



February 9, 2007

<letter sent to Senators Norm Coleman and Amy Klobuchar, and to Representatives Michele Bachmann, Keith Ellison, John Kline, Betty McCollum, James Oberstar, Collin Peterson, Jim Ramstad, and Timothy Walz>

The Minnesota Governor's Council on Geographic Information respectfully requests your support for full funding of the Nationwide Differential Global Positioning System in the 2008 budget. Experts tell us that the U.S. Department of Transportation needs \$27.25 million a year for fiscal years 2008 through 2010 to continue operating, constructing and improving the NDGPS, but the President's budget for 2008 provides no funding for this important system. In addition, proposed reductions in the Continuing Resolution for 2007 may seriously compromise the short-term operational capability of the NDGPS. Without adequate funding, the NDGPS will cease to operate on October 1, 2007. This would be a great loss to Minnesota.

The NDGPS is a joint project of the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Commerce, and the Department of Defense that provides accurate positioning and location information to travelers, emergency response units, and other customers through a network of high accuracy Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers. Public and private organizations in Minnesota currently use the NDGPS to meet a wide range of needs, including:

- Accurate mapping of transportation, other infrastructure, and buildings
- Precision navigation systems for agriculture and transportation
- Delineation of landscape features such as wetlands
- Scientific applications: tracking weather, soil conditions and endangered species, etc.
- Public safety uses related to crime and emergency response.

Planned NDGPS enhancements would result in greatly improved accuracy. With nationwide availability of 10-centimeter navigation accuracy or better, collision avoidance, lane keeping, and other applications will become available on a widespread basis, saving countless lives every year. The enhancement also would meet requirements for real-time applications that include locating underground utilities, automatic vehicle control, automated surveying for locating and managing bridges and other public assets.

The Minnesota Governor's Council on Geographic Information coordinates geographic information system activities among all levels of government in Minnesota. The council's 23 members represent state agencies, federal and local governments, higher education and the private sector. A copy of the 2006 Annual Report is attached. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have about the Council or the importance of the Nationwide Differential Global Position System to Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Rick Gelbmann
Chair, Minnesota Governor's Council on Geographic Information Systems

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

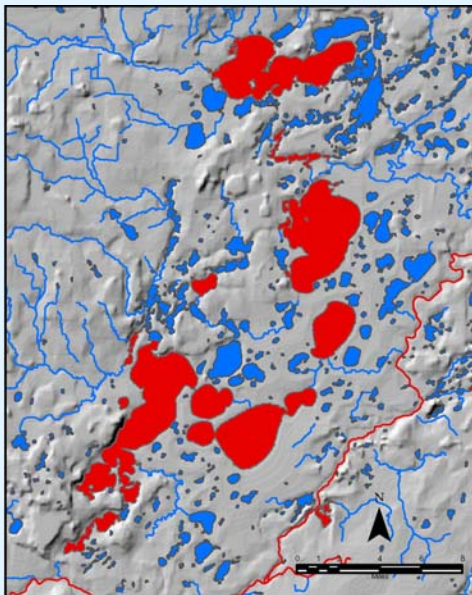
Helping People Get the Data They Need

- 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

- 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 24th 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.



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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**