with the GIS Team. Melissa reports that they are making progress in these areas, but it is a slow process.

Mason County GIS:

Matt Stull & Jennifer Radcliff from Mason County GIS told *The Summit* that in September 2008, they had four people in their GIS Department: a GIS Manager, a GIS Analyst, and two GIS Technicians. In December 2008, they lost their GIS Manager when she left to take another position and her position has never been refilled. The GIS manager position is still part of the current county budget.

Mason County's junior GIS technician was laid off at the end of 2008 and the position was removed from the 2009 budget. All GIS training and conference funding was cut from the 2009 budget, leaving the county with a "bare bones" GIS budget. Mason County also stopped replacing computer equipment in 2009. This bare bones budget is enough to pay for salary & benefits, supplies (like plotter paper and ink) and software maintenance. The only extra item with funding is about \$10k for aerial photography through the NAIP program.

Matt and Jennifer are able to argue their case to management about most things. They were successful in convincing them to purchase a new server for GIS but that was before the worst of the budget crunch hit. They have not needed to shut down any part of their GIS program, although many projects have been delayed.

Clark County GIS:

Bob Pool, Clark County GIS Manager reported that their budget is aided by the fact that they provide fee-based GIS services to Vancouver and to other agencies.

Wahkiakum County GIS:

Josh Tallman, Wahkiakum County's new GIS technician, reported that theirs is a new GIS program, funded by E911.

City of Kent GIS:

Kurt Palowez, Kent GIS Supervisor, said that the city has an ambitious Enterprise GIS plan that has been put on hold. The plan included funds for training which would have been useful as they transition to an SDE geodatabase. But that hasn't really had much of an impact since the core GIS group in Public Works is using a less sophisticated file geodatabase and managing to get the job done.

Kurt said that aside from that there have been no cuts to GIS, although other departments have experienced layoffs and had programs reduced or eliminated. Kurt thinks reasons for this include:

- The GIS staff is paid out of the Enterprise Funds (utilities) and Public Works projects - not the General Fund
- The Administration is aware that GIS is swamped with work and has a significant backlog despite the slowdown in permitting/building activity
- Past experience has shown that it is not cost effective to contract out GIS work

City of Auburn GIS:

Ashley Riggs, City of Auburn GIS & Integration Manager, reported that they have been given a percentage to cut on a department wide basis. They have not had to eliminate staff, but Auburn has cut costs for licenses, supplies, and training.

City of Bellingham GIS:

Don Burdick, City of Bellingham GIS/Technical Services Manager told *The Summit* that the GIS group within Public Works has had to cut the equivalent of 1.5 positions and about 30% of the budget for travel, training and professional services. The labor cuts have been through attrition and eliminating a temporary position. Bellingham GIS has also reduced its budget for new software.

