“I am truly lucky to have had the opportunity to attend the URISA 2008 Conference in New Orleans, not only for the abundance of information regarding GIS but also to get to meet with each of you. The conference was phenomenal, but above and beyond I most enjoyed every one of our conversations the best. You were all so insightful and enlightening. I walked away with a most improved knowledge of GIS and a feeling of real community and support. I hope that we will continue to stay in touch throughout the years to come. Thank you again for the pleasure of your company and camaraderie.”

- Noelle Brigman, Environmental Compliance Officer, City of New Iberia (LA) Wastewater Department

URISA’s 46th Annual Conference & Exposition began on Tuesday, October 7 with twelve well-attended pre-conference workshops. All of the hard work devoted by the Workshop Development Committee over the past year was evident. Two new workshops debuted, Building Quality Spatial Data and GIS Strategic Planning, and the other ten workshops went through a significant update process. Thanks to all of the authors, committee members, reviewers and instructors for another successful and productive year!

On Wednesday morning, Susan Johnson (URISA President) and Mike Lovett (acting Conference Chair) welcomed conference attendees and then David Gisclair provided a stimulating and well-received keynote address exploring how advances in enterprise GIS technologies have helped in the recovery and rebuilding of post-Katrina Louisiana, as well as the lessons learned recently during Hurricane Gustav. We were also happy to receive news from the Spatial Sciences Institute and were pleased to meet Dr. Christopher Pettit from the SSI.

Breakout sessions filled the rest of the day, with a break for the Roundtable Topic Luncheon. Attendees chose which of forty topics were of most interest to them (from K-12 GIS Education to Sports talk) and joined their peers for some good discussion. The day closed with the Networking Reception in the Exhibit Hall.

Thank you to all of the exhibitors who included URISA in their conference schedule this year. With the depressed economy, we truly appreciate your support!

- Facet Technology Group
- Federal Geographic Data Committee
- Geo-3D Inc
- GEOMAP GIS America
- GeoSpatial Experts
- GISCI
- Hart InterCivic
- iLOOKABOUT Corp
- Michael Baker Corporation
- National Geographic Survey / NOAA
- Orion Technology Inc.
- Pictometry International Corp
- Pinnacle Mapping Technologies Inc
- Safe Software, Inc.
- TerraGo Technologies
- TeachMeGIS
- University of Denver
- US Census Bureau
- WE Upjohn Center for the Study of Geographical Change
- Vertices/GIS4Kids
- Yotta MVS

On Thursday, we began the day with something new, an Awards Breakfast, to fully recognize all of the deserving recipients of URISA Awards this year.

ESIG Awards
Dr. Gary Hunter reviewed the URISA Exemplary Systems in Government (ESIG) Awards program and recognized both the winners and those receiving “Distinguished Systems” awards.
Important URISA Dates to Remember

February 8-11, 2009
13th Annual GIS/CAMA Technologies Conference
Charleston, SC

June 5-8, 2009
URISA’s GIS in Public Health Conference
Providence, RI

August 4-6, 2009
URISA/NENA Addressing Conference
Providence, RI

September 29-October 2, 2009
URISA’s 47th Annual Conference
Anaheim, CA

November 10-12, 2009
GIS in Transit Conference
St. Petersburg, FL

About URISA

The Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA) is the premier professional association for those involved in improving our urban and regional environments through the effective use of information technology. Professionals in planning, economic development, information systems, emergency services, natural resources, public works, transportation, and other departments within state and local government have depended on URISA for professional development and educational needs since 1963. Through its international, national and local chapter operations, URISA serves nearly 8,000 professionals.

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Wendy Nelson
Executive Director
wnelson@urisa.org

Article submissions, calendar items and industry news should be sent to wnelson@urisa.org
We were thrilled to have many of the ESIG participants on the program this year, to share their accomplishments with the attendees. Be sure to read through the winning system submissions (http://www.urisa.org/awards/2008esig) when you have time. Thank you to Dr. Hunter and the members of the ESIG Review Committee for their efforts this year!

