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Note from the President

The BC Chapter of the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association, URISA BC, is pleased to bring you this second newsletter of the 2005-2006 year. We on the Executive of URISA BC are GIS professionals who work for municipal and provincial governments, vendors and consulting companies. Our primary focus each year is to deliver at least two all-day workshops to the GIS community.

The first workshop in February, focused on GIS and Asset Management and proved to be our most successful event ever with 250 people in attendance—a 40% increase over our usual attendance. This confirmed our view that asset management is a “hot” topic and we greatly appreciate the efforts of our speakers who presented a diversity of perspectives. We are also thankful to all of you who gave up a day out of your busy schedules to attend, to participate, and to network with the speakers, attendees, and sponsors, particularly those of you who traveled from far away and exotic places like Calgary, Seattle and the BC Interior. We hope you went away with some new ideas, new material, and new contacts to help you move forward.

Our second workshop of the year is on June 5 and focuses

on GIS in health and public safety. Whether you are reading this online before the event, or reading it during the workshop itself, we think this will be another event in which you can learn a lot and be exposed to a number of interesting and thought-provoking speakers. Your workshop folder includes an evaluation form and we urge you to use it to give us your feedback on the event and let us know your suggestions for future workshop topics. And if you are interested in being a speaker at a future workshop, please let us know—we are always looking for quality speakers.

Continuing on the education theme, several members of the Executive participated on the program committee for the upcoming URISA International conference in September which is being held in Vancouver for the first time. This is an excellent opportunity to participate in a multi-day educational conference which is bringing in speakers from all over the world. Those of us involved in selecting the speakers can attest to the difficulty we had in choosing from among the many excellent submissions. For more information, please see URISA International's web site at http://www.urisa.org/Annual_Conference/annual.htm.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the members of the URISA BC Executive for their contributions and efforts towards making this another

successful year of providing quality educational opportunities for GIS professionals. Everyone on the Executive is a volunteer and when the time comes to organize an event, it takes a substantial amount of work and time out of our already busy schedules. It's clear from the late night emails that the group is working on organizing the seminars as an addition to their day jobs, not as part of their day jobs. Over the summer, Phil Bates from West Vancouver will take over as President and lead the efforts to make 2006-2007 an even better year.

Have an enjoyable summer and don't forget to use maps to help you find your way.

Jonathan Mark
URISA BC President 2005-2006

GIS in Health and Public Safety Sponsors





IBM Canada Ltd.



Seminar Sneak Preview

Mapping the boundaries: Cities of Disease

Maps long have been a primary medium for the understanding of invasive disease and the means by which they might be contained. Plague in the 1600s, Yellow Fever in the 1700s, Cholera in the 1800s and a plethora of emerging diseases in the 20th Century have all had maps as the medium of their analysis. It has been through maps that

theories of disease have been contested and practical responses argued by epidemiologists and urbanists alike.

Tom Koch, author of Cartographies of Disease, takes current concerns about emerging infectious diseases--from AIDS to West Nile Virus--and places them in the context of a range of diseases that have invaded cities since the dawn of the mercantile age.

So What Happened at the Last URISA International Conference Anyway?

With the next URISA International conference just around the corner, you might be wondering about what happened at the last one. Sacrificing our beloved Thanksgiving weekend, several of us Canucks traveled to Kansas last October to check things out. Albeit we are late filing this report, 7 months later, here is the story that remains with us.

In summary, the conference was wonderful success for us, meeting many interesting people from all backgrounds within the GIS field. Despite the political border between us, it's reassuring to know that we are all trying to solve the same issues of the day. Conferences like these are great vehicles for sharing ideas and information. Two

topics that were of keen interest to us included "Asset Management" and "Public Safety". Both topics were covered well by speakers, and also by impromptu and rather lively discussions about Katrina, and the use of GIS in a disaster situation.

One of the presentations that will stick with us the most was the keynote address by Chris Warner. Father of "Amber Alert", "Pets911" and now "Earth911". These web sites use GIS technology to help those in distress, and set the bar for collaboration between multiple government agencies.

And, oh by the way.... URISA BC should be proud, we came home with some hardware....



I know we had this picture in the last newsletter but heh we are proud. Ed.

Karen Stewart
 Phil Bates

URISA International to “Challenge the Limits” in Vancouver this September

For the first time since 1997, the URISA Annual Conference will take place in Canada this September 26-29.

If abstract submissions are a good measure (and we certainly believe it is), then we're expecting quite a turnout in September. The number of abstract submissions doubled compared to the past few years. Simply put, URISA members want to visit Vancouver!

The theme of this international gathering of GIS & IT professionals is “Challenge the Limits” and the conference will offer every professional in attendance a chance to stretch well beyond their comfort zones.

