



# RAMSEY COUNTY GIS USER GROUP

An alliance of communities sharing Geographical Information Systems

Monthly Meeting Minutes

February 7, 2008

Location: Shoreview City Hall, 4600 Victoria St. N

## 1. Welcome & Introductions

Jolinda Stapleton – Roseville	Curt Peterson- Ramsey County
Joel Koepp- Roseville	Chad Bergo - Maplewood
Mike Goodnature – Ramsey Conservation District	Dave Bauer - Rice Creek WD
Carrie Mack- Ramsey Washington WD	Matt Kocian - Rice Creek WD
Deb Jones – Falcon Heights	Julie Wotczak – North Oaks
Matt Baker – City of Shoreview	Ger Pha – City of St. Paul
Jan Vanderwall – Roseville Area Schools	Melissa Baker - Capitol Region WD

Meeting was called to order by Jolinda Stapleton

## 2. Additions or Corrections to the Agenda

No changes were suggested. Agenda approved.

## 3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

### a. Approval of revised 2007 December Minutes

No changes were suggested. December Meeting Minutes approved

### b. Approval of 2008 January Minutes

No changes were suggested. January Meeting Minutes approved

## 4. New business

- a. **Officer Elections** – 2007 RCGISUG secretary, John Blackstone, was not able to continue to the Vice Chair position. Mike Goodnature volunteered for the position, but there were not enough voting members at the January meeting to meet quorum. Email voting consisted of 16 approval, 1 refusal to vote (based on not having sufficient knowledge of the candidates), and 6 members who didn't reply. Quorum has now been met, and positions for 2008 are now final.
  - i. Jolinda updated primary contacts for member organizations in 2008. See Jolinda or Carrie for a full list of updated contact persons.
  - ii. Jolinda presented 2007 RCGISUG President, Jan Vanderwall with plaque commemorating his 3-year term as an officer.

## 5. Old Business

- a. **User Group Website** - Steve Lorbach was not present to report on website updates. No known updates have been made. It was suggested that this item be removed from the standard monthly agenda and reported on as necessary.

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b. **Education Opportunities** – Jan Vanderwall: Jan has been discussing with coworkers the idea of introducing GIS-related careers to high school students. This could entail a field trip-like session during school hours, or be done as an after-school program involving 10-30 students. Busses could be made available to bring students to User Group Member's place of business for the presentation. Points of interest would include job options, position descriptions, tasks, who they might be working with, salary range, projects, works in progress, etc. Multiple teachers/classes are seeing this as a positive activity for their students. Jan also mentioned the idea of offering summer internships for high school students (volunteer or paid) to help complete projects. Curt Peterson mentioned that Ramsey Co. has offered similar opportunities in the past and would be willing to do so again. Curt said they would be open to hiring paid student interns, but he was not certain if volunteer positions were available. He thought that having students to help finalize the Active Living Project would be a good assignment. Interested members should contact Jan Vanderwall.

c. **Enterprise GIS Small Group** – Jolinda: Several weeks ago, the User Group proposed to create a small work group to deal with the topic of Enterprise GIS. The group (including Jolinda Stapleton, Steve Lorbach, Joel Koep, and Curt Peterson) has met once to date. At this initial meeting, ideas were discussed as to how Enterprise GIS would benefit Ramsey County, and decisions were made about creating a formal memo. This formal memo or document would be for internal council members or others from our group in an effort to get support from decision makers. The strategy for completing this document was delegated to those present at this first meeting. First, each person was assigned a section of the memo to write. Sections will be reviewed and compiled at the second meeting that is scheduled for Tuesday Feb 12<sup>th</sup> 10am at the City of Roseville. Secondly, this draft version will be sent out to voting members to review. Sections include the following:

1. Executive Summary (1-2 paragraph summary showing the benefits of Enterprise GIS in Ramsey County) - Steve Lorbach
2. Current Practices (Background of RCGISUG, current procedure, cons) - Joel Koep
3. Proposed Enterprise System (advantages, savings in time/money) - Curt Peterson
4. Possible Enterprise GIS layers & projects, RCGISUG contribution towards project-Jolinda Stapleton

Jan mentioned that he spoke to Jan Parker (Ramsey Co Commissioner) about Enterprise and about collaborating efforts from the start. As it is designed in Access, this partnership could save money and assist in the process of board approval.

d. **Pictometry Update** – Jolinda: No update known. Steven Baker of Ramsey County Records is scheduled to meet with GEOSPAN, which might like to take that market over. Jolinda notes that they are similar in photography, but

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not functionality. Curt Peterson noted a new function to flag changes, stereoplot, digitize, make additions, track demolitions, etc. For those not aware of Pictometry, Jolinda reviewed the software functionality, licensing, space requirements (~180G) and access to the program.

The group discussed what degree of urgency there was to do another flight. Current Pictometry photography was taken in spring, 2006. 2008 flight being discussed. RCGISUG helped fund the 2006 flight. General consensus determined that a new flight in 2008 might be more than what is necessary.

Curt then mentioned that Ramsey County may be changing their aerial photography and physical feature updates from a 3 year to a 2 year cycle. The update cycle may affect the RCGISUG JPA or license with Ramsey Co. and may require reevaluation to coordinate with this (Jolinda, Curt and Deb). Jolinda will look at joint powers agreement for internal agreement, but will need to assess agreement with Ramsey County.

## 7. Ramsey County Updates - Curt Peterson

The staff member at Ramsey Co who usually creates update CD's was not available, so no CD's or DVD's were made available at this meeting. CD's will be made at soonest possible time and mailed out or passed out to interested members at a later date. All pertinent updates are reflected on the FTP site. Contact Curt to obtain new password for the FTP site. The geodatabase in the St. Paul directory receives weekly updates (available in personal Geodatabase file format) available to all RCGISUG members.

Updates to census information have received comments back regarding errors in the information. Shoreview stated errors as did New Brighton. This is a positive reaction as it shows that people are seeing anomalies in the database, and errors are being caught. Arden Hills is not going to participate in the 2010 LUCA census update.

Processing is being done on Ramsey Co. centerlines. Curt and three others each took ¼ of the county to process. Sections were compiled with addresses and it was found that census is not going to be able to handle changes in centerline data. Working around this would entail deleting entire centerlines and adding changes as a new line. Using Oracle software is part of the problem with the data processing. Another problem mentioned was that database with xy positioning would have given them address format, but they dropped xy and only use addresses (with description of apt/house/etc). The software is surprisingly chaotic. Curt stated that while some of the information is spatially pretty good, Rosedale and other areas have 300-500 ft errors. Curt fixed all of those entities, but census cannot handle the updates. The end result is that LUCA will be working towards creating greater compatibility with end user centerline updates. Ramsey County is now currently working to sort out what is really a "true" add or a "true" delete (street new build = true add) (street no longer used as a street = true delete). Once this is done, LUCA might be able to add 'true' adds and worry about spatial inaccuracies later.

This project will take more time to complete. Possibly another 3-4 weeks

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## 8. Community announcements and reports

a. Curt: Ramsey County is hiring GIS manager, but he has not seen a job posting. Jan saw Greg Mack who said it was posted, but Jan was not sure where. Considering Curt does 90% of the GIS for Ramsey Co., it would be good to keep track of this.

b. Jan Vanderwall: Broadband Mapping Project. The bill in discussion states the following:

“A bill for an act relating to telecommunications; providing for a grant to the commissioner of commerce to contract for a statewide inventory of broadband service; appropriating money.”

This would make such information public data. Jan considered it something that RCGISUG might want as an asset (a) so the public can know what is “floating around,” (b) because it would be beneficial for developers to know because it will be a draw for businesses who might want to be located in areas that are near broadband areas, and (c) because of the groups influence on updates and data.

