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WWW.LIGIS.ORG - YOUR SOURCE FOR GIS DISCUSSION

From Our Chairperson

Ross Baldwin
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GIS Manager
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As the newly appointed chairman of the Long Island GIS User Group (LIGIS), I thought it would be appropriate to initially familiarize myself with the history and mission of the LIGIS user group. The first place I investigated was the LIGIS website (www.ligis.org). There I began to go through the past Coordinates Newsletters. In doing so, I discovered a lot of interesting information about LIGIS.

But first, before I provide you with a brief history of LIGIS, I would like to share the current state of the LIGIS organization for any future chairman that is interested in the history as I was.

WHAT IS LIGIS?
The Long Island GIS User Group is a non-profit organization representing the interests of the Long Island GIS community. It was formed in 1987 to foster communications and cooperation among GIS professionals on Long Island. The organization encourages members to develop standards and procedures to facilitate the sharing of geodata. It is user-oriented, run on a completely volunteer basis by its members. Members are from the government, private, and educational sectors. LIGIS has neither a formal budget nor a formal mandate from any organization or branch of government. We are supported by the labor and services donated by our members and the organizations that employ them. LIGIS strives to provide a forum for information exchange, education and uniform GIS data development on Long Island. In the spring of 2014, LIGIS and the NYS GIS Association signed a Memorandum of Understanding to align both organizations. In this MOU, both parties pledged to assist one another in supporting collective goals and objectives as well as encouraging participation by the respective members in one another's organizations. LIGIS is currently made up of a chairman, 2 co-chairman, a steering committee (coordinating body), and the members of the user group itself. The majority of the current coordinating body voluntarily assumed their positions while more recent members were invited based on a majority vote. There are currently no term limitations for the members of the coordinating body although that may change as by-laws are developed. You are a member as long as you attend the periodic meetings and contribute. The coordinating body appoints and replaces members on an as needed basis. The members represent the principal agencies and organizations within LIGIS. The chairman of LIGIS is Ross Baldwin, and the Co-Chairman are Jim Daly (past chair) and Jim Touchet who were all nominated and then voted in. We had approx. 55 people in attendance at our last user conference in May of 2014. Membership has a total mailing list of

LIGIS and the NYSGISA: Perfect Together
By Alan Leidner, Board of Directors
Past President NYS GIS Association

At the invitation of Ross Baldwin I had the opportunity to speak at your Conference on May 22, 2014 at Brookhaven Laboratory. On behalf of Julie Tolar, NYSGISA President and the NYSGISA Board, I’d like to use this space to reiterate some of what I said at that time.

First I’d like to thank Ross and the LIGIS Steering Committee for agreeing to affiliate with NYSGISA. Affiliation does not come with any formal requirements, but does mean that there is an even stronger connection between LIGIS and the State Association. While some of the State Association discounts and events are only available to NYSGISA members (so we hope you’ll pay $10 and join!) many others, including all the services identified in the Regional Resources Guide are available to LIGIS (www.nysgis.net/regions). Our own estimates show that the value of membership amounts to between 40 and 50 times the cost of dues.

This is an exciting time for the NYS GIS Association. Over the past two years our membership has jumped from under 400 members to over 600! As far as we’ve been able to determine we are the largest independent State association in the U.S. I believe this growth reflects an appreciation by State GIS practitioners that we are providing many useful services for our members.

For example: In an effort to increase our value to members we are giving many more webinars. Not only are key State GIS leaders such as Bill Johnson, State GIO, and Bruce Oswald, former NYSGISA President continuing to give talks but we’ve also brought on board speakers from Federal agencies such as FEMA and NOAA, and county GIS managers such as Doug Schuecht of Rockland and Sam Wear of Westchester. In fact, last spring Michael Naughton, then LIGIS Chair, spoke about debris removal in his town following Sandy. We expect this program to get stronger, and we will continue to add recorded presentations that originate in the regions for placement on the State Association’s website. For example: a recent presentation by Steve Pollock of FDNY given to NYC Gismo was recorded and is now on the NYSGISA website (www.nysgis.net/featured/professional-development-resources).

