

## Nebraska GIS Steering Committee

## Meeting Minutes – March 6, 2003

Present were (authorized to vote \*):

Alan Beiermann	* Nebraska Public Power District
Chad Boshart	University of Nebraska - CALMIT
Lash Chaffin	* League of Municipalities
Steve Cobb	State Surveyors Office
Brian Dunnigan	* Nebraska Dept. of Natural Resources
John Erickson	* Policy Research Office
Steve Frederick	* Health and Human Services
Dick Genrich	* Nebraska Department of Roads
Erik Hubl	Lancaster County Assessor/Reg. Of Deeds
Ed Kelley	Nebraska Department of Roads
Scott McIntyre	* City of Omaha
Jim Merchant	* University of Nebraska – CSD
John Miyoshi	* Lower Platte North NRD
Steve Schafer	* Chief Information Officer
Sonja Sebree	* USGS
Bob Sloan	Department of Roads
Duane Stott	* Scottsbluff County
Mike Thornburg	Aerial Services, Inc.
Karisa Vlasek	University of Nebraska Omaha – Aviation Dept.
Cliff Welsh	* Nebraska Association of County Officials
Paul Yamamoto	* Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality
Larry Zink	GIS Steering Committee Coordinator

Complete Meeting Agenda

**MAJOR MEETING TOPICS**

FSA - DOQ/Imagery Advisory Committee  
Watershed Boundary Database Working Group  
Geospatial Data Sharing Initiatives  
Letter of Support for State Surveyors Office  
Agency Reports

Homeland Security/Bioterrorism  
Land Records Modernization Study  
GIS Personnel Classification  
GIS/LIS Association  
Voting Record

**NOTICE OF MEETING:** A public notice of the meeting, pursuant to Section 84-1411 R.R. S. 1943, was published in the Lincoln Journal-Star on Thursday, February 27, 2003.

**ROLL CALL:** Chairperson Duane Stott called the meeting to order at 1:05. Thirteen duly authorized representatives were present therefore a quorum was present to conduct business.

**MINUTES:** Brian Dunnigan moved to approve the minutes from the November meeting after making small revision in the notes related to Curt Sorenson and the FSA ("*Curt Sorenson said that they are working on finishing digitizing the field boundaries in Nebraska and converting those to GIS confirmed acres.*"). Dick Genrich seconded the motion. The motion passed. (*see vote #1 on Voting Record sheet*)

**FARM SERVICE AGENCY – DOQ/IMAGERY ADVISORY COMMITTEE :** A representative of the Farm Service Agency attended the last Steering Committee to request partners in an effort to obtain 2 meter leaf-on DOQ light or better imagery. The Steering Committee approved a recommendation to reactivate the DOQ Advisory Group to discuss the FSA proposal and facilitate coordination of efforts.

The DOQ Advisory Group met and participants determined that the FSA timeline is too short for any of their respective agencies to take part. The FSA made clear that this will not be a one-time project and there will be future opportunities for

participation.

**GIS AND HOMELAND SECURITY AND BIO-TERRORISM:** Steve Schafer reported that he and Larry had met with HHSS and NEMA to discuss efforts ways in which GIS can benefit homeland security. Steve noted that NEMA has entered into a contractual arrangement with CALMIT to assist in developing GIS capabilities for NEMA. Efforts are currently underway to explore how HHSS GIS and Bioterrorism needs might be addressed in a collaborative manner with the NEMA effort. Jim Merchant added that Chad Boshart has been hired to assist with this project and will be working on training efforts.

**WATERSHED BOUNDARY DATABASE WORKING GROUP :** At the last meeting, the NRCS requested assistance in developing a Nebraska watershed database adhering to newly defined national standards. Although much work in this area has already been done by DNR in Nebraska, that data was developed before the current standards were in place. The first question to address is whether Nebraska agencies wish to participate in the project. There does not appear to be a driving need for the database in Nebraska but it is pretty clear that the NRCS has an interest in moving ahead with effort even if state agency do not feel the need.

