

## **Status Report**

# **Louisiana Geographic Information Systems Council**

## **1999**

The Louisiana Geographic Information Systems Council was created by Act 922 of the 1995 Regular Session of the Legislature as Chapter 15 of Title 49 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950 known as R.S. 49:1051 through 1057.

The Council was placed within the Louisiana Data Base Commission, Office of the Governor, Division of Administration.

The Council members include:

1. Senate
2. House of Representatives
3. Division of Administration
4. Department of Agriculture and Forestry
5. Department of Justice
6. Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
7. Department of Economic Development
8. Department of Environmental Quality
9. Department of Health and Hospitals
10. Department of Natural Resources
11. Department of Public Safety and Corrections
12. Department of Transportation and Development
13. Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
14. Office of Emergency Preparedness
15. Louisiana Assessors Association
16. Police Jury Association of Louisiana
17. Louisiana Municipal Association

With the retirement of Ms. Zella Scheve, the representative of Louisiana Municipal Association, and the resignation of Mr. Fred Whitrock, from the Department of Justice, during 1999, two agencies were not represented on the Council. Several attempts were made by Council members and the Chair to have these agencies appoint new representatives to the Council. The annual attendance report has been attached and made a part of this annual summary.

The Council is responsible for guiding the sound development of GIS and geographically related information technology for the State of Louisiana.

The Council's duties are further described in nine items under R.S. 49:1054. The following accomplishments of the Council during 1999 - 2000 are presented as they relate to each item.

1. To direct the activities of a center, the Louisiana Geographic Information Center (LAGIC), established to provide various GIS services to the state.

Action:

Funding for Year Two of LAGIC was provided within the Data Base Commission budget for FY1999. Ms. Sharon Balfour, LADOTD's Council member is the Contract Administrator for LAGIC. The Council has tasked LAGIC to provide support for administrative tasks of the Council's monthly meetings, conduct an inventory of GIS software, hardware, data, and expertise within the members of the Council, provide metadata training to member agencies, and additional tasks which provide GIS service to the state.

Ms. Lynda Wayne served as the director of LAGIC. Mr. Joel Register vacated the data manager position in November of 1998. Mr. Josh Kent, formerly of the Louisiana State Land office, joined LAGIC as the new data manager on March 8, 1999.

In November 1999, Ms. Lynda Wayne announced her resignation as the director of LAGIC effective February 2000. She accepted new opportunities in the Asheville, N.C. area. A position/job description was developed and actions were taken to initiate a search to fill this position.

2. To establish GIS policies, procedures and guidelines for the sharing of data and technology among state agencies.

Action:

LGISC modified the by-laws of the Council to allow alternates, in the absence of the council member, to vote on issues of the Council. A resolution was prepared and adopted to support the continuation of the National Geodetic Surveyor (NGS) Advisor position in the State of Louisiana.

LGISC/LAGIC developed Data Lineage Guidelines for use by all agencies in the development of metadata.

LGISC's Archive Committee developed a work plan for archiving all documents of the LGISC. Archival procedures were implemented; the work is still in progress.

LAGIC continued to encourage agencies to prepare metadata for the data sets served by individual agencies. Two workshops have been conducted by LAGIC to aid member agencies in the creation of approved metadata records for geospatial data sets created by the owner agencies. LAGIC employees have visited with member agencies and assisted in the creation of Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) and the Louisiana Required Metadata Standard compliant metadata records. These records will be served on the LAGIC web site with links to the custodial agency for data distribution.

3. To promote GIS use and development in Louisiana.

Action:

The Council and LAGIC continue to provide information to the public on meeting schedules, events, minutes of Council meetings, membership, creation Legislation, policies and bylaws plus links to data and pertinent websites through the use of the Council website. Member agencies have provided an inventory of data on hardware, software, expertise, and available geospatial data within state government. Selected information was made available to the general public. The agencies were encouraged to keep the inventories up-to-date.