Student Paper Competition
Ernest Sinohui, Publications Committee Co-Chair, had the pleasure of recognizing two of the three prize winners in this year’s Student Paper Competition.

Arjen Koekoek and U Wa Tang were both presenters on the conference program. Their submissions are posted online (http://www.urisa.org/2008student) for your review. Congratulations to Claire Brill who was not able to attend the conference, but received second place in the competition this year. Thank you to the fine volunteer efforts of the Student Paper Review Committee!

Susan Johnson then had the honor of presenting numerous URISA awards to some outstanding URISA members.

Peirce Eichelberger was the recipient of URISA’s highest honor, the Horwood Distinguished Service Award. Peirce has a long history of meaningful and lasting contributions to URISA and we appreciate him every day!

Ken Dueker could not attend the conference, but he and Cindy Domenico were the recipients of 2008 URISA Leadership Awards. Both URISA Past Presidents (as is Peirce), Ken and Cindy have demonstrated exemplary leadership to URISA, creativity, innovation and dedicated support of URISA programs.

The URISA Service Award was presented to Dave Hawker and Bruce Joffe, both of whom have demonstrated faithful service to URISA and participation in its programs over a period of several years.

Jochen Albrecht, Editor of the URISA Journal among other accomplishments, was presented with the Barbara Hirsch Special Service Award. The entire committee that developed the successful URISA Leadership Academy was also recognized with the Special Service Award this year.

Carolina URISA received recognition as the Outstanding URISA Chapter for 2008 for its Innovation, Outreach, Education and Community Impact.

GISCorps Recognition
Finally, Mark Salling, Chair of the URISA GISCorps Core Committee, presented three GISCorps volunteers with certificates of recognition for their accom-
accomplishments over the past 12 months. Tom Ponte, Heather Milton and David Allen were recognized by the conference. Visit www.giscorps.org for details about current and past projects.

A full day of breakout sessions followed the Awards Breakfast and the day ended with the conference social event at Pat O’s on the River. Attendees were treated to ample food and drink and fine New Orleans Jazz in a very relaxed and festive atmosphere!

Friday began with more breakout sessions and closed with a plenary session on “Grass Roots GIS in the Recovery of New Orleans”, a fine panel of individuals who have been involved with neighborhood groups who use GIS to make spatial sense of the recovery after Hurricane Katrina. It was informative and eye-opening and brought more attention to the power of Public Participation GIS (PPGIS).

URISA’s Annual Business Meeting followed the session with a Secretary and Treasurer’s Report and recognition of outgoing URISA Board members (Ed Wells, Cy Smith, Zhong-Ren Peng, and Ingrid Bruce). Susan Johnson handed over the presidential gavel to Hilary Perkins who began her term as URISA President at that time. Incoming Board members Clare Brown, Karen Stewart, Mike Lovett, and Kathrine Cargo (President-Elect) were also welcomed as new members of the URISA Board of Directors.

**Charity Event**

Those who made plans to stay in town for the charity event on Friday afternoon were very pleased with their decision. URISA attendees (and spouses and friends) hopped on a bus to the Lakeview neighborhood and started working to clear out overgrowth at an abandoned house and clear out a trash-filled and overgrown lot in the area. It was a hot afternoon, but all who participated felt energized following a job well done for New Orleans. One of the neighbors came out to thank us when we were finished. She

