Southeastern Minnesota GIS Users Group

Meeting Minutes

Winona County Offices – Winona, MN - Thursday, November 14th, 2013 9:30 am - 12:00 pm

Attendees:

Tom Hoffmann – Winona County
Sarah Schrader – Goodhue County
Mark Engel – Yaggy Colby
Alan Laumeyer – Goodhue County
Dave Wavrin – Owatonna Public Utilities
Michelle Trager – Rice County
Dan Krzoska – Houston County
Joel Thoreson – Olmsted County
Shawn Gertken – Wabasha County
Ben Ogren – McGhie & Betts
Greta Bernatz – St. Mary's University
Todd Zielsdorf – Winona County
Frankie Mpagi – Winona County
Jeanne Franz – City of Winona
Nick Meyers – Winona County
Jay Forstner – Rochester Public Utilities
Jerrod Klug – Rochester Public Utilities
Meredie Sexton – Mayo Clinic
Patrick Thorsell – Scott County
Stephanie Nuttell – Winona County

9:30am Meeting Started

GIS and the County Attorney's Office:

Stephanie Nuttel – Winona County

- Assistant Winona County Attorney and pursuing a Masters in GIS degree from St. Mary's University at the request of the County Attorney. The County Attorney office is the legal advisor to all county departments.
- Provided many examples of how GIS is being used in the Attorney's office to prepare for court cases and for court exhibits.
    - Mapping "high drug areas" and providing evidence of stalking.
    - GIS is helping staff to review trends and help be more proactive with preventing crime.
- Plans to offer a CLE to educate lawyers about the benefits of utilizing GIS technology.

Using ArcGIS Online to Create a Survey Corner Application, Using Community Analyst for Our Comprehensive Plan, GIS & Photo Simulation, and Upgrading to Geodatabase 10.1:

Todd Zielsdorf – Winona County

The full version of this is available for viewing on the users group website.

- Utilized ArcGISOnline to show Survey certificates and statements of evidence information for the entire county. This map is available to the public.
- Utilized Community Analyst to help update the county's Comprehensive Plan. There was a lot of good data but could be difficult to access or download. Staff also used the NHGIS.org website to find a lot of US Census data.
- The process for updating the county's geodatabases from 9.3 to 10.1 was a little difficult. The system was down for three days because the databases were broke. Staff worked with Esri technical support to try and fix the issue. In the end, staff set up a new server, new SDE databases and set up the users and roles and brought in the previous SDE data at that point. This process was messy but worked in the end.

Web Applications at the County and City, Scheduled Scripting for Refreshing Website Data, and Google Mashup Demos:

Frankie Mpagi – Winona County

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- In 2012, staff deprecated the County's GeoCortex site and the City of Winona's Web.ADF site. Previously, the County had only two web map viewers and now there are 5 desktop apps and 3 mobile apps. The apps averages 1500 hits/month.
- Upcoming web projects include garbage schedule, mobile parcel map and highway culvert data collector app.
- The City of Winona uses a Silverlight-based parcel viewer that includes a popup window with image of culverts and information.
- The County Assessor department have access to an app where they can edit parcels to be tagged as woods, pasture, waste, etc. This information is used when staff calculates land values based on cover types.
- Staff is utilizing more models and scripts to automate processes. For instance, staff now uses Model Builder to delete parcel features and then append new data. This process works well as it does not put a schema lock on the data during updates. The models can be exported into Python scripts and can then be called using a .bat file. This .bat file can then be used in a Windows Scheduled Task to further automate the process.
- SQL Server and ArcGIS Server are on the same server. Staff has noticed high RAM usage on the server.
    - Ryan Moore suggested going to SQL Server Manager and change the setting for max RAM to use only ¾ of the total RAM. There is also an option called "RAM map" that is a free download to run on the server and track the RAM usage.

County-to-County Data Sharing:

Sarah Schrader – Goodhue County

The full version of this is available for viewing on the users group website.

- County GIS staff in southeastern Minnesota have been working on a way to more easily share GIS data county-to-county. Previously, one of the main road blocks to sharing data was the fee charged by some counties to provide GIS data to other counties.
- Over the summer, the State of Minnesota updated Statute 16E Subd. 11, to require that GIS data be shared at no cost between governmental agencies. View the full Statute here. Due to the Statutory change, counties and other governmental agencies can share GIS data freely. Unfortunately, there can still be difficulties when trying to distribute data via email or other options.
- Many times, the GIS data is too large for the distribution system (such as email) to handle or, the file types of some GIS datasets are blocked during distribution by security programs. The counties in SE Minnesota have come up with a plan to make it easier for counties in the region to share data by using a central repository that will be hosted by Goodhue County.
- A formal agreement has been drafted and reviewed by the various County Attorneys and will be sent to the County Boards for review and approval starting in 2014.
- The goal is for the counties to approve the agreement and then the GIS staff will be granted access to the secure repository to upload their data as well as download necessary data (such as centerlines and address points) from other participating counties.

General Discussion:

- Rochester Public Utilities is hosting the next Esri Utility Users Group meeting on March 25th and 26th of 2014. Ryan Moore will send out information about this event to the group. The conference cost is $50 per person and includes two lunches. There are typically around 80 attendees at this event and an exhibitor area.
- Sarah Schrader talked about the Esri Server Toolkit which is a free download from the Esri website that includes tools and code to automate server administration tasks such as starting/stopping web services. The toolkit can be downloaded here:

Meeting ended at 11:45am

Next Meeting: February 13th, 2013 – Hosted by Rochester Public Utilities

****Members are encouraged to present at a future meeting and to offer suggestions of vendors or other agencies to present. Please contact a Steering Committee member or the next meeting's host if you are interested in presenting:**

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