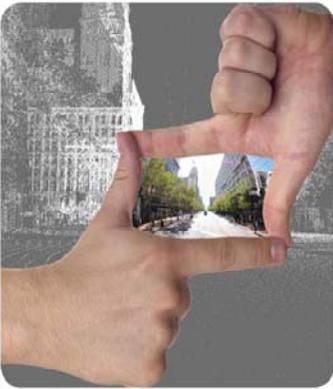
See GIS Budgets, Page 6



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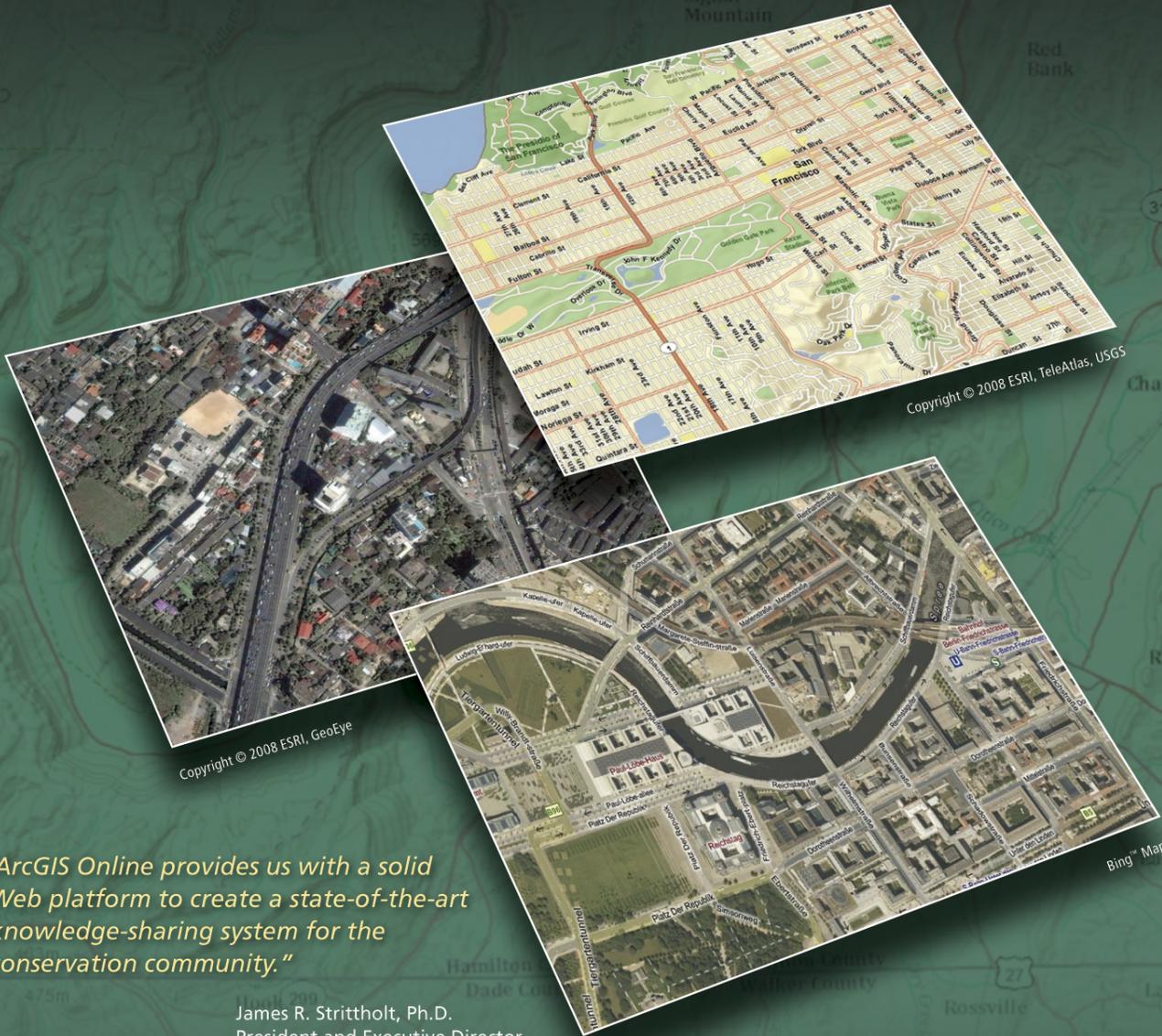




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GIS BUDGETS

Continued from page 4

Don explained how he develops his budget:

"We have two situations at the city of Bellingham. First the level of service provided to certain customers has changed based on their ability to pay for services. In some cases we have cut service levels for certain datasets we maintain and support services based on what customers can pay to provide those services.

"I am also given a goal for specific budget cuts in addition to any revenue cuts established through customer cuts. I must balance both the budget cuts and revenue cuts in my final proposed budget. Technically my budget is only a recommendation to the director, but the documented services and impacts makes acceptance a formality if the goals have been met."

Don said that to minimize the impact of budget reductions, they have postponed or slowed down major projects, leveraged on-line training, and defined critical, important and luxury services. He also feels that they can argue their case with some success for minimizing cuts.

"...by defining levels for each service we provide we have been able to show what customers will be affected and how their work processes will be impacted. This identified critical staff that needed to be kept to maintain service levels required by customers."

However, Bellingham GIS has had to discontinue support, enhancement, and development of all custom applications that are not for the entire enterprise. Many of the applications built over the past decade are no longer being supported or enhanced in any way. This has impacted several small groups that utilize the custom application to support their business processes. The only exception to this is the development of the enterprise wide ArcGIS server application which is considered a replacement for some of the custom applications no longer supported.