continued on page 8
Welcome New URISA Members

Joseph Adriano, City of Bellevue Human Svcs
Araya Araya, Effingham County
Michael Axelod, Louisiana State University at Eunice Louisiana, Eunice, LA
Kresha Aycock, Effingham County Board
Martin Balikov, ESRI, Olympia, WA
Jennifer Barker, AED, Washington, DC
Sheleena Bergasse, ESRI Canada, Toronto, ON, Canada
Ken Beville, Kissimmee Utility Authority, Kissimmee, FL
Joy Bonaguro, Berkeley, CA
Anita Bowen, City of Montgomery, Montgomery, AL
Jason Catelli, FM Global, Norwood, MA
Geoffrey Certain, Colorado CustomWare Inc, Fort Collins, CO
Jason Close, Harris County Flood Control District, Houston, TX
Kyle Collins, Harris County Flood Control District, Houston, TX
Patricia Collins, Thomas County Assessors Office, Thomasville, GA
Steven Cumblidge, Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, Athens, GA
Mark Curry, Auburn University Urban Modeling Lab, Auburn, AL
Michael Duncan, 3001 Inc, Huntsville, AL
Caroline McInnis Dunlap, Florence County GIS, Florence, SC
Marc Fevrier, Plano, TX
David Finley, Service New Brunswick Corporation, Fredericton, NB, Canada
Charles Flanagan, State of Louisiana, Baton Rouge, LA
Steven Foster, GISP, City of Franklin, Franklin, TN
Debi Grant, Town of Kernersville, Kernersville, NC
Angela Gray, Oceanering International, Laurel, MD
Jason Harpole, 3001 Inc Subsidiary of Northrop Grumman, Saint Louis, MO
Christopher Harrington, Dowl HKM, Anchorage, AK
Timothy Heinse, AMTEC Corporation, Redstone Central, AL
April Herrett, Kennesaw, GA
Lane Howerton, PLWC, Paragould, AR
Hasan Jamil, Department of Survey and Mapping, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Lisa Kamuf, University of New Orleans, New Orleans, LA
Jason Kaper, Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission, Columbus, OH
Arif Keceli, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK
Sung-Man Kim, GISP, PhD, AICP, Clay County, Green Cove Springs, FL
Miles Loretta, Cincinnati, OH
Cathy Lutz, Arlington Heights, IL
Cheri Mansperger, Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission, Columbus, OH
Lisa McAleer, South Georgia RDC, Valdosta, GA
Jane McAtty, Nez Perce Tribe, Lapwai, ID
Ann McElhan-Chambers, CDC Division of Blood Disorders, Lagrange, GA
James Miller, Raytheon, Woodstock, GA
Shawn Munro, District of North Saanich, North Saanich, BC, Canada
Jason Nelson, Tufts Medical Center, Boston, MA
Michelle Ning, Musqueam Indian Band, Vancouver, BC, Canada
Robin Reilley, Denver Regional COG, Denver, CO
Scott Riordan, State of Oregon, Salem, OR
Juan Roubaud, Jr, SAIT, Calgary, AB, Canada
Tricia Saulnier-Littlejohn, Dowl HKM, Anchorage, AK
Lane E Simmons, RBF Consulting, Sacramento, CA
Chris Small, City of St John, St Johns, NL, Canada
Dallas Smith, City of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada
Gregory M Sullivan, GISP, Town of Greenwich, Greenwich, CT
Chris Sweeney, 3 Rivers Connect, Pittsburgh, PA
Michelle M. Thompson, PhD, University of New Orleans, New Orleans, LA
James Valenza, Weston Solutions, Naples, FL
Kyle Valkenburg, HDR Engineering, Phoenix, AZ
Rafael Villarreal Pacheco, McGill University, Montreal, QC, Canada
Cathy Walker, Washington State Military Dept, Camp Murray, WA
Jessica Webster, Natural Resources Canada, Ottawa, ON, Canada
Scott Weisman, GISP, Leon County MIS/GIS, Tallahassee, FL
Sanford Wood, LSU at Eunice, Eunice, LA
Scott Zeimetz, Westwood Professional Services, Eden Prairie, MN

Federal Agency Member
U.S. Census Bureau

Corporate Members
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Autodesk – Gold Corporate Member
Michael Baker Corporation – Gold Corporate Member
Bowne Management Systems Inc
CDM - Camp Dresser & McKee Inc.
Geographic Technologies Group
Hart InterCivic
KCI Technologies, Inc
Manatron Inc
Merrick & Company
Mobile Video Services Inc
Optimal Geomatics Inc
Pictometry International Corp
Pinnacle Mapping Technologies Inc
Pixtures, Inc.
Sierra Systems Consultants Inc
Surdex Corporation
TerraGo Technologies
The Schneider Corporation
The Sidwell Company