The Council elected not to sponsor a "GIS in the Rotunda Day" this year. Instead, the Council decided to support the National GIS Day activities being sponsored by the National Geographic Society, Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), Inc. and the Association of American Geographers. The Governor, at the request of the Council, proclaimed November 19, 1999, GIS Day. On this day all throughout the State of Louisiana and around the country, school age children were exposed to Geographic Information System (GIS) technology and how it is used in various environments from business to government and from research to production. Over 1 million people were exposed to GIS activities on this special day.

The Council was one of the sponsors of the Fifteenth Annual Louisiana Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems Workshop in Lafayette, La. and conducted paper sessions during the workshop.

A continuing issue which the Council and LAGIC monitors is the proposal to redefine the practice of land surveying to include GIS and global positioning systems (GPS) technologies.

The State of Louisiana hosted the Annual National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC) conference in New Orleans, August 27 through September 2, 1999. The conference was well attended and many national GIS issues were addressed.

4. To provide a forum for the coordination and cooperation of state GIS efforts.

Action:

The Council meetings continue to be the forum for discussion and exchange of ideas as we build a Statewide GIS. Agency GIS activities and efforts were presented at the Council meetings to inform and share lessons learned and data sets developed through agency GIS projects. Additionally, guest speakers have presented information on topics relevant to GIS activities at the local, state, regional, and national level. Speakers and topics for 1999 included:

Dr. Michael Leitner (LSU/Geography and Anthropology) provided a summary of his work using GIS to analyze crime and described the Crime Mapping Research Center's (CMRC) new Internet crime analysis initiative.

Mr. Ernie Gammon, Louisiana Society of Professional Surveyors (LSPS) liaison presented the surveyors' views of GIS and why they are considering the redefinition of land surveying. This presentation opened a dialog between the GIS community and the surveying community. Mr. Gammon also spoke on the National Geodetic Survey

Advisor Program. He stated that the program was being cancelled because DOTD, the host agency, had gained enough experience to handle geodetic surveys without a consulting agency and there had been cuts in state funding. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Louisiana Geodetic Survey (LGS) voiced interest in continuing the NGS Advisor program.

Ms. Lynda Wayne (LAGIC director) presented the current issues of GIS data certification. Ms. Wayne received a grant from the Federal Geographic Data Committee for this project. The key issues in the development of the data certification project are 1) establish program requirements; 2) develop alternative implementation strategies; 3) to find existing online certified data sets; 4) and identify the nomenclature, purpose and function of certified data sets.

Mr. Steve Hartley of the National Wetlands Research Center/USGS, presented the GAP data for Louisiana. The data set was produced from various statewide sources including the 1998 National Wetlands Inventory and the 1993 Thematic Mapper imagery. The data was ground-truthed. It categorizes land cover into 23 classes based upon the Anderson Classification Scheme.

A strategic planning session was held at the Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center, Baton Rouge, LA, on March 2, 1999, to identify operational objectives for LGISC. Eleven of the seventeen member agencies attended. Objectives were ranked with the aid of facilitator and decision software. Some of the objectives were met during the past year while others are ongoing. The Summary of the 1999 Strategic Planning Session is attached and made a part of this annual summary.

5. To attract funding for state GIS efforts.

Action:

With the funding of LAGIC, a mechanism for obtaining grants and receiving funds has been achieved. LAGIC has received two grants. One of particular interest to the Council and the Data Base Commission is the FGDC proposal entitled "Issues and Attributes of a Statewide GIS Data Certification Program." LAGIC also conducted the NSGIC Framework Data Survey for Louisiana. The Council also sought from its member agencies, support to complete the statewide Digital Orthophoto Quarter Quad project.

