



imaginNEWS

what's inside

Meet Our New Board Member



Jennifer Miller,
Events Committee

New Members

Who's Doing What

From the Events Committee...

Things, they are a changin'... You may have heard already that IMAGIN is changing from a two-conference format per year, to one. We will include only the best aspects of the Spring Forum and Fall Conference into the 2001 IMAGIN Conference.

The two-day event will feature a totally new format. Registrants can expect to see "birds of a feather" lunches, demonstration stations (bring your data), field trips, post conference workshops, and much more.

A clearly designated job and resumé board, as well as tables for on-the-spot interviews will also be available. Vendors can look forward to a new and less complicated registration form.

A Student Paper Competition is also in the works. Any student submitting a paper to IMAGIN will receive free registration to the 2001 Conference. The top four students will be invited to present their papers. Those four winners will receive one night's lodging and a chance for a scholarship. Students interested in attending the conference, but not in submitting a paper, can do so by volunteering to work for four hours.

Another big change will be location. Don't look for us to be in the same place every

year. The 2001 Conference will be in Lansing at the Lansing Center, but we will be moving to new locations each year. We have already received some great suggestions including Sault Ste. Marie, Traverse City, Mt. Pleasant, Grand Rapids and Ann Arbor. If you know of the perfect place to host 600 of your closest friends, please let a Board Member or Events Committee Member know.

We are all very excited to bring to you a bigger and better conference. Planning them can be as much fun as attending them. If you would like to get involved, the Events Committee meets monthly in East Lansing. Please contact our Chairperson, Jessica Moy at dolansk3@pilot.msu.edu for more details.



Who is doing What in GIS and Spatial Technology?

NAME OF MUNICIPALITY:
CITY OF MADISON HEIGHTS

POPULATION: 32,196

SIZE OF AREA: 7.1 SQ. MILES (18.39 km²)

NUMBER OF STAFF: 2 FULL TIME, 1 PART TIME
(HIRING SHORTLY)

YEARLY BUDGET: \$189,000

STATUS OF PROGRAM:

The roots of GIS in the City of Madison Heights began when development of a GIS was adopted as a City Council Goal in the 1999-2000 Goal Plan. Plante & Moran, LLP, was brought in to assist the City with a Needs Assessment. This Needs Assessment formed the basis for the creation of the GIS Division within the Community Development Department. The division was staffed during the spring/summer of 2000 with a GIS Supervisor and GIS Specialist positions.

Projects completed to date include a streamlined public hearing notification program, zoning, sidewalk gap/replacement analysis, future capital improvements (street repaving and water main projects), voting precincts and street coverages. Concurrently, the division has been providing the Planning Commission and City Council with maps and information regarding cases and agenda items. The City's Future Land Use Plan Map (1990) and 2000 Existing Land Use Update are both expected to be finished shortly.

The public hearing notification process was the first administrative city process that was reviewed and streamlined using GIS software. Immediate and substantial timesaving benefits were observed, with GIS and IT staff performing this task in less than half the time by using free extensions available from ESRI's Web site.

The Sidewalk Gap/Replacement project uses the calculation functions within the ESRI ArcView program. The linear frontage and rearage per parcel will be processed using ARC/INFO and ArcView to assist in determining SAD participation and cost estimates.

The GIS division is also working closely with the Assessing Department to provide a mapping component to their reports.

One ongoing example is the mapping of quarterly commercial and industrial property vacancy reports.



DESCRIPTION OF NEW PROJECTS OR ACTIVITIES

Currently the city is looking into Citysight by Plansight. This site-licensed software will allow GIS coverages, shapefiles and databases to be viewed and queried by city staff. The general public will also have access to maps via a counter kiosk.

Utilities such as water, storm and sanitary will be mapped in the near future. Presently the City is in the process of evaluating the attributes that will be collected. Construction of these coverages should begin early in the first quarter of 2001.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY IF YOU HAD TO START OVER?

Given the amount of time that the division has existed, there has been limited time to reflect on possible alternative approaches. However, one area where more preparation time by the consultants would have been beneficial is in the area of departmental project needs with specific emphasis on the actual capabilities and limitations of GIS. As GIS grows, program changes and adjustments to the system will become apparent with the increase in project-based uses for GIS.

WHAT VALUABLE PIECE OF INFORMATION HAVE YOU LEARNED THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH THE GIS COMMUNITY?

The most valuable piece of information is to become active with your local GIS User Groups. These groups allow you to network with other GIS professionals who can offer insightful information on current and future projects.

Additionally, communities need to take advantage of outside funding sources. The City of Madison Heights was awarded a Startup Grant by ESRI. This grant provided the city with an ARC/INFO, ArcView, MapObject IMS license and an on-line training course at no cost to the city. Oakland County has also supplied the city with four ArcView licenses and ongoing maintenance of the parcel layer at no cost.