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GIS Innovations Ltd
GIS Planning Inc
Kessler GIS
MGP Inc
Munsys Inc
New Urban Research Inc.
North River Geographic Systems Inc.
Orion Technology Inc
Spatial Focus Inc
spatialest
Systems Design Inc
Tetra Tech
Tyler Technologies - Eagle Division
VIXXI Solutions Inc
Wellar Consulting

Happy Holidays and Best Wishes for the New Year from the URISA Headquarters Staff!
Extend your GIS Across the Enterprise.

Share the value of your work throughout your organization with Server GIS.

As a geographic information system (GIS) professional, you receive countless requests for maps and spatial information. Answering special requests, while important, takes time and reduces your productivity.

Imagine being able to push your maps, models, and tools out to the rest of the organization via focused, easy-to-use applications. Staff in other departments and out in the field could query accurate, up-to-date data without a lot of training. This increases their productivity as well as yours.

By making your maps, data, and analyses readily available, you can help others reap the benefits of the GIS work that you do. You already know that spatial analysis and visualization are important parts of daily decision making. Use Server GIS from ESRI to help others benefit from your work.

“The server-based options provided by ESRI allow the City of Mesa to deliver more enterprise GIS applications throughout our organization without high installation and training costs.”

Jason Bell
IT Services Leader,
City of Mesa, Arizona

To learn how organizations are using ESRI server GIS to improve productivity, visit www.esri.com/server.
President’s Column

Maturing
By Hilary E. H. Perkins, GISP, AICP

In preparing to write my inaugural column as URISA President, I went into the way-back machine and reviewed my predecessor’s columns as far back as 1997. It is interesting to read that even back then, URISA Presidents were keenly interested in pushing the organization forward, providing a range of ever-improving services to our members though education and professional development. From each Past-President’s unique perspective, they called for URISA to take its rightful place as the home for leaders and innovators from the geospatial community; and as an organization, to grow and mature along with our profession.

The current URISA Board of Directors is committed to this as well, and as you read in the last edition of the URISA News, building on that tradition of geospatial industry leadership with new programs and initiatives. Here are just a few of the highlights:

- The Balanced Scorecard and Strategic Planning. Every few years, it is useful for the Board to step back from the strategic planning process, to rethink the organization at an almost cellular level. Started under Past-President Susan Johnson, the “Balanced Scorecard” method helps us assess how URISA’s individual initiatives synch with its larger-scale objectives in terms of vision and strategy. The Balanced Scorecard focuses on both financial results and human issues, and provides a more comprehensive view of our organization. This strategic management system helps leaders focus on performance metrics while balancing financial objectives with URISA’s members’ needs, processes, and employee perspectives.

- The URISA Leadership Academy (ULA). This is an incredibly successful program designed to teach us to be effective leaders and GIS evangelists. Taught by leaders for leaders, the ULA helps us learn about our own management style, team building, capacity building, succession planning, budgeting, overcoming political issues, and strategic planning. The entire five day program, the only leadership training program of its type, is tailored to industry leaders and practitioners faced with unique challenges of GIS leadership and management, and who want to make an impact leveraging the power of GIS.

- The Coalition of Geospatial Organizations (COGO). URISA has joined with other geospatial associations to act cooperatively in response to short-term policy issues. Rather than leave this important work to ad hoc interactions, URISA helped form COGO in August 2008 as a forum for geospatial associations to better coordinate their activities. COGO is working aggressively to develop policy guidance on a variety of issues critical national geospatial issues. With ever-shifting budgets and priorities, it speaks well of our industry that we can find common ground on important issues. COGO is currently made up of its eleven founding member organizations and four founding advisory organizations (see www.urisa.org/cogo for a complete listing).

