



March 23, 2007

Governor Tim Pawlenty  
130 State Capitol  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Pawlenty,

As Chair of the Governor's Council on Geographic Information, I am writing this letter to advise you about budget reductions you have proposed to the Department of Administration budget that will impact key government services provided by the Land Management Information Center (LMIC). Members of the Council have voted to express LMIC's value to the state.

As advisors, we appreciate that tough decisions must be made to keep government spending under control. But we believe that LMIC provides important services that support your goals of coordinated uses of innovative technology that improve government services in Minnesota at reduced cost to us all. Despite a budget reduction of almost 50 percent from 2001 to 2007, LMIC has consistently improved its services to state agencies and local governments and provided leadership that has resulted in improved coordination and effective partnerships that benefit the entire state. The budget proposed for 2008/2009 would reduce LMIC's appropriation further – from \$805,000 to \$258,000. LMIC will not survive that reduction.

The Council's mission is "to promote efficient and effective use of resources by providing leadership and direction in the development, management and use of geographic information in Minnesota." We are a broad-based group representing state and local government, the federal government, academia, and the private sector. We are authorized by Executive Order 99-6 and receive administrative and technical support from LMIC. The Council depends on LMIC to provide meeting, website and administrative support. More importantly LMIC staff provides a means to implement our coordination and strategic planning initiatives. With LMIC's support, we have been effective in accomplishing our mission. The Council's annual report is attached.

Below are three broad areas where LMIC plays a critical role in achieving an enterprise approach to statewide information services along with examples to illustrate the importance to the operation of state and other government agencies.

- **GIS Data Distribution and Coordination.** LMIC distributes a tremendous amount of GIS data to state agencies, other government agencies and the public through its web site. The data are used on a daily basis by many state agencies, especially the Department of Natural Resources, Pollution Control Agency, Department of Transportation, Department of Agriculture, Board of Water and Soil Resources, Department of Health, Department of Public Safety, and Department of Education. For example, LMIC provides expensive aerial photography and other GIS data over the web that helps avoid millions of dollars a year in redundant investments in data and data management costs to state agencies as well as other government and non-government organizations. While LMIC has been distributing GIS data

for more than 20 years, the volume of data distributed has exploded in recent years – now exceeding almost 80,000 downloads per year. The return on investment for LMIC’s data distribution function is estimated at 20:1. The LMIC approach supports OET goals of shared services and adds great value to the state and opportunity for efficiencies.

- **GIS Technology Coordination.** Coordinating GIS requires not only technical knowledge but also organizational knowledge to bring together disparate interests in state government as well as other government and non-government agencies. We depend on LMIC for this knowledge. LMIC currently is developing an inventory of GIS web-based programs and services that have the potential for statewide use, which would support OET’s shared services goal and promises to save millions of dollars by reducing duplicate investments. LMIC already is seeking efficiencies through coordinated program development to serve many agencies using common applications. This can only happen if an organization like LMIC has the resources to develop the organizational and technical methods needed for complex GIS coordination.
- **Strategic Planning Support and Implementation.** Use of GIS has expanded beyond issues related to natural resources, transportation, agriculture and pollution control to Health, Homeland Security and other program areas. LMIC plays a major role in guiding this expansion and the effective use of GIS technology throughout Minnesota. LMIC’s role in planning for and responding to emergencies is illustrative. The Minnesota Emergency Operations Plan designates LMIC as the provider of GIS data for disasters and responses, including for flu pandemics. A “common operating picture” presented through accurate data and maps is essential for effective responses. LMIC has been the state’s strongest advocate for developing this capability, which will depend upon strong coordination among state agencies and local governments based upon standards for data and technology. LMIC is now working with stakeholders to develop a new strategic plan for statewide GIS coordination and is assumed to be the primary implementer of the plan once it is developed.

A further reduction of LMIC’s budget will severely limit, perhaps cripple, its ability to coordinate GIS technology at a time it is being rapidly adopted by state agencies and other organizations throughout the state. We believe that investing in LMIC is one of the best ways to efficiently reap benefits of this important technology. We have acknowledged LMIC’s value repeatedly through Governor’s Commendations, including commendations from you in 2003, 2004 and 2006. LMIC supports the work of your Council and needs your continued support.

Please contact me if you have questions or would like to discuss this issue.