City of Bellevue GIS Program:

Ann Boyd, City of Bellevue GIS Manager reported that their GIS program has not been affected directly, except for limits to out of state training. She is involved in budget discussions and was asked to offer up a percent cut in the GIS budget. None were taken however, because other programs cuts in ITD were taken instead. There have been no labor cuts to date, although Bellevue has a voluntary furlough program and there is talk of making it mandatory for 2010.

On the positive side, Bellevue GIS was able to get a position approved that had been cut from the 09-10 budget. Ann explained:

"The argument was based on the neglect in our program of data maintenance and the resulting impacts to the entire organization, from neighborhood outreach to development services to public safety. Also we argued that we were centralizing and institutionalizing a disparate process into one position that will be more efficient in the future. Basically, the "house of cards" argument. ITD was able to find funding for a 2 year position, although we had asked for an FTE."

City of Burien GIS:

Dean Tatham, City of Burien GIS Manager reported that he's had to cut \$50k each from his software/hardware budget and special projects budget. This represents approx. a 20% reduction, which will continue into 2010. (This is not just for GIS but all City IS/GIS.) Dean said that he is given a target reduction, but then he can decide where to make the cuts.

Dean said that they have actually been able to increase staff – they added a full-time IT support person in May, but this position had to be revenue neutral, i.e. funded by savings by not outsourcing the work.

City of Longview GIS:

Ruth Bunch, City of Longview GIS Coordinator said that all city employees are taking 9 furlough days this year – City Hall is closed on these days. She also lost her GIS technician about a year and a half ago and it doesn't look like the position will be filled anytime soon – at least not in 2010. Ann was able to make her case to retain this position with city decision makers, but without success. The impact is that some data layers have not been maintained for over a year with a negative impact on data reliability.

Non-labor cost reductions included putting upgrades on hold for at least another year. Also training is not available.

Future outlook and budget cut mitigation strategies

Ashley Riggs said that Auburn GIS is deploying a new interactive GIS websites for core City applications. "If we can get more data and maps online, the fewer requests we have coming in."

Ann Boyd summarized the future outlook for Bellevue GIS:

"I have to say that we are so far surviving quite well, even though the City has made a lot of cuts. GIS is an enterprise need not tied to CIP or any other thing directly impacted by the economic downturn. That said the City is undergoing a MAJOR OVERHAUL of how we finance and provide city services which will have long-lasting impacts to everyone in the city and I expect we will not come through that untouched."

Dean Tatham, City of Burien GIS suggests capitalizing on grants within other departments. For example, DOE grant in Burien's Public Works funded an asset mgmt/work ticketing solution implementation ("CityWorks") in IT.

Matt Stull & Jennifer Radcliff report that Mason County GIS is trying to be more efficient by being better organized and automating as many processes as possible. They have colored coded their "To-Do / Project" list based on the priority of the task / project. This helps them to stay focused on the more pressing tasks when we they are tempted to work on lower priority items.

See GIS Budgets, Page 7

GIS BUDGETS

Continued from page 6

Art Seeley said that he and Linda Gerull have come to realize that Pierce GIS, as an IT group has not done a good job of educating directors, councils, budget staff on the cause and effect of new applications and technologies once they are implemented. Without establishing the baseline of what staff was doing then and comparing with what their volume is today, they do not have a way to prove that IT is an effective use of their budget dollar as compared to department's own FTEs. Art said:

"We have also not established a true matrix for the users of what it cost to maintain their system, implement new systems, provide enhancement, update infrastructure, etc. and therefore they are unable to quantify in their minds if it would be a better investment to save an IT person that will maintain and enhance their systems or eliminating one of their own staff. This is especially true when departments look to technology to cover their existing staff losses and do not realize their cutting the IT side affects the user's ability to implement efficiencies in a timely fashion if at all."

Art said that GIS managers needs to place themselves in the users shoes as many in IT take the approach they are indispensable and therefore have not done a good job of ensuring the users money was well spent. GIS has typically not quantified the dollar spent versus the return to the user.

"If user departments see an exponential growth in their IT budget, projects delayed, lack of allocated IT resource, told no several times, how can they see the benefits of IT over their own staff."