There are, of course, a variety of other initiatives and programs highlighted on the URISA website and I encourage you to check them out and seek out opportunities to volunteer and give back to this important organization.

Another common thread running through my predecessors’ columns was the idea of that passion that keeps URISA moving forward. I know it is there, as I suspect many of you do too. URISA has been a vitally important constant in my own career, from the first nudge my then boss (Past-President Chuck Kindleberger) gave me to get involved when I was fresh out of college, to digging into that all-important network for employment prospects, to taking advantages of the depth and breadth of URISA’s educational opportunities to learn and grow both an individual and as a professional.

We have built a certain camaraderie over the years, based on shared interests and common goals. I want to see that camaraderie and passion continue to flourish as URISA grows and the geospatial industry matures. Past-President Cindy Domenico’s quote that “where technology, policy, and passion intersect, we find our members, the heart of URISA” is still so true. Besides the genuinely important work of providing essential educational opportunities for the GIS professionals that make URISA the organization that it is, let’s begin to look for new opportunities to build on that passion.

Expectations created by these market changes put pressure on us as GIS professionals to deliver more functionality directly to our customers. The next generation of GIS professionals will be called on to not only know spatial theory, but to convey it through a range of media from traditional printed maps to my iPhone. These exciting changes need to be tempered with what many of us know can be the raised expectations of web-enabled GIS tools.

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said that the lot we cleaned up used to have three homes on it. The water from the storm reached eight feet in her house. Incredible.

(We also appreciated the post-work cold beverages and snacks provided by Pictometry!) Thanks to Dore’ Vorum for some of the great photos.

Start making your plans to attend next year’s conference in Anaheim, California! The conference will take place at the Anaheim Marriott, September 29-October 2, 2009.

Thanks to all of the attendees, the conference committee, URISA leadership, conference speakers, exhibitors and sponsors for a great event!

URISA is pleased to announce the renewal of the Horwood Critique Prize!
In 1985, the URISA Board of Directors established the Horwood Critique Prize honoring URISA’s First President, Ed Horwood and his wife Rosemary. The objective of the Prize is to challenge professionals to more critically interpret developments in their field. The Prize is given annually to author(s) of a paper published in the URISA Proceedings representing:

...the best critical analysis of an urban or regional information system design, implementation or application; technology; policy or issue; or contextual environment. Papers will be judged upon their candor, critical insights and conclusions, and methods employed in critique.

Those who wish to enter their work in the 2009 Horwood Critique Prize competition, should submit an abstract through the URISA 2009 Annual Conference Call for Presentations. Criteria for formal paper submission will be distributed and the deadline date for paper submission will be May 22, 2009. (Note that proceedings papers for the general conference are not due until after the conference.)

If you wish to serve as a member of the Horwood Critique Award Committee, please contact Wendy Nelson at wnelson@urisa.org.
At 10:00 a.m. on November 13, 2008, millions of solutions for Kansas’ local government officials. A Kansas-based solutions provider. CountyWorks will join Manatron’s InfiniTech Division in Hays, Kansas and with this acquisition, Manatron strengthens its solutions for Kansas’ local government officials.

At 10:00 a.m. on November 13, 2008, millions of people throughout Southern California participated in the Great Southern California ShakeOut Drill, the largest earthquake preparedness exercise in U.S. history. The drill simulated a magnitude 7.8 earthquake along the San Andreas Fault in Southern California. ESRI supported participating agencies with software, staffing, and resources used during the exercise, which modeled assessment, rescue, relief, and recovery efforts. GIS technology was used to help build an accurate, continuously updated emergency information repository; aided decision support and resource management; and enhanced multijurisdictional communication.

“We worked diligently to create a realistic exercise that helps us see where we are with our response capability in the event of a major earthquake,” says John Ellison, agency technology officer and GIS capability in the event of a major earthquake,” says John Ellison, agency technology officer and GIS director, California Resources Agency. “By upgrading to ArcGIS Server 9.3 and ArcGIS API for Flex, we have an easy-to-use Web-based viewer suitable for this purpose. We are very pleased with our GIS experience including during the exercise.”

