



Federal Geographic Data Committee FGDC endorses the United States Thoroughfare, Landmark, and Postal Address Data Standard June 2011

Recently the Steering Committee of the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) endorsed the United States Thoroughfare, Landmark and Postal Address Data Standard.

The United States Thoroughfare, Landmark and Postal Address Data Standard is the culmination of efforts of the Address Standard Working Group (ASWG) formed by the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA) in 2005, when the FGDC accepted a proposal submitted by URISA to create a Street Address Data Standard. The ASWG worked under the authority of the U.S. Census Bureau, which chairs the FGDC Subcommittee on Cultural and Demographic Data (SCDD). The U.S. Census Bureau is the maintenance authority for the standard.

The United States Thoroughfare, Landmark and Postal Address Data Standard contains four parts: address data content, classification, transfer, and quality. The Standard covers each of the main types of addresses found in the United States, and provides a framework for classifying them, understanding their component parts and attributes, testing their quality, and organizing them for exchange with other agencies and the public.

Street addresses are the location identifiers most widely used by state and local government and the public. Street addresses are critical for administrative, emergency response, research, marketing, mapping, geospatial information systems, routing and navigation, and for law enforcement and first-responders in time of crises. The adoption of the United States Thoroughfare, Landmark and Postal Address Data Standard will provide local, state, tribal, and federal agencies with a means to share address information, as well as a methodology for improving response to emergency and non-emergency service requirements, with associated improvements in efficiency, effectiveness, and economy.

“The United States Thoroughfare, Landmark, and Postal Address Data Standard will have a significant impact at all levels of government and is an essential component of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure,” said Ivan DeLoatch, Executive Director of the FGDC. “We encourage government agencies, as well as others, to implement the standard for it provides a foundation for understanding and developing solutions for the many challenges in our communities.”

The ASWG, led by Carl Anderson, GISP; Hilary Perkins, GISP; Ed Wells, GISP; Martha McCart Wells, GISP; and Sara Yurman, GISP, along with dozens of additional volunteers, worked tirelessly since 2005 on developing the United States Thoroughfare, Landmark and Postal Address Data Standard.

The ASWG used an innovative methodology in developing the United States Thoroughfare, Landmark and Postal Address Data Standard by placing all draft materials and discussion in a public environment through the use of a wiki site, public circulation through URISA's website of two drafts, and a broad inclusionary effort to help understand “on-the-ground” addressing issues across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the United States Territories.

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Highlights of the standards development process included the following:

- Two drafts were circulated through the URISA Web Site (over 400 comments were received on these drafts).
- Over 40 presentations were given at state, regional, national, and international conferences.
- Two webinars were presented through URISA.
- A wiki site was used to further refine the Standard (more than 500 people joined the effort to view and comment).
- Thousands of teleconferences, emails, and conversations with practitioners were held.
- Two public comment periods were held. 216 comments were received through these public comment periods.

The United States Thoroughfare, Landmark and Postal Address Data Standard, the result of this consensus-driven process, was submitted through the FGDC's formal standards review and approval process for ultimate endorsement by the FGDC.

Both the U.S. Postal Service and the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) were involved in the development of the United States Thoroughfare, Landmark and Postal Address Data Standard and profiles of the standard. The Postal Addressing Profile of the Federal Geographic Data Committee United States Thoroughfare, Landmark, and Postal Address Standard outlines the equivalencies and differences between the Address Data Standard and USPS Publication 28, "Postal Addressing Standards." NENA finished its public review of the Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) Civic Location Data Exchange Format (CLDXF) Standard, and is responding to the comments it received. The ASWG will finalize the Profile Reconciling the FGDC United States Thoroughfare, Landmark, and Postal Address Data Standard and the NENA Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) Civic Location Data Exchange Format (CLDXF) Standard when NENA has a final standard.

The FGDC-endorsed United States Thoroughfare, Landmark and Postal Address Data Standard is published in its entirety on the URISA website, www.urisa.org, and is available for use and implementation. It is also available on the FGDC website, www.fgdc.gov.

In order to facilitate use and adherence to the Standard, the ASWG has begun work on implementation guidelines. Members of the ASWG received a 2011 NSDI CAP Grant for the prototyping of data quality and data exchange tools to assist local, state and federal agencies in implementation of the Standard.