Don't miss:

- Thirteen pre-conference workshops on topics ranging from *Best Practices for Developing Geographic Information Models* to *LiDAR Concepts, Principles and Applications* (attendance at a workshop is included with full conference registration)
- Opening and closing keynote address
- More than 200 presenters from around the world
- Special presentation by the 2006 URISA Exemplary

Systems in Government award winners

- Vendor hospitality and user group meetings
- A packed exhibit hall
- Networking opportunities galore

Conference sessions, organized by program track, will cover such topics as “Strategic Planning for Information Technology,” “Emergency Preparedness,” and “Large-Scale Public Portals.” The conference committee has added an entire track focused on Professional Development issues to the schedule this year. And (just announced) URISA's annual Public Participation GIS (PPGIS) Conference will be presented in conjunction with the Vancouver program.

In order to encourage more individuals from the same organization to attend, “team discounts” have been added as a registration option, where significant discounts are offered for multiple attendees.

The URISA Board of Directors, committee volunteers and headquarters staff are all excited about the renewed energy in the conference this year.

We especially appreciate the contributions from the URISA BC Chapter – the 2005 Outstanding Chapter of the Year award winner! Chapter members participated on the program committee, will be presenting at the conference,

and have assisted in many, many ways through the conference planning process. Thank you!

Looking forward to seeing you at URISA 2006 in Vancouver!

Visit the URISA website for complete program details, www.urisa.org.

Wendy Francis, Executive Director, URISA,
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City of Burnaby's West Nile Virus (WNV) GIS data collection system

To prepare for the anticipated arrival of WNV, the municipalities which form the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) are taking a coordinated approach to ensure that WNV prevention measures are in place on public lands.

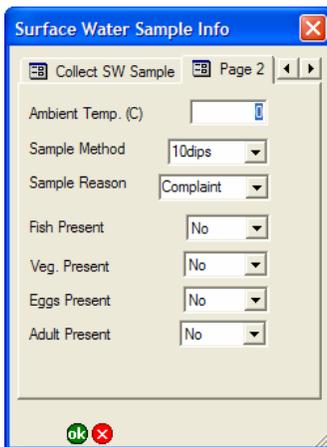
As part of the regional process, Burnaby has made significant progress mapping the location of mosquitoes on public lands that may be potential carriers of WNV. This includes identifying mosquito breeding areas, such as artificial water bodies and storm drains (catch basins). A range of eco-sensitive treatment options have been used in selected areas to minimize mosquito populations and protect human health, while also maintaining the health of beneficial organisms that

reside in wetlands, creeks and lakes.

Burnaby utilizes GIS to capture and maintain WNV data, and provide stakeholders with interactive tools for viewing this data. 3 steps/platforms are involved: Mobile GIS is employed to capture field data, desktop GIS is used to store, and manipulate data and web mapping is used to facilitate interaction with WNV data. Burnaby has developed an end to end solution to ensure data integrity and improve data processing efficiency. Burnaby currently has the following GIS environment: ESRI's ArcPAD 7, ArcGIS Desktop 9.1, ArcSDE 9.1, and HP IPAQ device with Windows Mobile 5.

Field Data Collection

The field application involves using a handheld device with

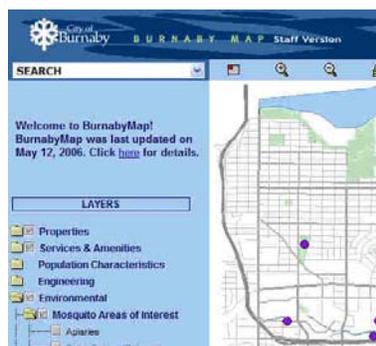


Windows Mobile 5 operating system, ArcPAD 7 and a custom application. Where applicable, field crews are able to capture WNV data based on forms and dropdown menus. When the field data is checked back in

the GIS database, a routine is run against the field data to ensure that relationships in the database are synchronized. The field application provides crews with a more efficient data collection method as well as assisting in the validation of certain data fields.

The second part of our custom solution is the ability to automatically update the City of Burnaby GIS database with weekly submissions by our field crews. When Burnaby receives the GIS data, only a cursory check is required on the data due to the built-in QA/QC of this new solution. The custom solution allows Burnaby to process the field data and update our central repository within our desktop GIS environment.

Burnaby's Web Mapping Application



The City of Burnaby's new end to end solution will ensure that all WNV data captured in the field is of the highest quality. As well, this solution will provide an efficient means of updating Burnaby's repository and sending timely updates to the

GVRD's regional WNV mapping system.

2006 Executive Changes

Many thanks to the executive members who worked so hard to help us organize past events and now move on to other challenges:

Andrew Walther
Peter Klemm

We now welcome two new members; Randy Hall and Christopher Majewski.

Our current executive committee consists of:

President – Jonathan Mark
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 Vice-President - Phil Bates
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 Treasurer - Dave Newman
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 Secretary – James Andrusiw
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