Art concluded by saying that Pierce IT and GIS needs to be ahead of the curve and work smarter, plan better, offer alternatives instead of a "no", look at enterprise solutions and not departmental solutions, find partners, and coordinate projects to share costs. One thing about GIS, according to Art,

"...is that we work with all the departments and are in the position to see collaborative opportunities and coordinate these opportunities. Bottom line is we need to be the leaders in thinking outside the box, the very best at controlling our costs, providing the greatest return on the user investment and ensuring the leaders are educated in what it takes to run IT."

Key strategies and best practices

So what is a GIS manager to do?

Melissa Crane from San Juan County GIS described her strategy:

"I am trying to show the decision makers the benefits of GIS and how it can improve efficiency by releasing applications, hosting training seminars, writing press releases and newsletters, etc. to educate decision makers, employees, and the public how we can do more with less using GIS. The message that I am trying to convey is that the goal of the GIS Team is to create a one-stop-shop for all County data. This allows any staff member or citizen to get various types of information from several County departments in one place."

See GIS Budgets, Page 8

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GIS BUDGETS

Continued from page 7

San Juan County GIS has just released a new Internet mapping application (<https://www.sjcgis.org/>) and they have several more applications planned that will contain a variety of data ranging from land use, habitat, septic systems, public lands, accidents, etc. Their training seminars discuss future plans for GIS as well as train users on our new mapping application. Melissa has hosted numerous sessions for staff and separate sessions for the public. She also strategically timed the release of this application to coincide with the County Fair where GIS demonstrated the software and strategically signed up to work the booth with Council members.

To promote their new Internet Mapping Application, they will have a scavenger hunt on GIS Day that utilizes data and tools from the application. A gift certificate will be awarded to the winner purchased with personal funds. Melissa has also trained her team to think of everyone as clients rather than co-workers or citizens.

"When our clients say jump, we jump (within reason). I knew early on that GIS was still fairly new to this County, so I have made a huge effort to be as responsive and helpful as possible."

Other strategies that Melissa uses include:

- Release high profile, tangible products at key times (i.e. during the budget process, right before the County Fair, a week before the budget is adopted, etc.)
- Host a GIS Day event every year that involves staff and the public
- Write newsletters, press releases, etc. to keep everyone informed of GIS projects
- Host GIS User's Group meetings for staff and community
- Bend over backwards to be as responsive as possible (if you can help someone at a moment's notice, that goes along ways in their book)

Art Seeley and Linda Gerull suggest:

- Keep staff informed and asked them to watch for opportunities. Act on what staff finds and work closely with departments that have grant opportunities to become part of the grant request.
- Expand services to other jurisdictions and private companies as everyone is looking to save money and community projects and sharing of resources provide those opportunities.

Acknowledgements:

Special thanks to those who responded to the survey or otherwise provided input for this article:

- Ann Boyd, City of Bellevue
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- Don Burdick, City of Bellingham
- Melissa Crane, San Juan County
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- Kurt Palowez, City of Kent
- Bob Pool, Clark County
- Jennifer Radcliff, Mason County
- Ashley Riggs, City of Auburn
- Art Seeley, Pierce County
- Matt Stull, Mason County
- Dean Tatham – City of Buriem
- Josh Tallman, Wahkiakum County

Greg Babinski is the Finance and Marketing Manager for the King County GIS Center in Seattle. He will be teaching the half day 'GIS Budgeting and Funding' session during the week-long URISA Leadership Academy, to be held December 7-11 in Seattle. He is also the Chief Editor for *The Summit*.
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- The process of making a map – conceptualization and planning
- The process of making a map – design, production, editing & Q/A, output, and reproduction

Intended Audience: This workshop is designed for the individual who may be new to GIS or who has not had specific training in cartography, but needs to create maps to support GIS data analysis and display. It will also be useful for GIS managers to understand how to manage a major cartographic project effectively.

Location: Edmonds Conference Center, 201 Fourth Ave N. Edmonds, WA 98020 425.640.1808

Date: November 16th, 2009

Registration: 8:00am

Cost: \$125 for WAURISA and URISA Members and \$140 for non-members

Class Scheduled: 8:30 am to 5:00 pm

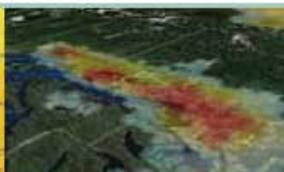
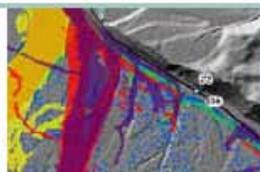
Refreshments and Lunch: Lunch and refreshments are provided. Lunch will be boxed lunches provided by The Catering Company and at the time of registration you can choose your lunch preference.