Larry noted that an initial WBD pilot project outline was developed for the Logan Creek watershed with the intent of seeking answers to several outstanding questions about the project and how it might best dovetail with existing data and other efforts. Unfortunately, the NRCS staffperson who was going to take the lead on the pilot project left the state for another position. Initial feedback for others who have undertaken this effort indicate that the biggest cost involved in completing the project would be for a coordinator to handle acquiring the data and obtaining feedback from the various interest groups on draft data. The estimated cost for completing this database statewide is \$200,000. No funding has been allocated at this time.

**UPDATE ON STATUS OF LAND RECORDS MODERNIZATION STUDY:** The project is still moving forward in the data gathering phase. A local government land records status survey was sent out and has generated a surprising response. 93% of the counties contacted responded along with 90% of the first class cities. In some cases, both the county clerk and the county assessor answered the survey, speaking of both a lack of coordination as well as the level of interest in this technology.

The consultants are still waiting for a few surveys but would like to close the study tomorrow. At that time, an analysis will be done. Currently, data is also being collected regarding institutional models in other states related to state-local collaboration in land record modernization and maintenance..

A half-day meeting of the core advisory group will be held on April 10 or 11 with Bill Holland to discuss what politically feasible options. They hope to have the final draft recommendations ready for presentation on May 12, the day before the symposium, to solicit community feedback for the final report.

**COORDINATING GEOSPATIAL DATA SHARING INITIATIVES (NEBRASKA CLEARINGHOUSE – NDNR; AMERICA VIEW – CSD; NATIONAL MAP; AND USGS MAPPING PROJECTS OFFICE) :** Larry noted there are several projects concurrently underway that are related to facilitating geospatial data sharing and have the potential for either some level of duplication or gains from synergy if collaboration and coordination can be achieved. Larry suggested that the Steering Committee should take a leading role in seeking coordination between these initiatives.

*USGS Nebraska Project Office* - An attempt is being made by a group known as Natural Bridges to site a USGS project office into Crofton, Nebraska as a part of the USGS process of decentralizing their mapping division. The first question to answer is does Nebraska want a Project Office. Jim Merchant said that having a mapping center Project Office in Nebraska is a no lose proposition. Larry said that the USGS would likely be interested in Nebraska's commitment to developing the National Map as a criteria for considering Nebraska for a MPO. Jim agreed and added that having the Office in Nebraska would probably accelerate efforts to complete the Nebraska portion of the National Map.

Larry noted that based on earlier conversations, that the Peter Kiewit Institute could be a possible player in Nebraska related to the National Map. Larry has been trying to make contact with the appropriate person at PKI but has received no response. Scott McIntyre agreed to try to contact Jon Kragt or Jonnie Shockley to discuss possible support from the Institute.

The main concern that Larry expressed was that there are several potentially interrelated projects and initiatives related to geospatial data sharing and we needed to be proactive in achieving the maximum synergy possible between these efforts. John Erickson agreed to keep watch on further developments in this area relative to the Governor's office.

*America View* – Jim Merchant explained that NASA began a pilot project in Ohio to test the ability of the Internet to transfer large data files of remotely sensed data. It was considered a success but NASA dropped its funding. The USGS took the project over 18 months ago, calling it America View, and began working toward creating a portal in each state to provide

access to remotely sensed data. The data will be available for download free of charge to all citizens. CALMIT is Nebraska's contact.

The database does not have a lot of information in it yet but there is data from every part of the state and they are expanding their educational efforts. In conjunction with the UNO Extension Specialist, they plan to invite other universities and state agencies to participate in populating and using the database. Jim said he could arrange for a short demonstration of the portal if there was interest.

*Nebraska Clearinghouse (NDNR)* – The GIS Steering Committee created a Advisory Committee to make recommendations about what to do about the Clearinghouse. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Department of Natural Resources take responsibility for a Nebraska enterprise-wide geospatial Clearinghouse. DNR agreed subject to resource availability. They are in the midst of an information technology review and will be in a better position to make progress on this front in a couple of months.

Jim Merchant commented that there is no search tool available to find the location of data, largely due to a lack of metadata. Larry said that he had envisioned something similar to the National Map housed at DNR with appropriate search capability. Duane Stott added that the Land Records modernization study could provide an opportunity to address the metadata issue by designating specific funds for the purpose of creating metadata.