In years past it appeared that the NYS GIS Association was centered in Albany and many thought that we were a branch of State Government. We are now long past this misunderstanding. In fact the large majority of Association

Inside...
Page 2 ... Street Addressing Mapping (SAM)
Page 2 ... Pictometry and Eagleview
Page 2 ... Sophisticated Maps in Schools
Page 4 ... Save the Date(s)
Page 7 ... FALL LIGIS Meeting agenda

(Continued on page 3)
Street Address Mapping (SAM)
By Cheryl Benjamin
The Office of Cyber Security (OCS) has embarked on a major project to create a detailed statewide address point dataset. This will expand on the current NYS Address Points, improve their positional accuracy and maintain them in the NENA address standard. Standardized, accurate, and up-to-date address points are a required dataset for Next Generation 911 (NG911). This presents a challenge because consistently formatted address data are not uniformly available across the state. Centralizing the address point data build effort will result in the least costly solution for all.

Building the data for the high level needed for 911 dispatch will also ensure it is suitable for multiple applications. For example, the SAM dataset will also be used to host a statewide geocoding service. State and local agencies need to geocode addresses as point locations to support a variety of functions. This will allow state and local governments and other entities to utilize this shared service to get consistent, accurate geocoding results. In addition, this will eliminate the redundant cost and effort of each organization maintaining its own geocoding service, and the potential of different entities receiving conflicting results from different geocoding services.

The SAM dataset will accommodate sub-addresses (e.g. apartment, building, suite, floor, etc.) as determined necessary by 9-1-1 officials. The SAM initiative nicely complements the NYS Streets & Address Points Data Maintenance which has been underway at OCS for several years (see the Streets & Address Maintenance tab above).

NYS Streets & Address Points Data Maintenance
OCS continues to maintain the NYS Streets and NYS Address Points data sets, containing over 135,000 miles of streets and more than 4 million address points. Over time, the NYS Address Points dataset will be phased out and replaced with the Address Points developed as part of the SAM Project. The NYS Streets data set contains numerous attributes including primary street name, alternate/alias street names, address ranges, route numbers, classification, jurisdiction, and other attributes needed for geocoding or routing applications.

The data sets are available to NYS GIS Data Sharing Cooperative Members and NYS local governments at no cost through the NYS GIS Clearinghouse (http://gis.ny.gov/gisdata/inventories/member.cfm?OrganizationID=522). Data is released quarterly in March, June, September and December. A version of the NYS Streets data (http://gis.ny.gov/gisdata/inventories/details.cfm?DSID=932) containing all but the address and routing attributes is also freely available to the public.

The NYS Streets and NYS Address Points datasets are used extensively by State agencies, counties, local governments, federal agencies, and increasingly by the emergency response community. To keep the data up-to-date, the Office of Cyber Security coordinates with local government partners to identify needed street and address changes such as the addition of new streets or address points, correction of street names, addition of alternate/alias street names, and refinement of address ranges. Edits are reported using MMNT (Map Maintenance, Notification and Tracking), a secure web application that allows authorized users to submit updates and corrections. Edits are made once and the updated data sets are shared back with all governmental agencies, minimizing duplication of data maintenance efforts.

(Continued on page 4)

Pictometry
By Anthony Bursae
The merger of Pictometry International and EagleView Technologies in January 2013 created a unique company with powerful technological solutions in the GIS, measurement and analytical space. The combined company has more than 50 patented technologies to provide scalable, efficient and highly accurate analytical solutions. Pictometry invented the technology behind aerial oblique image capture.

As the market leader for over 12 years in the government space, the company also services the infrastructure and commercial industries. Providing powerful high-resolution aerial imagery and analytical tools for assessment, public safety, emergency response and overall visualization needs, Pictometry continues to offer one-of-a-kind solutions.

EagleView has specialized in automating manual processes through SaaS technology solutions for over five years. The company invented patented software that produces 3D models resulting in aerial roof and wall measurement reports that are extremely accurate and detailed. As the market leader in both the construction and insurance markets, EagleView continues to introduce innovation not only in construction and the insurance claims vertical but also in underwriting, estimating and disaster response.