Parking: Free parking is at the conference center and on nearby streets.

Public Transportation: The conference center is 5 blocks from the Kingston Ferry Landing and 6 blocks from the Amtrak and Sounder Commuter Rail Station.

Registration for the workshop is open. See: <http://www.waurisa.org/Workshop.html>





WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

STATEWIDE GIS STRATEGIC AND BUSINESS PLANS

Regional Listening Sessions

All people, at all levels, and in all industries are either directly or indirectly affected by geographic information technology. Please join in the 2009 statewide effort to develop a new focus for GIS in Washington.

- What are the most important GIS issues in the state right now? The most important issues for your community?
- What are the State's major strategic opportunities for GIS?
- The most important thing the state could do to advance the statewide GIS is...

Please come to the Listening Session most convenient for you:



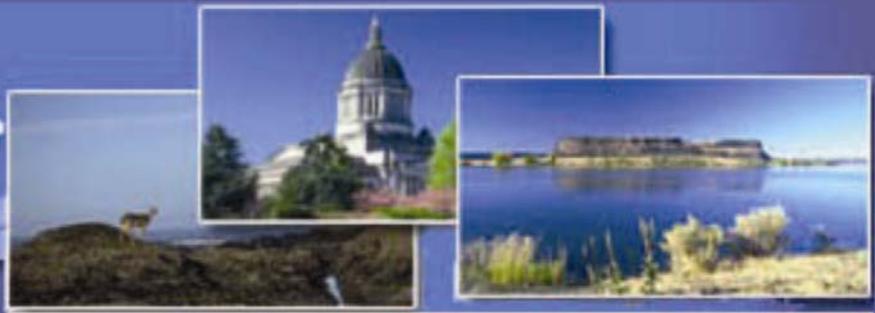
Please **RSVP** to:
Joy Paulus at joyp@dis.wa.gov
Specific meeting locations will be provided soon

Can't attend? Fill out an On-Line Survey at:
www.wagis.wa.gov/2009Planning/Survey

Survey will open no later than October 1, 2009 and close no earlier than November 10, 2009

For more information about the Project, please visit: www.wagis.wa.gov/2009Planning; or contact: Joy Paulus at joyp@dis.wa.gov

The Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) in partnership with the USGS and WAGIC provided funding for this activity



Call for Workshop Presenters

Enterprise GIS

GIS Management

Transportation

Asset Management

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Asset Management

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GIS & Land Surveying

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Metadata

Desktop GIS Apps

Mobile GIS Apps

Other Topics!

WAURISA invites you to participate as a presenter in upcoming workshops through 2010. We are in need of volunteers willing to give educational presentations on a wide range of GIS topics. Presentations can range in duration from at least 90 minutes to 7 hours. All submissions are welcome and will be evaluated as a potential workshop focus. Our goal is to present workshops in both the eastern and western portions of Washington State.

Specifically, presentations are being sought to fill:

- Half-day workshops for a pre-conference workshop series to be held on April 19th, 2010 in Tacoma, WA. Visit the WAURISA page (waurisa.org) to view 2010 conference details and previous workshop topics for examples. Pre-conference workshops can have 75 – 100 attendees.
- Content for GIS developer workshops to be held throughout 2010.
- Any other 90-minute to full day length content relevant to URISA members. If similar topic proposals are received, workshops focused on that subject will be considered. Visit the WAURISA [education page](#) for previous examples of workshops. Workshop attendance can be 30 – 75 people.

Please submit an abstract for the education sessions.

Submissions will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Subject matter is relevant to the WAURISA membership.
- Learning objectives are clearly outlined.
- Presentation materials will be provided at no or low cost (WAURISA will pay for black and white reproduction of instructional booklets.)
- Workshop will be presented in a way that it is educational in nature, and will not promote your company or services.
- Instructor has prior teaching/speaking experience.

