

Louisiana Geographic Information Systems Council

Report from the Chair for the Year 2000

Bo Blackmon, Chair
Dennis Eilers, Vice-Chair

Introduction

I have compiled a list of important GIS activities undertaken by the Council and the Louisiana Geographic Information Center (LAGIC) during the year 2000. I have limited the activities to those which were originated or were finalized during the year. I have also included noteworthy GIS activities undertaken by Council member agencies if the Council members participated in or advised on the project and Council “associates,” individuals who are closely tied to the Council by attending Council meetings and who work regularly on Council activities but have no official status with the Council.

Meetings and Conferences

The Council held 12 monthly meetings during the year and Council members, alternates, LAGIC staff, and Council associates attended many more meetings related to Louisiana or federal GIS.

- 17th Annual Remote Sensing and GIS Workshop
The Council was a co-host and provided a paper session concerned with local government GIS.
- Federal/State GIS Working Group Meetings
The Council hosted one of these meetings in Baton Rouge.
- Louisiana Digital Government/LA Connections
There were several of these meetings which were attended by the Chair and Council associates.
- National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC) Annual Conference
- Data Base Commission Quarterly Meetings
- Office of the Data Base Commission Geospatial Portal Working Group Meetings
- LSU National Center for Geoinformatics: Geospatial Technology Seminar
- MAPPS Stakeholders' Conference
- NASA Technology Summit
- NASA/NSGIC Steering Committee Meeting: Planning for Memphis Conference

Special Presentations at Council Meetings

The Council attempted to have a special presentation at each Council meeting. Many of these presentations were part of the Council business and are not noted below. Others were presented as informational topics to the Council.

- Don Hutchinson - Deputy Commissioner of Administration - LA Connections and Louisiana Digital Government Initiative
- Dr. Roy Dokka - LSU Department of Geology - Planning for the LSU National Center for Geoinformatics
- Farrell Jones - Assistant Director of LSU CADGIS Lab - The Atlas Web Site
- James Harvey - President of the Louisiana Planning Councils - Function of the Louisiana Planning Councils
- John Snead - Cartography Manager, LSU Louisiana Geological Survey - The New Digital State Map of Louisiana
- DeWitt Braud - Instructor, LSU Department of Geography and Anthropology - The Louisiana GIS CD, Version 2
- Ed Leachman - Director, Office of the Data Base Commission - The Louisiana GIS Portal and LA Connections
- Sherel Martin - St. Mary Parish Assessor and Rich Bailey - Ouachita Parish Assessor
Changing Technology and the Louisiana Assessor

Resolutions

Four resolutions were passed during the year.

1. Procedure for Formal Recognition of Digital Geospatial Data
2. Support for the Office of Data Base Commission's Geospatial Portal
3. Official "Recognition" of the DOTD Parish Boundaries Digital Data
4. Recognition of Glen Daigre's Outstanding Service to the Council and the GIS Task Force

Committees

The Council has appointed members to several committees during its existence. All committee activities are not discussed as many of the activities span the year 2000. During the year 2000, two new committees were appointed and one outstanding project was accomplished by one committee.

- Digital Data Committee established - Joe Holmes, Chair
- LAGIC Oversight Committee established - Sharon Balfour, Chair
- Technical Advisory Committee working with LAGIC to create web based GIS Primer

Reports

The Council encourages committees and individuals working on Council projects to submit formal reports, but due to the workloads of the Council members, not many of these formal reports have been submitted during the life of the Council. Many verbal

reports are submitted during the regular Council meetings and are detailed in the minutes by LAGIC. Some critical reports were:

- DOTD report to FGDC on the Transportation framework data layer standards
- State Lands report to Council on the Cadastral framework data layer standards
- Council's report to ODBC

Data Base Commission Presentations by Council members or Associates

The Data Base Commission's knowledge of GIS is very low. Through our relationship with Ed Leachman, Director of the Office of the Data Base Commission, the Council has received significant attention from the Commission. This has resulted in giving the Commission a greater understanding of GIS in Louisiana. Several presentations were made by the Council or the Council's associates on GIS topics during the year 2000.

- DOQQ presentation by David Gisclair of LOSCO
- Council activity report, March 2000 - Bo Blackmon, Ed Leachman
- Louisiana GIS CD Version 2 - DeWitt Braud, LSU
(Many Council member agencies provided data and metadata for inclusion on the CD)
- Council Report for the Year 2000 - Bo Blackmon, DNR, and Craig Johnson, LAGIC

National GIS Interaction

Sharon Balfour, Glen Daigre, LAGIC staff and other Council members and associates monitored national GIS activities, especially FGDC and NSGIC, to assure that Louisiana's GIS goals did not conflict with national goals especially in the establishment of standards for GIS. Several Council members volunteered for tasks to review federal standards particularly for the framework data layers. This was in progress prior to 2000 and will continue beyond 2000. Some notable events were:

- Appointment of Sharon Balfour as official liaison between national GIS groups and the Council
- Attendance of NSGIC annual meeting by Council members and LAGIC staff
- Review and report to FGDC on DOTD's review of the Federal Transportation GIS Standards
- I-Team concept introduction and research

Louisiana Geographic Information Center at LSU

LAGIC is tasked with providing technical assistance to the Council. They successfully initiated and completed many varied tasks during the year 2000.