Billion Dollar Pledge to Bring Sophisticated Geo-Maps to Classrooms
By Charlie Fitzpatrick
People love maps including kids, especially when they can tweak them. Mapping software connects the instinct for visual understanding with the capacity to explore and investigate questions. But the world of digital learning is a realm of "haves" and "have nots." Some students have steady access to the right equipment, adequate connectivity, activities suited to needs, and teachers who can make good use of it all. Sadly, this is not universal. To reduce the technology gap, President Barack Obama challenged industry to help schools. Last month he announced that Esri had pledged $1-billion of mapping software available free to US K-12 schools.

Since 1969, Esri, headquartered in Redlands, California, has built geographic information system (GIS) software. Today, Esri software is used across the globe, in nearly every industry, to make maps and analyze data. From farming to defense to modeling climate to routing school buses, users on workstations and laptops collaborate with others on tablets and smartphones, building data, designing maps, and making decisions. And what used to require robust computers and skilled specialists can now be explored, modified, and enhanced by a broad spectrum of knowledge workers on a laptop, or field agents on a smartphone, or students on a tablet.

ArcGIS Online is cloud-based GIS. Since its birth a few years ago, savvy educators have demonstrated its power as a learning tool. The recent addition of "Organization" subscriptions lets government agencies, companies, and other groups have a portal for producing maps, storing data, sharing content, and collaborating on projects. And now, "Organizations" and guidance for its use are available at no cost to any U.S. K-12 school.

(Continued on page 6)
members are also members of their regional or local GIS groups. So LIGIS members should have no doubts: NYSGISA is your Association. As our membership grows and our regional groups grow stronger, together, we will have increasing influence on policies that affect our jobs and the growth of GIS in the State. LIGIS members should be excited by the prospect of working closely with other regional associations such as GISMO (NYC), GIS SIG (Rochester area), NYERGIS (Ithaca), WNYGIS (Western NYS), Hudson Valley County Associations, and a number of “North Country” GIS groups covering the Adirondacks. One of the great benefits of being a NYSGISA member is being able to rub shoulders with your colleagues across the state.

The coming year will be full of activities. The Summit Committee, led by Bill Johnson is hard at work developing a program of fabulous speakers for the upcoming November 2014 event (see the Summit link at www.nysgis.net) to be held in October 2014, in Skaneateles, New York. Bruce Oswald and the Conference Committee have gotten a jump on our November 2015 Conference which promises to be our biggest one ever, coming off a highly successful 2013 conference in Saratoga NY where a sold out audience of more than 325 people had two days of presentations, networking and fun.

The NYS GIS Association has started a new initiative to develop “Professional Affiliation Groups (PAG).” Since many of our members work within specific functional areas we issued a survey to determine the ones of greatest interest. One hundred and one members responded and almost all of them indicated a desire to join an affiliation group. Moreover, forty-four of them expressed an interest in playing a leadership role. Over the next months we expect to form groups with interests in environmental protection, health, utilities, emergency management, law enforcement, and planning, to name a few. Right now Kevin Jenkins of NYS GISMO is forming up our first Affiliation Group in the area of Transportation. Watch the Association’s website as this effort grows. I think LIGIS members can realize significant benefits from linking up with other State Association members with similar interests.

Encouraged by our greater numbers, NYSGISA is now working towards increasing its influence on local, state and national issues that are of interest to the GIS community. Our Legislative Committee, led by Joe Jones of Nassau County and assisted by Bruce Oswald, has been our watchdog in Albany overseeing legislation that might affect our profession. Almost every member of the State’s Geospatial Advisory Council (GAC), which works with State GIS Bill Johnson, is a State Association member, including Jim Daly. The GAC is currently tackling issues related to procurement and open data. In the future our Government Committee led by Julia O’Brien (FEMA Region 2) and Mike Ross (GIS SIG) will be examining civil service titles and tests.

