NSDI Community Demonstration Projects Creating Locally–Driven Electronic Government

From Federal Geographic Data Committee Winter 1998 Newsletter

Vice President Gore’s National Partnership for Reinventing Government is sponsoring six NSDI Community Demonstration Projects to support the use of geographic data for local decision-making. These projects are being coordinated with the FGDC and will be implemented in cities, counties, and watershed areas across the country to illustrate the use of geographic information and the benefits of improved liaison between federal and local communities. Each project will address different issues, such as crime prevention and reduction, watershed and water quality management, disaster preparedness and recovery, and urban growth and land use planning. The demonstration period will run from July 1998 through May 2000.

The following communities were selected for this demonstration effort:

- In Dane County, Wisconsin, the project will create a citizen-based, online, smart growth planning process to protect farmland and open space and address environmental concerns, while sustaining continued growth.

- Gallatin County, Montana, just north of Yellowstone National Park, contains extensive areas of public lands, and is experiencing rapid population growth. This community’s project will develop tools for the county government to access integrated federal, state, and local information, consider population impacts, and understand alternatives for growth, and the effects of their decisions on the community.

- Tillamook County, Oregon will support a public/private partnership by creating online web-based tools for reporting and accountability. Citizens and local, state, and federal government agencies will be able to monitor and report progress toward common goals for water quality, flood mitigation, and fish habitat restoration.

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Ask the Executive Director...

An Exceptional Year Paves The Way For 1999

By David J. Martin, Executive Director

As the Executive Director of URISA, it is my pleasure to welcome you to our 36th year of providing high quality professional education for IT/GIS professionals in state and local government.

Last year was an outstanding success both programmatically and financially. The number of new URISA members has increased nearly 10% over 1997. More IT and GIS professionals took advantage of URISA’s educational offerings than ever before. And for the first time in three years, our operations generated a net revenue!

I am very pleased to report that the Member Outreach program, launched in 1998, was more successful than we could have imagined. You told us you needed educational resources that were available locally, without requiring large amounts of time away from work and family, and at reduced costs. Based on this, the Member Outreach program was developed and our first efforts concentrated on bringing our Certified Workshops directly to you at the local level.

Fifty-four workshops were held in thirteen locations in ’98, both throughout the U.S., and at several sites abroad to reach our International membership. In all, nearly 1,200 professionals took advantage of this outreach effort, an increase of 65%. In 1999 we will continue to expand this activity, while at the same time developing our first Workshops on Video to further provide you with easy, reasonably priced access to these exceptional educational programs.

Likewise, our publication efforts were also expanded. We produced four new titles, including the extremely popular Salary Survey. In 1998, many of you responded to this opportunity by ordering twice the number of publications than in 1997. We also delivered three issues of the URISA Journal, and for the first time in many years, sent every member the Annual Conference Proceedings. For ’99 even more publication activities are planned, including several new titles, another special issue of the Journal and the beginning of surveying for an expanded Salary Survey scheduled for distribution in 2000.

In 1998 we also rededicated ourselves to assisting URISA Chapters in all aspects of their work. In all, URISA Chapters reach nearly 5,000 professionals. To assist the Chapters administratively and with the task of providing education locally, URISA Headquarters staff produced and distributed a brochure outlining all of the many products and services available to URISA Chapters. Several Chapters utilized our professional staff in meeting planning, while others took advantage of our Web Site development and hosting capabilities. Other Chapters turned to URISA International to provide their members with copies of the URISA Journal and other publications. And while all of this was going on, our HQ Finance staff worked quietly behind the scenes helping Chapters complete complicated tax and government documents to remain in compliance with the myriad of complex laws governing non-profit organizations.

In considering our priorities for 1999, education continues at the forefront of our activities. We will continue to develop a GIS Certification Program defining core and supplementary skills. We will also expand our joint activities with other organizations such as APWA, APA, IAAO and DAMA. And we will begin a concerted effort to let you know what is going on at the Federal level of government that affects your daily operations.

Topically we will focus efforts on Transportation, as the federal government directs nearly $218 billion in this area that will impact all urban and regional governments. Address Issues and Document Management will also receive special attention in 1999. As you can see, we anticipate another “banner year” for URISA! But, we can’t do it without your help.

In 1998 over 200 members volunteered to work on URISA programs. Further, members contributed over $50,000 in addition to their annual dues payment, which provided vital “seed money” for the development of these new programs. Without your continued volunteer and financial support, URISA would not be able to carry out its important educational and charitable mission. Please consider volunteering or making a tax-deductible contribution.

1999 finds URISA on sound financial footing: our Headquarters facilities are ample and well organized, our management team is strong, and our group of volunteers continues to be second to none! On behalf of the URISA Board of Directors, thank you for your continued support. Your contribution of time and money is a solid investment in our future and a commitment to ensuring the success of our profession into the next century.