In discussing the extent of the North Suburban INET, Jan referenced a map of the boundaries and explained that the INET connects pumping stations and most municipal buildings and properties. Curt mentioned a discussion with Terre (Roseville I.T.) about adding segments to make complete coverage for government offices. Curt thought it would benefit the proposed Enterprise GIS, making it much faster.

Joel discussed seeing a range/ring of fiber OEC. He feels that as these issues come up, the User Group should look for them to be layers that we can use and make available to public. He brought up the question of if private companies would resist this bill because it would affect competition. Jan replied saying if something is a common entity, there is private interest and public inventory, just like other utilities. Broadband cables are in the public domain and should always be accessible to the public information.

c. Joel Koepp: Problems with online mapping. A recent problem with the online mapping program exposed an issue with the web service: ArcIMS creates and stores images every time web users convert the custom map to a PDF. This folder contained 22,500 JPEGs and PDFs. The application is set for static images so it *should* automatically delete these files, but did not. Joel deleted everything from before 1/1/06. Jolinda sent out message to CivExplorer to have them delete on the fly. Future goals regarding the site are to get functional web stats. Nothing is currently in place to monitor this.

d. Dave Bauer: Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD) is currently working from Access / laser fiche, but they are looking at Oracle or SQL as a web mapping application for web interface data entry. Curt responded saying that SQL works well if data contains less than a few million records. For greater

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- amounts of data, he suggested Oracle might be better. SQL is far less expensive compared to Oracle. Dave stated that RCWD also started using Access database for permits, entering in asset information on PDA's in the field, but was wondering if it easy to translate to oracle on a daily basis? Curt stated that the transition was not too complicated, but did not know if the daily conversion would be advisable unless data could electronically updated as it was taken. He suggested converting all current files to Oracle and maintaining records in that format.
- e. Matt Kocian asked if other users had an arc hydro database set up. Mike Goodnature was looking into it for Terry Noonan. Other WD people showed interested in discussing this issue further.
  - f. Dave Bauer: 2009 aerials- He would be interested in getting estimate to see about extending the Ramsey County flight into rest of Rice Creek Watershed District (west as far as river and north to Forest Lake). Curt said that USGS (Ron Wessel) did a similar addition for the 2006 aerial photo flight. USGS funded part of project to expand the flight north  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles north and into Hennepin County for a short expanse. As long as funding is available from interested parties, flight expansion could be a possibility.
  - g. Jolinda inquired about status of plat scanning. Curt stated that there is a movement to get half sections, plats, certificates of survey out on web. Carla is working with County Staff to come up with a strategy. Contact management system (CMS) will not allow integration to publish to web, making it difficult to search. Joel mentioned that a new website CMS doesn't have built-in for image maps, but programs can be written. One is currently being used for zoning and address atlas in Roseville. Curt also suggested it be put it into SQL so combination queries can be made. This would be easier than the 'bucket' system.  
Plats prior to 1978 have not all been scanned, but later years have been. Backlog plats will be scanned later.
  - h. Curt: The City of Maplewood has been going through addresses, and sent him a shapefile of updates. They've been working on updating parcel data, particularly apartment buildings/occupiable units. It is necessary to get apartments and other occupiable units for Homeland security. Cities should send Curt any occupiable unit information. Deb mentioned she is waiting for State Fair and U of M data before she sends the information to Curt.

## 9. Agenda for March Meeting

The proposed agenda for the March meeting was discussed. Suggestions regarding agenda items are welcome. Please send item suggestions to Carrie Mack ([carrie.mack@rwmwd.org](mailto:carrie.mack@rwmwd.org)). A March Draft Agenda will be distributed with the minutes and posted on the web site.

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## **10. Other business**

No other business.

## **11. Adjournment** was at 3:16 p.m.

Next meeting will be on March 6, 2008, 2:00 p.m. at Shoreview City Hall.

Minutes submitted by Carrie Mack, Secretary.

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