Steve Schafer asked if the primary beneficiary of this project would be citizens or government agencies. The State Records Board is in the process of issuing an RFP to obtain a state portal. The Steering Committee could collaborate with the State Records Board to require vendors to demonstrate how they would address the Clearinghouse issues.

These three efforts are moving ahead without coordination at the moment and there may be opportunities to collaborate and pool resources. First a direction needs to be formulated. Steve Schafer suggested arranging a meeting of representatives from CALMIT, USGS, and DNR to discuss relevant issues and possible commonalities. Jim Merchant added that the University of Nebraska Library should be included as they have expressed interest. Larry agreed to make the arrangements.

**UPDATE ON GIS PERSONNEL CLASSIFICATION INITIATIVE:** Ed Kelley reported that the decision was made to draft GIS job descriptions, including required education, experience and job duties. There are two different types of GIS classification, GIS Specialist and IT Specialist from another area with GIS capability.

Larry commented that his impression was that the personnel IT Advisory Committee needs to be educated about GIS. To facilitate that, a CPQ is being drafted for that Committee. Complicating progress in the classification efforts is that the personnel liaison has health problems.

**ADOPTION OF MEETING SCHEDULE:** Larry drafted a meeting schedule based on the traditional Thursday schedule except for days where there were conflicts with the Department of Roads conference room. There were some problems with the schedule dates and approval was postponed.

Ed suggested combining the May I-Team meeting in 2004 with the GIS/LIS Association meeting.

**POSSIBLE LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM STATE SURVEYORS OFFICE:** Steve Cobb from the State Surveyors Office explained the office has traditionally had two positions designated to assist cities and counties with GIS work. With the budget cuts in process, they have lost funding for both positions and would like a letter from the Steering Committee expressing support for the work the SSO does to assist local government.

Lash Chaffin moved to endorse the letter. John Miyoshi seconded.

Steve Schafer asked if any of the local government entities have spoken on this issue. Steve Cobb said they have not asked them for support. Lash said that they will be expressing support for the State Surveyors efforts.

John Erickson said the Governor has recommended to reduce GIS funding by \$56,000. The Appropriations Committee recommended reducing GIS funding by \$28,000 the first year with a 13.5% increase the second year. Steve Cobb explained that they originally had funding for 2.4 FTEs. One FTE accepted another position, leaving 1.4 FTEs and the recommendation has been to eliminate 1.0 FTEs. That will leave a .4 FTE position and they have asked to have an additional .5 FTE reinstated.

Steve Schafer said that in order for this letter to have any impact, the suggestion of an alternate area to cut must be made.

Cliff Welsh asked if the cities and counties have been asked to make up the funding difference. Steve Cobb said they have never charged for the work they do for the counties and do not plan to.

A vote was called on the motion for the GIS Steering Committee to send a letter supporting funding for the State Surveyors Office GIS technical support position. The motion received 8 votes for, 4 votes against, and 3 votes as "not voting" (*see vote #2 on Voting Record sheet*). Larry Zink indicated that the motion did not pass because it did not receive a majority vote of the total Steering Committee members. (*In hind sight, the motion did actually pass because the Steering Committee voting procedures had been modified to no longer require a majority of the actual Steering Committee members, but only a majority of those present. Your humble Coordinator had his mind on the old procedures when he indicated the motion had not passed*).

John Miyoshi said that non-code agencies can still send letters of support to the Governor. Steve Schafer indicated that approach was likely to be more effective.

#### **REMINDER - ELECTION OF OFFICERS AT MAY MEETING**

**NEBRASKA GIS/LIS ASSOCIATION:** Ed Kelley reported that the Association has been mostly involved in planning the Symposium to be held May 13 – 15. The I-Team meeting will be held the day before.

The Association has hosted several local forums that were very well attended. There was a GIS forum in Norfolk in November, Gering in October and one in Grand Island. There were 75-100 attendees at each.

Larry commented that the GIS/LIS Association has emerged as a successful, strong organization.