Sincerely,



Rick Gelbmann,  
Chair of the Minnesota Governor’s Council on Geographic Information

cc: Dana Badgerow, Commissioner of Administration

*Minnesota relies on geographic information systems to address such critical issues as protecting the environment and responding to emergencies. The Minnesota Governor's Council on Geographic Information promotes the effective use of GIS by coordinating investments; developing standards, policies, and guidelines; promoting stewardship of geographic data; and minimizing duplication of effort and public expenditure.*

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS, FY 2006

In 2005-2006, the council addressed its mission by

- Helping people get the data they need
- Communicating with Minnesota's Geographic Information System (GIS) stakeholders
- Coordinating federal, state, regional, and local activities
- Developing standards and guidelines that support data sharing

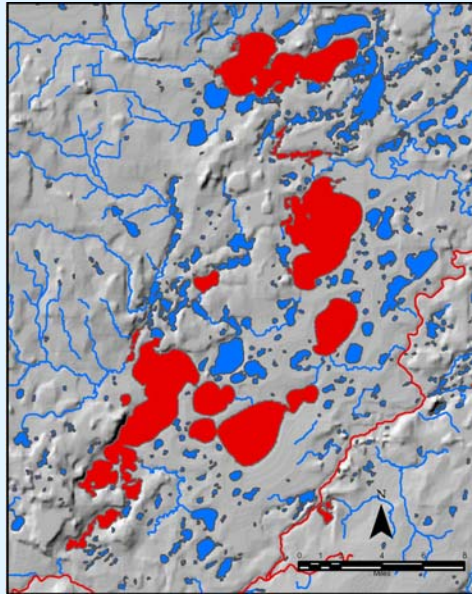
### Helping People Get the Data They Need

- Expressed the state's need for current air photos by joining a national coalition of states to encourage federal agencies to improve their photography programs.
- Continued to work with federal officials to accept Minnesota's watershed delineation process with minor modification. Thirty-five hydrographic units have been processed and delivered for review and another 24 are near completion.
- Successfully demonstrated a system to cross-reference older hydrography data and the National Hydrography Dataset (NHD).

### Communicating with Minnesota Stakeholders

- Updated the council's Web site to make information more easily accessible to a wider range of viewers.
- Presented the benefits of using GIS technology in emergency preparedness planning, response, and mitigation at the Association of Minnesota Emergency Managers conference and in meetings with state, county, and city officials.
- Held a well-attended meeting in Grand Rapids to learn about local GIS activities and needs.

## NHD Enables Impaired Waters Mapping



*The National Hydrography Dataset (shown in blue) is used to reference and display rivers and lakes designated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency as impaired waters (shown in red). For more information about impaired waters, see [www.pca.state.mn.us/water/tmdl/index.html](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/tmdl/index.html)*

- Continued to provide videoconferencing access to council meetings, when technically feasible.
- Published 14 articles in *Minnesota GIS/LIS News*, plus one each in *Minnesota Surveyor* and *MNCITLA News*.
- Presented strategic planning efforts at the 24<sup>th</sup> annual Minnesota Government IT Symposium.
- Recommended a Governor's Commendation for *Minnesota MapServer*, the world's leading open source Web-mapping service.
- Prepared a one-page summary, *Minnesota's Strategic Plan for GIS*, to alert people about the council's plans for organization, technology, and data.
- Developed *The Case for a Minnesota State GIS Enterprise*, a common-sense argument for adopting an enterprise approach to sharing and integrating state GIS resources.

- Participated in the 2005 state GIS/LIS conference with two panel sessions and six papers.
- Sponsored a training session on NHD updates.

### Coordinating GIS across Agencies and Sectors

- Received a \$50,000 grant from the Federal Geographic Data Committee to address organizational and operational issues of state geospatial strategy.
- Initiated discussions about geospatial technology issues with the state's chief information officer and the Office of Enterprise Technology (OET).
- Developed a survey to identify prospects for shared statewide geospatial technology services.
- Maintained relationships with national programs that support the National Spatial Data Infrastructure.
- Gained a seat for one of our members on the board of directors of the National States Geographic Information Council. NSGIC is the national organization of state GIS councils.
- Merged state and MetroGIS Emergency Preparedness Committees to avoid duplication of effort.
- Assisted in planning to create a Minnesota County GIS Association.
- Drafted agreements with the U.S. Geological Survey to establish the state's stewardship role for maintaining and updating Minnesota hydrographic data.

### Developing Standards that Support Data Sharing

- Re-established a formal GIS standards review process in response to the state's new IT governance structure.
- Gained approval from OET for two hydrography standards: *Lake Basin IDs* and *Watercourse IDs*.
- Developed and approved a new standard, *Watershed IDs*, and forwarded it to OET.
- Intervened in federal efforts to create a new *Geographic Names Information System*, providing critical comments that led to a better standard.



**MINNESOTA GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL  
ON GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**  
658 Cedar Street, Room 300  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
e-mail: [gis.council@state.mn.us](mailto:gis.council@state.mn.us)  
[www.gis.state.mn.us](http://www.gis.state.mn.us)

## PLANNED ACTIVITIES, FY 2007

In 2006-2007, the council will continue to support more cost-effective, higher-performing GIS services within Minnesota through the following activities:

### Monitor Data Needs and Make Data Available

- Complete a second generation strategic plan for the Minnesota Spatial Data Infrastructure (MSDI).
- Complete documenting uses and benefits of digital parcel data in Minnesota county governments.
- Identify local sources of data critical to the emergency preparedness community.
- Develop implementation plans for use and maintenance of the state's hydrographic data.
- Begin new focus on updating wetland data.