ESRI and Xplore Technologies, an innovative manufacturer of rugged mobile computing systems, announce the winners of the joint 2008 ESRI and Xplore Technologies Mobile Government Demonstration Project Grant Program. The ESRI and Xplore Technologies software, hardware, and training grants, totaling $95,950, have been awarded to 10 state, regional, and local governments. The recipients are:

- Alabama Forestry Commission, Forest Management Division
- City of Sarasota, Florida, Public Works and Utilities Department
- County of Bay, Florida, Emergency Services Department
- County of Montgomery, Maryland, Department of Parks
- County of Nueces, Texas, Community Supervision and Corrections Department
- County of Woodford, Kentucky
- Eastern Municipal Water District, California
- State of California, Department of Transportation, District 7
- Town of Narragansett, Rhode Island, Department of Community Development
- Village of Algonquin, Illinois, Parks and Forestry Department

Manatron, Inc. has acquired the CountyWorks government software operation of Nex-Tech, Inc., a Kansas-based solutions provider. CountyWorks will join Manatron’s InfiniTech Division in Hays, Kansas and with this acquisition, Manatron strengthens its solutions for Kansas’ local government officials.

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- County of Woodford, Kentucky
- Eastern Municipal Water District, California
- State of California, Department of Transportation, District 7
- Town of Narragansett, Rhode Island, Department of Community Development
- Village of Algonquin, Illinois, Parks and Forestry Department

Orion Technology, a Division of Rolta Canada has been listed in Microsoft’s ad congratulating companies who have attained 4 or more competencies in the Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Program.

Manatron, Inc. announced that MVP Tax for Indiana is the first property tax software in the State to receive official software certification from the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF), in accordance with the legislative requirements established by 50 IAC 23 “Computer Standards for a Uniform and Common Property Tax Management System”.

Merrick & Company has opened a new office on Commerce Park Drive in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. The firm has been involved in ongoing projects at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and Y 12 Nuclear Security Complex for the past eight years and, during that time, has continued to build its base of clients in the south and southeast regions of the U.S.

Munsys, Inc. announced the release of Munsys 10.1. The primary focus of this release is to provide compatibility with the latest releases of AutoCAD 2008 and 2009 family of products.

**People News**

Nigel Roberts, former URISA Board member, has taken a position as the Manager of Departmental Systems for the City of Mississauga, Ontario’s IT Division.

The Sidwell Company, the premier provider of GIS and land records management solutions for local government, recently announced a reorganization of its senior management team. Brent Mainzinger has been appointed Vice President – Chief Technology Officer. Kevin Daugherty has been appointed Vice President – Sales and Marketing. Don Mangus, previously Sidwell’s Director of Photogrammetry, has been appointed Vice President – Photogrammetry, responsible for managing the company’s entire Photogrammetry Department, including the internal production department and flight operations.

Scott Gustafson, P.E., has been promoted to a vice president of Merrick & Company and the manager of the firm’s Los Alamos, New Mexico office.

**Geographic Technologies Group, Inc. (GTC)** is pleased to welcome Donald Lee, Software Support Specialist, to their North Carolina corporate office.

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URISA Caribbean Chapter President, Valerie Grant-Harry, GISP, announces GeoTechVision Enterprises, Ltd., specializing in innovative spatial technology solutions for the Caribbean.

**Project Awards**

Merrick & Company, a world leader in LiDAR, digital ortho imaging, photogrammetry, and geographic solutions was awarded a contract by North Line GIS (Breckenridge, CO) to provide LiDAR, two-foot contours, breaklines, six-inch digital color orthophotography, and a DTM for almost 300 square miles in the central Rocky Mountains of Colorado. According to Trip McLaughlin of North Line GIS, “Our company brought together 21 entities to form a consortium to obtain highly accurate spatial data in order to reduce acquisition costs.” Participants include government agencies, metro districts, the EPA, and independent land owners.