I hope that the above has intrigued you and started you thinking about becoming more active in LIGIS and in the NYSGISA. We are always looking for members with energy and enthusiasm. So please consider going to (www.nysgis.net) and becoming a State Association member. You can always reach out to me at leidnera@nyc.rr.com if you have any questions or if you’d like some advice about how to take advantage of the opportunities offered by NYSGISA.

The first meeting of the Long Island Geographic Information System (LIGIS) User Group was held late 1987, and was conducted by the Syosset sub-district of the U.S. Geological Survey, Water Resources Division. There were approx. 25 people in attendance representing 8 agencies. The first ‘Coordinates Newsletter’ was published in the spring of 1988 and represented a formal effort to establish a communication network among Geographical Information Systems software users on Long Island. As stated in the initial publication, “It is our hope that this newsletter will keep all interested parties informed of pertinent GIS activities taking place on Long Island, provide a forum for all agencies wishing to contribute relevant information, and provide a focal point for the development of a valuable regional spatial database accessible to all cooperating members”.

On July 26th, 1988, the LIGIS User Group held its second meeting at the U.S. Geological Survey office in Syosset, NY. Twenty-nine people were in attendance representing various Nassau County Dept., Suffolk County Dept., NYSDEC, SCWA, EPA, USGS, etc. There were a number of Subcommittees formed which included Data Standards Committee, Data Development and Maintenance Committee, Data Documentation Committee, Management Liaison Committee, and a Newsletter Committee and Agency Spokesman. By 1991 these Subcommittees were fine tuned, transitioning to the Steering Committee we know today, Intergovernmental Data Standards and Documentation Committee, GIS Applications Committee, and the Newsletter Committee.

In 1992, membership had grown to approx 200 members representing over 40 public, private and education entities. By the fall of 1995, membership had increased by over 160 members to 360. At this point, about 70-80 attended each User Group Conference. Local and County governments predominate the membership, while state agencies and consulting firms were also well represented. ARC/INFO was the dominate software used by LIGIS members at the time, but...
desktop products such as MapInfo and ArcView had been gaining rapidly. Other products in use include GISPlus, IDRISI, ERDAS/Imagine, TransCAD, and AtlasGIS.

There have been many different venues for the bi-annual LIGIS User Group Conferences over the years. They include Brookhaven National Lab, Suffolk County Community College, Hofstra University, and U.S. Geological Survey to name a few. We are looking to add a new venue to the list this fall so stay tuned.

I was unable to easily find any information on attendance or membership numbers from 1995 to present. I started going to conferences back in the early 2000's and do recall a much higher attendance but have been told that attendance fluctuates from year to year.

Chairperson History
2014 - ? – Ross Baldwin
2007 – 2014 – Michael Naughton
2003 – 2007 – Jim Daly
2001 – 2003 - Jeff Altorfer
1997-2000 – Dr. Mary Daum
1993-1996 - Joe Jones
1992-1993 - Ron Green
1991-1992 - Alan Scott, (Ron Green finished term)
1990-1991 - Dennis Jackson, (Ron Green finished term)
1987-1989 - Ed Oaksford , (Ron Green finished term)

We need all of your help and support to keep LIGIS flourishing. Please feel free to become a member of LIGIS (it's free), join the NYSGIS Association, contribute to the Coordinates Newsletter or just attend a user conference (earn GISP points for attending).

* Special thanks to Ron Green for letting me tap into his vast knowledge of LIGIS to aid in my research. Ron is a past chair and member since the inception of LIGIS. Thanks Ron!
Thank you to our Spring 2014 LIGIS Meeting Presenters for taking time to discuss with us their information.