### Enhance Communication with Stakeholders

- Participate in the 2006 conference of the Association of Minnesota Counties.
- Continue to connect with the emergency management community via presentations at their conferences and surveys to determine their GIS awareness and needs.
- Organize a forum to discuss emergency preparedness and public safety data access and security issues.
- Expand efforts to educate GIS professionals about the emergency management community's needs.
- Continue to expand communication with the state and local IT communities.
- Develop a new council brochure.
- Continue to improve the council's Web site.

### Coordinate across Agencies and Sectors

- Work with OET to integrate geospatial technology with the state's enterprise technology environment.
- Recommend functions, organization, and funding for a state geospatial authority.
- Implement a shared services survey across agencies and sectors.
- Prepare a proposal to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to develop a common operating procedure for emergency planning response and mitigation in Minnesota using GIS data maintained by local, regional, state, and federal agencies.

- Develop a Web-based guide to key information resources to help local governments create and maintain parcel data.

### Standards Initiatives

- Finalize standard for *Hydrographic Features/Attributes*.
- Begin detailed logical design work on major geospatial architectural components.
- Recommend revisions to the Minnesota Geographic Metadata Guidelines in response to emerging international metadata standards.
- Inventory and review existing and proposed federal or state standards/best practices for GIS-based emergency preparedness data.
- Continue monitoring federal data standards.

**FY 2007 Council members represent a broad cross-section of organizations that benefit from coordination of geospatial technology and data.**

#### Appointed Members

**David Berrisford**, MN Dept. of Public Safety

**Jeff Bloomquist**, Farm Service Agency, USDA

**Gordon Chinander**, Metropolitan Emergency Services Board

**Will Craig**, University of Minnesota

**Mike Dolbow**, MN Dept. of Agriculture

**Rick Gelbmann**, Chair, Metropolitan Council

**Jeff Grussing**, United Services Group

**Charlie Kost**, Southwest Minnesota State University

**Jonette Kreideweis**, MN Dept. of Transportation

**Stuart Lien**, Clearwater County

**Robert Maki**, MN Dept. of Natural Resources

**Tim Ogg**, MN Board of Water and Soil Resources

**Mark Olsen**, MN Pollution Control Agency

**Victoria Reinhardt**, Ramsey County

**Ken Saffert**, City of Mankato

**Mark Sloan**, Clay County

**Bill Swing**, Wright County

**Sally Wakefield**, 1000 Friends of Minnesota

#### Ex-Officio Members

**David Arbeit**, Land Management Information Center

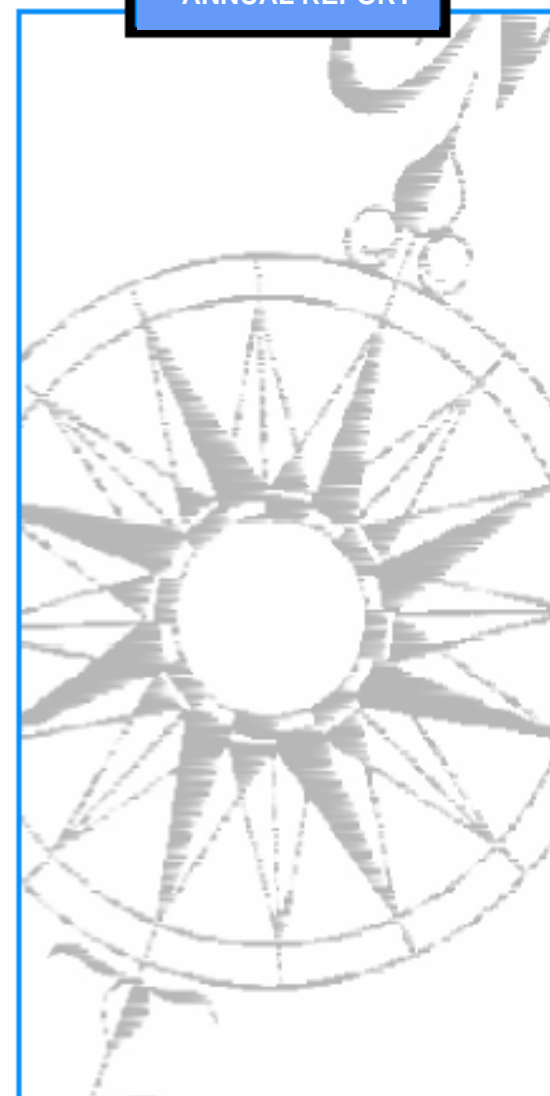
**Chad Martini**, MN GIS/LIS Consortium

**Lee Meilleur**, Legislative Coordinating Commission

**Mike Ryan**, MN Office of Enterprise Technology

**Ron Wencil**, U.S. Geological Survey

FY 2006  
ANNUAL REPORT



**Minnesota  
Governor's Council  
on Geographic  
Information**