Please submit an abstract of the presentation, presenter name(s), anticipated presentation duration, intended audience and any other supplemental documentation to illustrate how your presentation meets the criteria listed above to president@waurisa.org by **November 30th, 2009**. Submissions will be evaluated continuously but presenters are encouraged to submit early. Please address questions to president@waurisa.org

Presenters will benefit by receiving discounted learning opportunities!

- Conference workshop presenters will receive a complimentary registration to attend the full conference.
- Honorariums are available to non-conference presenters whose content is 3 hours or more.

SOUTHEAST WASHINGTON / NORTHEAST OREGON GIS USER MEETING A SUCCESS

By Chris Owen, GISP

(Editor's note: Earlier this year the WAURISA Board voted to provide financial support for a meeting of people interested in GIS from Southeast Washington and Northwest Oregon. The meeting was organized by Chris Owen, GISP.

The recent Southeast Washington / Northeast Oregon GIS User Group Meeting (SEWANEOR UGM), held at the Whitman College Reid Center, on September 17th, 2009 was a success. Twenty-eight people attended from around the area, including Jenny Brogdon and Scott Moore from ESRI Olympia. WAURISA provided funding for lunch and some marketing material to help support the meeting. Having lunch provided was a huge draw, and it was so convenient to eat in the meeting room – thanks to the Whitman College catering service.

This was not the first SEWANEOR UGM but rather an attempt to rejuvenate the meeting and try to bring it back to life. After the meeting was over I felt rejuvenated to try new things and explore new ideas. From the feedback from other people who attended, I think they were rejuvenated too. Normally, I feel this way after attending conferences or training sessions put on by other organizations, but I didn't think I would feel the same way after hosting a meeting...well, I was wrong. The reason I say this is because I came away with some really good information - tips on how to get started with some newer technology, server system configuration information and learned more about other programs in the area.

Scott Moore from the ESRI Olympia office started off with a "Creating Effective Web Maps" presentation. The presentation was packed with a lot of information on how to prepare data for web applications, examples of sample viewers and new RIA resources. This wowed the crowd and gave me quite a few ideas for the City of Walla Walla GIS program.

Sean Redar from the Army Corps of Engineers followed with a presentation on the Walla Walla Districts Enterprise GIS Program. Sean has the huge task of updating their system with newer system technology, organizing existing datasets and integrating older applications into the new system. I spoke with Sean after the presentation and Sean explained what specific hardware was being used and why they chose it. Again, this gave me some ideas for our own program.

SE Washington NE Oregon GIS User Group Meeting September 2009

Date: Thursday, September 17, 2009
Time: 9:00 - 1:00 PM

Where: Whitman College, Reid Center, Room G02

AGENDA:

1. Check In
2. Introduction
3. ESRI Presentation
4. Corps of Engineers Presentation
5. City of Walla Walla Presentation
6. Lunch!

I presented last and I discussed the City of Walla Walla's GIS program, focusing on integrations, ROI examples with a live demonstration. I was asked a few questions after the presentation, so hopefully people came away with new ideas for their own program.

The inspiration for the meeting was to re-establish and create new relationships - this is a good thing. Knowing what others are doing in the area is helpful and trying to work for a common goal is good, but knowing and talking to the people who make this happen is just as important. Sean Redar and I will be co-chairing future meetings and our goal is to have them twice a year. Our goal is to have an outlet for people to discuss GIS topics, be able to network, and showcase their work – we may even have a map gallery at the next meeting.

Finally, I wanted to thank WAURISA, ESRI Olympia, and Whitman College for their support and use of resources.

Chris Owen, GISP

GIS Supervisor
City of Walla Walla
Technical Services – GIS
cowen@ci.walla-walla.wa.us



JEFF HOLM, WAGIC COORDINATOR (1994 TO 2007)

(Editor's Note: The Summit recently received the following notice from Joy Paulus about the passing of Jeff Holm)

It is with great sadness that I announce the passing of a fellow retired GISer.

Jeff Holm, WAGIC Coordinator (1994 to 2007), NSGIC member, friend and co-worker passed away last night surrounded by his family and friends.

Shortly after retiring from state government in 2007, Jeff was diagnosed with cancer. He had hoped to do more mountain and road bike riding, to work on putting his sports car back together, to travel with his wife of many years and do many other things that retirement affords us.

I'm glad some of us had the opportunity to know and work with him.