Name: Richard L. Mangus
Title: GIS Supervisor
Organization: City of Madison Heights
Address: 300 W. Thirteen Mile Rd
Madison Heights, MI 48071
Telephone number: 248.837.2656
E-mail address: richmangus@yahoo.com

10th Annual IMAGIN Forum

MAY 21 AND 22, 2001 — LANSING CENTER

Presentations are being solicited for the 10th Annual IMAGIN Forum in the following subject area:

Municipal and County GIS: This tract will feature GIS applications in use in municipal and county governments. Application areas could include land use planning, assessment & taxation, public safety, environmental protection, public works and other areas where GIS technology is used in local government service.

New Technologies & Trends: This tract will feature the latest GIS technologies being developed by several of the country's leading GIS vendors. Specific software and/or application demonstrations will illustrate how information technology trends are resulting in more powerful and integrateable GIS toolsets.

FORUM continued on page 4

Want Ads

We are looking for smart, creative people to fill additions to our staff as "Community Planner/Project Manager" and "Geographic Information System (GIS) Technician." The job site is beautiful Traverse City, the pay is good, benefits are great, and colleagues stellar. Both jobs are described in detail on our Web site (www.liaa.org).



Meet our new Board member...

In August the Board of Directors appointed Ann VanSlembrouck to fill the vacant seat of Lori Peltz-Lewis who resigned to accept employment in California. As the GIS Coordinator for SEMCOG, the

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, Ann is practiced at working cooperatively with other agencies, counties, and communities to enhance the region's GIS resources. Ann also oversees all GIS projects within SEMCOG.

Prior to joining SEMCOG, Ann was GIS Manager for Waterford Township in Oakland County. Ann was charged with building Waterford's GIS program from the ground level. It was a lot of work but proved to be great experience. The challenge of building a GIS program from scratch was aided by the great vision Waterford had for uses of GIS at the local level.

Although she's only been in her current position for a year, Ann is not new to SEMCOG. Her first experience in GIS was as a part-time employee at SEMCOG in 1992, updating land-use records to 1990. In 1993, she was hired on full-time as a GIS Planning Analyst in SEMCOG's DataCenter. There she primarily worked on updating several GIS layers for use in the Regional Development Forecast.

GIS has improved the way SEMCOG utilizes and displays data, and the methodology of planning projects. Better data makes for better decisions. The future of GIS at SEMCOG will include collecting, analyzing, and communicating its geographic information.

Ann's 8 years of experience in the GIS field have encompassed a variety of applications — from land use updates to street centerline file conflation. For Ann, the array projects she's been assigned have imparted a more complete understanding of how the entire spectrum of GIS really works.

Ann holds a BS in Geography from Central Michigan University (1991), and an MA in Geography from Eastern Michigan University (1998).

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GIS in Problem-Solving: This tract will feature specific GIS research and/or applications used to solve complex problems and high-end analysis.

Federal & State Initiatives: This tract will feature current GIS initiatives occurring in federal and state government.

Use of Web Technologies for Public Access: This tract will feature the use of the web-based public access applications and how they are improving access to government records.

Management and Policy: This tract will feature GIS management and policy issues identified and overcome during implementation of these multi-faceted systems.

Education, Training and Employment: This tract will feature GIS education, training programs, and employment opportunities.

Share and Share Alike — Issues on Data Sharing: This tract will feature cost-effective strategies for data sharing.

Student Paper Competition: The Student Paper Competition is open to all currently enrolled students. Papers should reflect student projects and may be research-oriented or applied GIS. See the Web site for further details www.imagin.org. Deadline different from tracts above, March 1, 2001.

The deadline for receipt of proposals is January 1, 2001. Details can be found on the Web site www.imagin.org. Questions and paper abstracts should be directed to Events Committee chair: Jessica Moy, 1405 S Harrison Rd., Room 308 Manly Miles Building; East Lansing, MI 48823 or (517) 432-0601 or dolansk3@msu.edu.

Supporting Organizations

ANALYTICAL SURVEYS INCORPORATED

Kent Parks
Regional Sales Manager
941 North Meridian Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 634-1000
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kpark@anit.com

MICHIGAN INFORMATION CENTER

Eric Swanson, Director
111 South Capitol
Romney Bldg
Lansing, MI 48913
(517) 373-7910
Fax: (517) 373-2939
swansone@state.mi.us

Rob Surber
Manager, Geographic Services Division
111 South Capitol
Romney Bldg
Lansing, MI 48913
(517) 373-7910
Fax: (517) 373-2939
surberr@state.mi.us

Dan Metzger
Geographic Specialist
111 South Capitol
Romney Bldg
Lansing, MI 48913
(517) 373-7910
Fax: (517) 373-2939
metzgerd@state.mi.us

Tony Olkowski
Geographic Specialist
111 South Capitol
Romney Bldg
Lansing, MI 48913
(517) 373-7910
Fax: (517) 373-2939
olkowskit@state.mi.us

Everett Root
Framework Development Manager
111 South Capitol
Romney Bldg
Lansing, MI 48913
(517) 373-7910
Fax: (517) 373-2939
roote@state.mi.us