William Johnson
NYS Geographic Information Officer
Contact phone: (518) 549-8375
email: william.johnson@its.ny.gov
Presented: NYS GIS Strategy and Statewide GIS Support

Alan Liedner
NYS GIS Association, Board of Directors and Past President
Contact phone: (518) 242-5200
email: leidnera@nyc.rr.com
Presented: NYS GIS Association Update

Cheryl Benjamin
NYS Office of Information Technology Services
Contact phone: (518) 242-5200
email: Cheryl.Benjamin@its.ny.gov
Presented: Street Address Mapping (SAM)

Anthony Bursae
NYS GIS Association, Board of Directors and Past President
Contact phone: (518)
email: leidnera@nyc.rr.com
Presented: NYS GIS Association Update

Update your LIGIS profile!
The world of GIS is constantly changing and the LIGIS membership reflects those changes. Unfortunately, it is often not possible for members to take a day or even a half day off from work to attend a user conference. But we can keep up with Long Island GIS activities by simply visiting the LIGIS website (www.LIGIS.org) and registering. The process is easy! Just go to the site and click on register. Once you are registered, you can select what messages/notifications you want to receive, choose to be notified if there is a new article, keep up-to-date with the latest news in GIS, etc.

Appreciation
Thank you to every person and organization who contributed to this issue of Coordinates. We remind our readers that the opinions expressed within are not necessarily the views of the LIGIS Steering Committee. Inclusion of articles from non-governmental organizations and private entities does not represent endorsement of these entities.

Articles Welcome
If you’re feeling especially energetic, you can submit an article for the semi-annual publication of "Coordinates". Let your fellow GIS professionals know how you are applying your GIS and what’s new with your agency or business. Maps and links to your web apps are always welcome as well. Submissions of articles and announcements for the newsletter are welcome. Submissions should be in MS Word and be emailed to Ross Baldwin at Chairman@LIGIS.org.
As I sit here at my desk, typing away, I struggle. Not at the lack of topics, but the words to not only accurately describe my thoughts, but the words that may illustrate the humor that I use to guide me through the difficult decisions and circumstances. I hope to illustrate through my words the common struggle of not only GIS professionals, yet that of technology driven careers in general.

I started with the intent to write about the updates intended to refurbish an aging GIS system. Yet recent developments (loss of funding) are guiding my fingertips. This GIS platform is old. With little or no financial support for software updates since inception, it has crawl’s feet around its edges, varicose peripheral wiring, possibly even a prosthetic power supply parts (inside joke, sorry). Over time, not many employees talked about the GIS system. Of course our planning department utilized it A LOT, and made recommendations to make it more user friendly etc., yet for the most part nobody talked about it. It was a silent employee “tool”.

Yet when the system trips up, and is out of service during repair, everyone starts crying, and phone calls/emails come pouring in. WOW! So they love me, they really love me! (reference to Jim Carrey in the Mask) [sarcasm] I find it odd that people can be so fickle. So unsupportive. Most important, it’s not us that they “love”, or “dislike” it’s the system that we just happen to manage. The system that we labor over all week long. A network of hardware/software and user input that make a useful tool. Yet, who takes criticism of a system or a labor of love lightly! Of course, sometimes a criticism is taken personally. Just the same as when an employee (public or private) does not fund the upgrades to the system. The upgrades to the “tool”. The upgrades for you. It is difficult not to get upset, angry. It’s not personal. It’s business. It is politics.

Working with outdated software, hardware, platforms etc, can be done. “We are doing it”. “We have been doing it”. “Why can’t we continue doing it?” Most (if not all) people reading this “tirade” has experienced similar issues at one time or another. We all want to develop or be a part of the “big project” – one that our career will be a legacy of. One that we will be remembered as a “visionary” or the “architect of” (or at least, that is what I hope to do). Not being too “pie in the sky”, over extending or pretentious – I want to have an effect on the future of how employees (in these offices) will utilize mapping technology. And upon my departure of this physical life that I slip to the heavens – my friends and colleagues will hopefully look back at my existence with recollection of achievement.