-Joy Paulus
Washington State GIS Coordinator



APRIL 19 - 21, 2010

RISE

TO THE CHALLENGE

Tacoma, WA



WAWRISA

GREATER TACOMA CONVENTION & TRADE CENTER

2009 GIS IN TRANSIT CONFERENCE

The Route to Success in Transit GIS



Sponsored by URISA and the National Center for Transit Research (NCTR)

URISA and the University of South Florida's National Center for Transit Research at the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) are pleased to announce a new partnership to present the 2009 GIS in Transit Conference, taking place in St. Petersburg, Florida, November 16-18, 2009.

http://www.urisa.org.php5-12.websitetestlink.com/gis_transit

2010 GIS/CAMA CONFERENCE



Changing Values in Changing Times Economic Influences on Property Valuation GIS/CAMA Technologies Conference Little Rock, Arkansas March 8-11, 2010

http://www.urisa.org.php5-12.websitetestlink.com/gis_cama

2009 URISA LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



**URISA Leadership Academy
December 7-11, 2009 - Seattle, WA**

Registration for the 2009 ULA Is now OPEN!

www.urisa.org/ula

"I felt that the ULA truly authenticated the change in mentality from being a general worker to a true geospatial professional, or leader. It really boosted a change in attitude for me."

- Craig Barraclough, GISP, Park County (CO) GIS

Course Outline for ULA - Seattle

Courses are taught by proven leaders in the profession, with materials reviewed and enhanced by a team of reviewers and editors. Each course will include numerous interactive exercises, team-building tools, and opportunities to delve into topics in a way you cannot do at large conferences. Course attendance is limited in size to encourage such interaction. Click on each day heading below for details about each session.

Monday, December 7, 2009

Session 1: Introduction to Leadership and Management
Welcome Reception

Tuesday, December 8, 2009

Session 2: Building a Successful Team

Wednesday, December 9, 2009

Session 3a: GIS and Organizational Capacity Building: How May I Help You? *Session 3b:* Show Me the Money - An Introduction to Budgeting & Finance for GIS

Seattle Night Life Launch Pad Reception!

Thursday, December 10, 2009

Session 4: GIS Politics and Change Management

Friday, December 11, 2009

Session 5: Putting It All Together – Evaluating Where You Are and Planning Where You're Going

Luncheon Keynote - Cy Smith, GISP



The Association For **GIS** Professionals

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Have you seen the new URISA Website? See: www.URISA.ORG

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Save the Date

2010 WASHINGTON GIS CONFERENCE:

Rise to the Challenge
April 19-21, 2010
Tacoma Convention Center



In addition to the paid sponsors listed on this page, WAURISA acknowledges support from the following agencies that provide chapter board members:

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- ESRI
- Port Madison GIS
- City of Olympia
- Pierce County
- Douglas County
- Wendt GIS
- King County GIS Center

THE SUMMIT - EDITORIAL

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF GIS?

What is the value of GIS? Seems like a simple question. But do we GIS professionals assume too readily that the answer is apparent to the agencies that employ us? If we are asked to describe the business value of our GIS project or program, how do we answer? The focus of this issue of *The Summit* is on the response to the recent financial crisis by Washington city and county GIS programs. The problem is being felt in Olympia also as the State faces cutbacks, and in regional agencies, tribes, and utilities.

Transit agencies have been hard hit as rising oil prices forced them to trim budgets to preserve existing service levels. Imagine you are a transit agency director – your job is to put buses on the road. By eliminating a GIS FTE, you can save maybe 1,000 hours of bus service. Imagine you are the GIS coordinator at that agency – how do you argue that your GIS services are worth more than that knee-jerk reaction to save 1,000 hours of bus service?

How many Washington GIS programs can document the value they deliver? Many GIS programs are initiated after a cost-benefit (CBA) or return on investment (ROI) analysis. But these look to projected future financial benefits. Don't we need to document the ongoing value of GIS after the project is completed and we are into O&M?

Many of us forge relationships with the managers who do benefit from GIS – and who help to fund our programs. But when budgets are being cut five, ten percent across the board, aren't we better off having hard facts and figures at hand to document how our GIS programs save money or enhance effectiveness? Can we make a compelling case to that transit director that that FTE can figure out how to reroute buses to minimize deadhead time and save even more real service hours? Maybe we need a new focus on cost-benefit documentation (CBD).