Alden Leatherman
Chief GIS Specialist
111 South Capitol
Romney Bldg
Lansing, MI 48913
(517) 373-7910
Fax: (517) 373-2939
leathermana@state.mi.us

Carolyn Laner
Manager Information Services Division
111 South Capitol
Romney Bldg
Lansing, MI 48913
(517) 373-7910
Fax: (517) 373-2939
lanerc@state.mi.us

Joel Weever
Systems Specialist
111 South Capitol
Romney Bldg
Lansing, MI 48913
(517) 373-7910
Fax: (517) 373-2939
weeverj@state.mi.us

PLANTE & MORAN, LLP

Jason McKinley
Management Consultant
27400 Northwestern Highway
Southfield, MI 48037-0307
(248) 223-3501
Fax: (248) 352-0018
mckinleyj@plante-moran.com

Tammi Shepherd
Management Consultant
27400 Northwestern Highway
Southfield, MI 48037-0307
(248) 223-3808
Fax: (248) 352-0018
shepherd@plante-moran.com

AERO-METRIC, INC.

Clare Weaver
Contract Administrator
4708 North 40th St.
Sheboygan, WI 53083
(920) 457-3631
Fax: (920) 457-0410
cweaver@aerometric.com

Individuals Added to Existing Supporting Organizations

MSU-CENTER FOR REMOTE SENSING & GIS

Renee Nugent
Information & Stat Analyst
1405 S. Harrison Road
308 Manly Miles
East Lansing, MI 48823-5243
(517) 482-0604
Fax: (517) 353-1821
nugentre@msu.edu

JoAnn Render
Programmer Analyst
1405 S. Harrison Road
308 Manly Miles
East Lansing, MI 48823
(517) 432-0959
Fax: (517) 353-1821
renderj@msu.edu

Kevin Fowlks
Programmer Analyst
1405 S. Harrison Road
308 Manly Miles
East Lansing, MI 48823
(517) 432-9808
Fax: (517) 353-1821
fowlks@msu.edu

Sarah AcMoody
GIS Tech
1405 S. Harrison Road
308 Manly Miles
East Lansing, MI 48823-5243
(517) 432-7447
Fax: (517) 353-1821
acmoody@mus.edu

LIVINGSTON COUNTY

Dawn Siegel
GIS Coordinator
2300 E. Grand River
Howell, MI 48843
(517) 546-9858
Fax: (517) 546-9523
dawn.siegel@hline.localhealth.net

OTTAWA COUNTY

Nichole Hutchins
GIS Technician
12220 Fillmore Street
West Olive, MI 49460
(616) 738-4600
Fax: (616) 738-4897
nutchi@co.ottawa.mi.us

Jennifer Milanowski
Systems Analyst
12220 Filmore Street
West Olive, MI 49460
(616) 738-4601
Fax: (616) 738-4897
jmilano@co.ottawa.mi.us

MARQUETTE COUNTY

Jack Wolford
GIS Technician
2101 Fitch Ave. Upper Apt.
Marquette, MI 49855

HILLSDALE COUNTY

Betty Keeling
County of Hillsdale
6 N Howell Street
Hillsdale, MI 49242
(517) 439-0262
Fax: (517) 439-1248
bakeeling@dmci.net

WOOLPERT

Gregg Grohrband
Project Manager
409 E. Monument Avenue
Dayton, OH 45402-1261
(937) 341-9329
Fax: (937) 461-0743
gregg.gohrband@woolpert.com

AYRES ASSOCIATES

Kirk Contrucci
Manager, Photogrammetry
2445 Darwin Road
Madison, WI 53704
(608) 249-0471, Ext. 113
Fax: (608) 249-2806
contruccik@ayresassociates.com

MI TECH. UNIVERSITY

Fernando de Melo e Silva
Civil Engineer
MTU/Tech Dev. Group
309 Dillman Hall
Houghton, MI 49931
(906) 487-2102
Fax: (906) 483-3409
fdemeloe@mtu.edu

3DI, LLC

Jerry Carlsen
Sr. VP, GIS Professional Services
28969 Information Lane
Easton, MD 21601
(410) 770-6000
Fax: (410) 820-5613
jcarlsen@3dillc.com

Lou Garcia
GIS Consultant
28969 Information Lane
Easton, MD 21601
(410) 770-6000
Fax: (410) 820-5613
lgarcia@3dillc.com



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IMAGIN is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization comprised of individuals and organizations interested in the use and application of geographic information system (GIS) technology in Michigan. Our members are committed to improving the quality and availability of digital data necessary to make good use of GIS. We believe that cooperation and open communication are necessary to achieve these objectives.

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imagiNews

is published 12 times a year.
You may contact the editor at:

IMAGIN
27300 Haggerty Road, Suite F-30
Farmington Hills, MI 48331
(248) 489-3972
(248) 489-3973 fax

Jim Bennett, IMAGIN President

Deborah K. Schutt, Executive Director

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Frank Sobie, Board Liaison/Information Resources Committee
Erick Phillips, Chair/Information Resources Committee

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