Yet if our administrators are unwilling to provide the necessary funding and the financial support that the systems require, then our careers will go undeveloped as well (forcing us to move onto the proverbial “greener pastures”, that will eventually produce the same listless occupational development because very few companies and government entities do provide financial support as necessary for our technology – and if they do, you reading this will never leave because you know how good you have it, hence the unforsaken circle of inadequate career advancement for the rest of us!). Of course it is not the taxpayer’s burden (for those in the public sector) to develop employee career(s) – do we not owe it to the taxpayers to improve the methods and policies that offer the most cost efficient government possible? Raising up one of the procedures and techniques of the mid-20th century (tell me it’s not true)!! Paper pushing, stacks and piles of documents being stored in file cabinets from administrations long gone). Inherently then the developers (ourselves) career or knowledge base advances with the system, and hopeful the pie in the sky legacy will live on with minimal yearly budgetary rations aimed toward GIS software maintenance, and the gates of heaven (or wherever you believe you will be going) for us will be lined with points, lines, polygons and orthoimagery alike.

Anonymous

“Billion Dollar Pledge” (Continued from page 2)

High schools, middle schools, and even elementary schools have already used Organizations effectively. Schools can control the de

gree of searching and sharing, permitting access to vast galaxies of external data or just a few specific items, and control privileges for individuals or groups. Students can gather or generate data, make and share maps that show their work, publish content for use by the community, and construct dynamic reports on projects they investigate deeply. The online world means " anytime, anywhere connected."

The content options are huge, and project-based or problem-based learning is an ideal approach. Young students can study the types and health of trees in the neighborhood, or track critters around the world. Middle school students can research and build projects about local history or examine the interplay of disasters, governments, and health across the globe. High school students can analyze neighborhood demographics for political trends or model storm, flood, fire, or earthquake susceptibility under varying conditions.

The increasing teams of data and evolving tools and capacities means a never-ending stream of new opportunity for savvy educators. But what about those not as comfy with GIS? Enter the many thousands of GIS professionals! Because Esri technology is used in so many industries, and so many users are quite passionate about both GIS and their local community, willing GeoMentors abound. A GeoMentor is someone who can help introduce geographic analysis, address technical questions, locate data, help set up an ArcGIS Online Organization, or other useful tasks. Local GIS users can be found with a quick Internet search combining two terms: "GIS" and the name of your city, county, state, or region.

Whether a single computer in a classroom, or 1:1, or BYOD, students and educators can have access to explore or do work whenever connected. A world of opportunity awaits schools using ArcGIS Online! And it’s free.

GIS DAY

On November 19 join in the worldwide celebration of GIS Day, the annual salute to geospatial technology and its power to transform and better our lives. Be a part of the festivities by hosting, supporting, or attending a GIS Day event.
Fall 2014
Users Group Meeting
Thursday, October 9th 2014
Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, New York
Berkner Hall

AGENDA

9:00 – 9:45
Registration and Networking
Please Sign in

9:45 – 10:00
Introduction and Opening Remarks
Ross Baldwin, LIGIS Chair

10:00 – 12:00
Homegrown Long Island: Part I
Suffolk and Nassau Agencies
Presentations from various agencies throughout Long Island on interesting GIS Projects they have engaged in

12:00 – 1:00
Lunch Break

1:00 – 1:30
Keynote Speaker
Andrew Nicklin, Director of Open NY - Office of the Governor, State of New York
Responsibilities as the new Director include helping expand the open data website, engaging with the developer and research community through Open Data events, and helping to oversee the design of a model website for municipalities to share their information. Mr. Nicklin will coordinate with the Office of Information Technology Services to evaluate and provide recommendations concerning the management, design and structure of Open NY.

1:30 – 3:00
Homegrown Long Island: Part II
Suffolk and Nassau Agencies
Presentations from various agencies throughout Long Island on interesting GIS Projects they have engaged in

FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION ON LIGIS, GIS EVENTS, AND GIS
Please visit: www.LIGIS.org
(Create a username and password to access the "Forum")

To Read Past Issues of Coordinates Newsletters & FOR INFORMATION ON LIGIS, GIS EVENTS AND GIS:
Please visit www.LIGIS.org

FALL 2014
The coordinating committee members represent the principal agencies and organizations within LIGIS as a whole.

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This issue and previous issues of ‘Coordinates’ can be viewed on-line in PDF format at www.ligis.org

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