- Hired new LAGIC Director

- Web based GIS Primer
- Archiving Council documents
- Maintaining Council and LAGIC web sites
- Establishment of E-Mail List Server to serve Council's needs
- GIS Metadata Workshops development and implementation (1st in December 2000)
- Booth at Environmental State of the State Conference
- Parish GIS Survey
- LAGIC Open House
- Increased LAGIC contract from one to three years
- ImageServer development
- Online Metadata Workbook
- LOSCO Environmental Baseline Inventory Data Catalog
- GIS data theme and keyword development
- GIS Day Demo in Capitol Rotunda
- DOQQ online access and download capability support (LSU CADGIS Atlas Web Site)
- Geospatial Portal technical support

Outreach

No theme for the Council's activities in the year 2000 was established; however, if one theme was highlighted, it was outreach to local government and advising them in implementing or improving their GIS capabilities. Some of the Council's outreach was:

- Open Council meetings and encouragement of persons interested in GIS to attend
- Parish GIS survey
- GIS Primer
- Metadata training
- Remote Sensing and GIS Workshop
The Council made a significant effort to bring in local government GIS staff members and sponsored papers on topics critical to local government GIS.
- Data Base Commission meeting presentations by the Council or Council associates

Miscellaneous Council Projects and Accomplishments

Many of the Councils and the Council's associates' varied projects and accomplishments do not fit in one of the above listed categories or may have been mentioned briefly as a presentation. Listed below are some additional accomplishments or more details of those listed previously.

- Assisted LSU CCEER in the search for and hiring of a new director

- Louisiana multi-agency contract with the National Geodetic Survey (NGS) to retain the services of the Louisiana NGS Advisor whose funding from DOTD had been cancelled
- Louisiana Civil Service GIS position Dual Career Ladder established to allow valuable technical state GIS staff members to take supervisory positions without the requirement to have staff to supervise
- Louisiana GIS CD 2nd version funded by LOSCO and created by several entities under the direction of DeWitt Braud, LSU, with GIS data contributed by numerous state and federal agencies
- Louisiana GIS Portal concept created by Ed Leachman, Director of ODBC, to link Louisiana citizens with state and federal GIS data through one web site
- IRS/TM satellite merge funded by DEQ and completed by DeWitt Braud, LSU, to provide the state with four meter pixel/color satellite coverage via the Internet
- Worked with surveyor's organizations to restructure MAPPS model law being presented to state legislatures for passage which would give surveyors control of all state GIS projects

Comments by the Chair

During the year 2000, the Council made some progress of advancing the technology of GIS in Louisiana as it has through the years of its existence. Since GIS is still a little known technology in our state, its acceptance is slow. Although many "non-GIS" agencies see their need for GIS technology, they are not willing to veer from their historic functionality. Until we can prove to them that GIS technology is a significant improvement over standard computer functions, they will not attempt to change their ways. I have collected suggestions from Council members and associates and others working in GIS inside and outside of Louisiana of how we may improve the spread of GIS technology. The Council has attempted to accomplish most of these goals in the past without success; however, with the onset of Louisiana's Digital Government Plan and the new Office of Information Technology, GIS can play an important role and demand a greater respect than it has in the past. New computer technology has also given GIS new life with faster CPU speeds and less expensive data storage for huge quantities of data so the prohibitions of GIS expense are not as great as in the past.

- Work closely with the CIO and the Office of Information Technology (OIT) to establish GIS as an accepted technology and use the new strength of the CIO's position to accomplish some of the suggestions listed below
- Work with OIT to develop state contracts for GIS software, data, and maintenance to reduce costs, etc.
- Work with OIT to provide ways for small or low funded departments to get their GIS data to the public via the web
- Expand the funding, capabilities, and staff of LAGIC
- Use the power of OIT to "encourage" ALL Council member state departments be active on the Council
- Use the power of OIT to "encourage" agencies to appoint members working with their departments' GIS activities or at least be knowledgeable in GIS

- Add a member from the Attorney General's Office for legal advice (informal as well as formal)
- Elevate the level of critical GIS projects like the ITeam, GIS Portal, the DOQQ and LIDAR projects, and GIS development for the Intranet
- Elevate the reformatting of standard textual data with a spatial component into GIS formatted data and make it available on the web
- Work with universities and other training institutions to provide a steady flow of GIS trainees into the GIS work force
- Elevate outreach programs including stressing the importance of standards in GIS to all government agencies
- Elevate the importance of data sharing in state and federal government

SIGNED: _____
Bo Blackmon, IT GIS Manager