Bentley Systems announced that Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has joined Bentley’s Enterprise License Subscription (ELS) program for a three-year term. Bentley’s innovative ELS will extend FDOT’s software capability by granting FDOT access to a comprehensive portfolio of civil engineering, architectural, construction, operations, and geospatial software for a single annual fee. Built on a common platform, the portfolio includes almost 200 integrated and interoperable design, analysis, and collaboration software products.

Southwest Florida Water Management District signed an enterprise license agreement (ELA) with ESRI to support the rapid expansion of an accessible geographic information system (GIS) that provides employees with the right data and tools to effectively perform their work. The agreement also supports the technological advancement of two key information systems built on ArcGIS Server.

Colorado CustomWare, Inc. (CCI) is pleased to announce that Yavapai County, AZ has selected CCI to provide them with a Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) solution. Yavapai joins six other Arizona counties (Mohave, Navajo, Apache, Santa Cruz, Gila, and Greenlee) on CCI’s industry-leading CAMA solution, RealWare.

Geographic Technologies Group (GTC) was selected for multiple software contracts including: Sutter County, California—purchased one (1) additional seat of LMobile Community Connect. City of Albany, Oregon—upgrading from LGdispatch to LGdispatch Community Connect. Yuba County, California—upgrading from LGdispatch to LGdispatch Community Connect and from LGmobile to LGMobile Community Connect. Wayne County, North Carolina—purchased Geo Blade Viewer. City of Napererville, Illinois—purchased Geo Blade AVL and ten (10) seats of Geo Blade Viewer including the pictometry module. The City of Sanibel, Florida selected GTC to develop a GIS Needs Assessment and Strategic Implementation Plan. Powhatan County, Virginia selected GTC for GIS location based Situs address collection and database development.

**Geotek Mapping** was selected as prime consultant for City of Goldsboro city-wide water system GIS mapping project.
Better Information Systems as a Catalyst for Achieving New Measures of Transportation System Performance.

by Barry Wellar, Wellar Consulting, Ottawa, ON Canada

I am currently engaged as the Principal Investigator for the Transport Canada project, Methodologies for Identifying and Ranking Sustainable Transport Practices in Urban Regions. (Wellar, 2008). As part of that research activity, I have had occasion to consult with veteran URISA members (Urisans) William Garrison, Will Steger, and Ken Dueker, as well as with researchers and practitioners in various fields about designing new measures of transportation system performance.

The focus of the companion research regarding new measures is “sustainability”. This concept has been the subject of much discussion in the development domain for decades but, as of this writing, it is still short on specifics in the transportation field. The intent of the companion research initiative, therefore, is to accelerate the search for measures which can be incorporated in decisions about identifying, adopting, and implementing sustainable transport practices.

However, for reasons involving vested interests, inertia, the difficulty of compiling compelling evidence, and other factors which impede achieving change, breaking away from the old ways of measuring transportation system performance in favor of a sustainability agenda will not be easy. Indeed, I expect that the reader can quickly think of attitudinal, ideological, institutional, political, and other barriers to be overcome in order to move towards a new transportation order in which measures of performance are based on sustainability criteria.

That said, and in the spirit of all Urisans who embrace problems that beg for solutions, I believe that we are in fact on the cusp of a new era in terms of how transportation system performance is measured. To tilt matters in favor of the new order, one thing that is needed are persuasive arguments to induce citizens, businesses, governments, etc., to let go of the old order and grab onto the new one. This communication about catalysts is a contribution to the body of persuasive arguments.

In the research paper, “Cutting to the Chase in Designing New Measures of Transportation System Performance”, five catalyzing influences are proposed which may help Canada (and other countries) cut to the chase in deriving and implementing a new set of measures which are energy-conserving, and are sound ecologically, socially, economically, financially, and geographically (Wellar, 2008b). The five catalyzing influences are:

- The growing shift away from private motor vehicles for passenger trips, and possibly for freight trips;
- Geographical limits to development;
- More regard for legacy systems;
- More concern about safety and security issues;
- The increased availability of better information systems and better geographic information systems (GIS) in particular.