6. To coordinate the acquisition of statewide data sets.

Action:

The Council continued to work closely with the Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator (LOSCO) to see through to completion, the statewide Digital Orthophoto Quarter Quad project. The Council provided a statement supporting funding for completion of the project to the Office of the Data Base Commission for presentation to the House of Representatives budget hearing for the Office of the Governor's FY2000 budget. When completed the DOQQ's for the entire state will be available on the Internet as 1:12000 scale, color infrared georeferenced digital files (they will appear as aerial photographs but will have georeferencing).

The LIDAR program began with a pilot project in the Amite River Basin. This project tested the accuracy of the technology and produced two-foot contours for the basin. The results of the LIDAR pilot program have been very exciting. When the final analysis has been completed, a decision will be made as to whether or not this technology will be applied to the State as a whole with the final product being georeferenced to the CIR DOQQ's.

7. To facilitate the establishment of an infrastructure for network communication and data exchange among state GIS users.

Action:

LAGIC maintains websites for both the LGISC and LAGIC. Information on Council membership, policies, meeting schedules minutes, contacts and GIS news items are posted to the LGISC website. LAGIC's website posts links to geospatial data, agency metadata records, and allows for member interactive communication. The Council believes that the Internet provided the single most efficient method of geospatial data exchange. A search routine is being developed by LAGIC for the LGISC web page so the archives of the LGISC can be searched for historical documents of the LGISC.

8. To advise state agencies on the acquisition and implementation of GIS and related activities.

Action:

The LAGIC Technical Committee established in January 1999, serves as an expertise resource available to the Council member agencies. Mr. Dennis Eilers (CRT/OSP) presented a written meeting summary generated by LAGIC and an oral report on the status of the CRT GIS development initiative. Three goals were generated at this meeting. Mr. Eilers will continue the development efforts with the assistance of LAGIC and the Technical Committee.

9. To coordinate GIS activities in state government with the activities of the Louisiana Data Base Commission.

Action:

Changes to membership of the Louisiana Data Base Commission and funding of the Office of the Data Base Commission (ODBC) have resulted in close interaction with both the Commission and the newly appointed (mid 1999) Director, Mr. Ed Leachman and the Council. Mr. Leachman is a frequent attendee at Council meetings and Council members and LAGIC employees have worked with his staff on presentations and GIS demonstrations to the Data Base Commission. The Commission through Mr. Leachman seeks Council input on recommendation of geospatial data set for the Louisiana Data Base. A subcommittee of the Council, the geo-spatial working group, will work with the ODBC on formulating policy to address issues of recommending appropriate data bases for inclusion into the Louisiana Data Base.

The Council continues its association with the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) as a recognized cooperating agency. The Council was represented at

two FGDC Steering Committee meetings in Washington D.C. to discuss issues important to all levels of government.

The Council continues to participate with other states in the National States Geographic Information Systems Council (NSGIC). NSGIC is an active organization representing states' interests, which is committed to informed and effective government through the wise use of spatial information and technologies. Members of NSGIC include delegations of state geographic information managers, representative from local government and federal agencies, the private sector, academia, and other professional organizations interested in geographic information. The purpose of NSGIC is to encourage the coordinated development of geographic information and related technologies to ensure that information may be integrated at all levels of government. Two Council members currently serve as officers on NSGIC. NSGIC's website has provided a forum for timely issues including the national effort by the surveyor community to adopt standard legislation to redefine the practice of land surveying to encompass GIS and GPS technologies. This is a topic of considerable significance to the GIS community in Louisiana and one that the Council continues to monitor. New Orleans was chosen as the site of the 1999 NSGIC Conference.

Council members have worked with the Louisiana Department of State Civil Service classification and pay unit and with the Council of Information Service Directors (CISD) to upgrade GIS pay levels within state government. Some success has been achieved in this sector. The Department of State Civil Service recognized that qualified GIS personnel were not being retained in state jobs and granted an across the board "market rate" adjustment of two pay grades to the GIS classes. The proposal by the CISD for IS personnel which includes the GIS classes was approved September 29, 1999.