Perhaps a broader focus can be applied to this question as well. In 2008, an economic study was completed in New Zealand that showed that geospatial technology had raised the GDP of that country's economy by approximately three percent, and that removal of remaining barriers to the full potential of GIS could raise the GDP an additional four percent. This study is significant in that it is the first to look at CBD on a broad basis.

If there is true business value to our GIS services, we need to be able to document what that value is.



The Summit is published by WAURISA. To encourage the discussion of issues and ideas of importance to the Washington GIS community we welcome letters to the editor or opinion essays. Letters to the editor should be a maximum of 100 words and essays should be limited to 500 words.

Chief Editor:	Greg Babinski
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Interview Editor	Michelle Lortz
Olympia Area Editor:	Whitney K. Bowerman
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For subscriptions, content, comments, or suggestions, email:
SummitGISNews@URISA.org

PUBLIC MAPS IN WASHINGTON

Not all public maps are public in the sense that they are mounted in a prominent public place. Maps are a frequent subject on the postage stamps of many countries and the U.S. is no exception. The postage stamp shown here was issued in 1939 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the admission to the union of Washington, along with Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

Postage stamps may represent old 'snail mail' technology (note the 3 cent price tag) but they do allow the sender to personalize his or her correspondence with a little extra message.



U.S. postage stamp issued for the 50th anniversary of Washington Statehood

Do you know of a public map display in Washington? Send it to *The Summit* and we'll include it in a future issue.
 -Editor

THE SUMMIT – LITERARY CORNER

Dracula, Chapter One: Jonathan Harker's Journal (1897)

'Having some time at my disposal when in London, I had visited the British Museum, and made search among the books and maps in the library regarding Transylvania; it had struck me that some foreknowledge of the country could hardly fail to have some importance in dealing with a noble of that country. I find that the district he named is in the extreme east of the country, just on the borders of three states, Transylvania, Moldavia, and Bukovina, in the midst of the Carpathian mountains; one of the wildest and least known portions of Europe. I was not able to light on any map or work giving the exact location of Castle Dracula, as there are no maps of this country as yet to compare with our own Ordnance Survey maps; but I found that Bistritz, the post town named by Count Dracula, is a fairly well-known place. I shall enter here some of my notes, as they may refresh my memory when I talk over my travels with Mina.'

- Bram Stoker



GIS USER GROUPS IN WASHINGTON

ACSM – Washington State Section

<http://www.wss-acsm.org/>

ASPRS Puget Sound Region

<http://www.photogrammetry.com/ASPRS-PSR/>

Cascadia Users of Geospatial Open Source

<http://groups.google.com/group/cugos/>

Contact Karsten Venneman at: karsten@terraxis.net

Central Puget Sound GIS User Group

<http://waurisa.org/phpBB2/viewforum.php?f=24>

Contact Nora Gierloff at: ngierloff@ci.tukwila.wa.us

Central Washington GIS User Group

Meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the Super China Buffet in East Wenatchee, WA at 12:00 noon.

For information contact Amanda Taub at:

ataub@co.douglas.wa.us

King County GIS User Group

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/operations/GIS/UserGroups.aspx>

Meets 1st Wednesday every other month at 11:00am at the KCGIS Center, 201 S. Jackson Street, Seattle WA, Conf Room 7044/7045.

Northwest Washington GIS User Group

http://www.acadweb.wvu.edu/gis/nwgis_mtgs.htm

Southeast Washington/Northwest Oregon GIS User Group

For more information, contact Chris Owen:

cowen@ci.walla-walla.wa.us

Washington Geographic Information Council (WAGIC)

<http://wagic.wa.gov/>

Join Listserv at: <http://listserv.wa.gov/archives/wagic.html>

Washington Hazus Users Group

<http://www.usehazus.com/wahug>

Contact Gathy Walker at: c.walker@mil.wa.gov

To have your GIS related group or event listed in future issues of *The Summit*, notify the editor at:

SummitGISNews@URISA.org.

To be added to *The Summit* mailing list, contact:

SummitGISNews@URISA.org

Back issues of *The Summit* are available at:

<http://waurisa.org/thesummit/>

Interested in volunteering your time to help WAURISA?

Contact Don Burdick or any Board member listed to the right.



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