The section on Better Information Systems may be of particular interest to URISA members, and it has been excerpted from the larger paper (http://www.transport2000.ca/) along with the pertinent references.

Catalyst E: Better Information Systems

The final catalyst has many roots, including the Steger (1966) paper, the Wellar (1975) newspaper column, Garrison’s 1965 paper in the Journal of the American Planning Association and the 2007 Anderson Lecture (Garrison, 1965, 2007), and numerous other publications on the topic of transportation measures over the past 40 years.

As Steger, Garrison, Wellar and other commentators observe, creating transportation system performance measures is a difficult and significant achievement. However, creating measures is just one part of the applied measures activity, because operationalizing the measures requires collecting, organizing, and processing the data needed to test and re-test the measures, and then performing analyses, calibration, evaluation, and so on using the measures in real-world engineering, traffic, planning, health, public safety, and other operational environments (Wellar, 1998, 2002).

This point is emphasized by Schneider (2008) who recently noted that the importance of having data available for measures applications in the walking and cycling modes cannot be over-emphasized: “Data collection is critical for measuring pedestrian and bicycle characteristics over time. This aspect of pedestrian and bicycle performance measurement is often a barrier for transportation agencies.”

The comments by Schneider at the 2008 ACSP-AESOP Congress support the position I took at the 2001 URISA conference regarding the critical importance of having an information system/geographic information system (IS/GIS) in place to support large-scale measures, such as those developed for the Walking Security Index (Wellar, 2001).

Fortunately, a concerted effort has been made by professional organizations such as URISA (http://www.urisa.org/) to address various data problems that confront researchers, consultants, professional staff, elected officials, and members of the public who undertake transportation and related studies at the local and regional scale. Further,
there is a large North American industry of private corporations which have also been active as data providers, and as sources of information system hardware, software, services, and, most notably for this report, of geographic information systems (GIS) software, peripherals, and services.

As participants in the evolution of GIS are acutely aware, tremendous steps have been taken in the last decade, indeed, last half-decade, to dramatically increase the functionality, scope, and ease associated with using GIS in transportation studies.

Evidence in this regard is illustrated, for example, by the ten websites that were selected for each of GIS Day and Transportation Day during Geography Awareness Week 2007 hosted by the Canadian Association of Geographers. (http://www.cag-acg.ca/en/geography_week.html) And, as further evidence of the growing popularity of GIS, witness the rapidly growing number of comfortable users of Google Maps and global positioning systems (GPS).

That progress notwithstanding, however, the use of GIS for developing, testing, implementing, and evaluating new measures of transportation system performance still faces several major challenges. First, although the concepts and measures introduced by the Walking Security Index project 1994-2002 spawned numerous follow-on projects and studies, it appears that only limited progress has been made in developing the IS/GIS capabilities that were discussed in several WSI publications a decade ago (Wellar, 1998, 2002).

Second, IS/GIS applications in the walk mode involve issues of scope, scale, and functionality which are very different from the private motor vehicle experience, and evidence of lessons learned seems slow to materialize. Third, it appears that in a number of municipalities, only very limited progress has been made in applying geographic information systems and geographic information science to address issues involving the cycle mode. And fourth, there appears to be very little published work describing how GIS is being used to analyze and improve the connections between and among active transit modes, that is, walking, cycling, and transit.

Those challenges are significant, but they are more the result of lack of regard and action in support of active transportation, than they are measures of technical or technological shortcomings in GIS. Consequently, given the need for new measures on the one hand, and the rapid advances in how GIS technology can be used to produce better transportation system performance information across all modes, it is expected that within the next several years GIS will play a major role in advancing efforts to design and implement new measures of transportation system performance.

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References


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