LB232 is a bill introduced in the legislature on behalf of the Registrar of Deeds to add a fee on the land transactions for the purpose of land records improvement. The Association passed a resolution applauding the goal and expressing concern about a lack of coordination, referencing the Steering Committee's Land Records Modernization Study. Jim Langtry testified on behalf of the GIS/LIS Association.

Duane agreed that the concept is good but their proposal does not address many of the other issues involved and once the funding is tapped, it cannot be tapped again. Larry asked if it would be timely to share more about this effort with the senators. John Erickson said he will speak with Senator Smith.

**AGENCY REPORTS:** Jim Merchant reported that CALMIT is involved in a new project with NEMA to develop GIS programs through training.

Scott McIntyre from the City of Omaha reported that they are actively gathering interested parties to determine interest in a 2004 flight to obtain DOQ imagery. If enough people are interested, additional layers could be added, such as street center line and water features. There has been some interest expressed by Pottawatomie County, the Utilities and USGS. Roads also indicated an interest in participating. It will be a one million dollar project covering 1000 square miles. The imagery will be high resolution, 1/16 meter in the urban areas.

The Arc Users Group meeting will be held September 22-24 at the Omaha Doubletree.

Cliff Welsh raised a question about appropriate access for national databases for homeland security. Governors are struggling with getting a handle on IT budgets because expenditures are embedded.

John Miyoshi reported that purple loosestrife is designated as the fastest spreading noxious weed. Money has become available for weeds inspectors to use GPS units to track the spread of noxious weeds. They are very excited about using the new technology.

Alan Beiermann reported that he has convinced his teams to get aerial photography. Aurora was the first one and the team is very excited about what they are getting. They may be flying up to thirteen counties.

Dick Genrich reported that they were unsuccessful in obtaining funds for the road identifiers research proposal. They plan to rewrite the proposal and resubmit it to the University if permitted by DAS rules.

Sonja Sebree reported that there are two NAQA studies in progress in the USGS Water Resources Discipline. She will report on their progress at the next meeting.

Steve Fredrick reported that there is a great deal of interest in using GIS but they are looking for resources. The West Nile Virus may provide an opportunity for the first HHSS GIS application.

Duane Stott reported they are working on getting an ARCIMS set up on a Solaris and would welcome technical assistance.

**OTHER:** Larry reported that the Annual Report is complete. He submitted it to Washington as an I-Team Report and received feedback that it was the best that has been submitted.

\$2,000 is potentially available for a project having something to do with streets in Nebraska. This may be an opportunity to begin working on creating a street address database.

The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting will be May 15, 2003 at the Cornhusker Hotel.

Vote Tallies for 3/6/03 GIS Str. Cmte. Meeting									
	Roll Call	Min. #1	Support ltr. for SSO #2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8
DAS - Steve Schafer (Lori McClurg)	P	+	-	.	.	.	.	.	.
DEQ - Paul Yamamoto (Mike Linder)	P	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	.
CSD - Mark Kuzila Jim Merchant	P	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	.
NGPC - Bruce Sackett Abu Gadem	A	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
NRC - Roger Patterson, Brian Dunningan	P	+	NV	.	.	.	.	.	.
PTD - Cathy Lang Bob Martin	A	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
PRO - John Erickson (Lauren Hill)	P	+	-	.	.	.	.	.	.
DOR - Dick Genrich (John Craig)	P	+	NV	.	.	.	.	.	.
St.Surv - Jim Brown	A	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Leg. - Judy Backhaus (Patrick O'Donnell)	A	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Sonja Sebree	P	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	.
John Miyoshi Steve Cacioppo	A/P	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.
Alan J. Beierman	P	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	.
Cliff Welsh	P	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	.
Larry Worrell Jim Langtry	A	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Lash Chaffin	P	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	.
Duane Stott	P	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	.
Scott McIntyre	P	+	-	.	.	.	.	.	.
HHS - Steve Frederick (Dick Nelson)	P	+	-	.	.	.	.	.	.
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>13/14 - P</b>	<b>13 +</b>	<b>4 -, 8 +, 2 NV</b>	.	.	.	.	.	.

"P"=present, "A"=absent, "+"=voting for, "-"=voting against, "NV"=not voting