



## Geographic and Land Information Society, Inc.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual ESRI Survey and GIS Summit - "Bridging the Gap" took place last week in San Diego, between 8:30 a.m. Saturday July 23<sup>rd</sup> and 5 p.m. Tuesday July 26<sup>th</sup>. Unlike last year's summit, which was held at the Omni Hotel, this year's took place in the immense San Diego Convention Center (SDCC). As usual, it was held in conjunction with the International ESRI GIS Users Conference (UC), which began two days later on Monday, lasting five days until Friday the 29<sup>th</sup>. The 24<sup>th</sup> ESRI UC (one a year since 1982) was attended by over thirteen thousand people! Our Survey Summit was a bit more modest, with about three hundred people.

I arrived in San Diego rather late Friday evening July 22<sup>nd</sup>, somewhat "blee-ree-eyed", after driving the 400 miles from Fresno. A fine seafood dinner in Marina Del Ray (approximately halfway down) helped ease my "travel pains". I then checked into an economy motel for the next four nights. The relatively cheap downtown motel was only a mile from the conference venue. Therefore, I considered myself very fortunate, as most rooms within the city were gobbled up, well in advance.

The Survey and GIS Summit (a "pre-conference conference") had approximately three hundred surveyors and others in attendance for the specialized four-day event. On Saturday, we had a plenary session format, with no "break-outs". Even a complimentary box lunch was provided. The following are per ESRI online at:

[www.esri.com/events/survey/openingday.html](http://www.esri.com/events/survey/openingday.html)

Mike Weir, the ESRI Survey Industry Manager, opened the Summit with an overview of the direction that he sees GIS Technology is taking within the surveying industry. Mike said "we all use spatial data and location information; that's why we're here!" He went on to say "GIS is the framework for integrating the surveying, engineering, and GIS data processes." Mike also pointed out to us how the connection between the different groups is the data. According to

Mike, "surveyors locate and create the spatial data; engineers build on top of it; and GIS professionals create inter-related maps used for further analysis and decision making."

After Mike's introductory comments, there were technical demos illustrating new developments in ESRI software. A CAD data integration demo showed how the new capabilities available in ArcGIS 9.2 prove that CAD and GIS data can live together. The demonstration highlighted the integrating of CAD data and the GIS workflow. Ian Fitzgerald, a GIS coordinator and fiber optic network engineer for the Truckee-Donner PUD, demonstrated an Engineering Asset Management application that analyzes construction sites, in order to predict final costs, thus saving time, materials, and other expenses. Using wireless capability, right in front of us, he courageously, and very successfully I might add, linked his laptop directly back to his agency's GIS database, located hundreds of miles away.

The keynote speaker introduction followed the technical demonstrations. Jim Hart, from Hamilton (Ohio) Southeast Utilities (SAMCO), spoke about envisioning the possibilities of the future. Jim compared several images from movies and books, which were originally considered technologically impossible and were looked upon as only imaginative creations. He followed each image with something similar that is being developed or has already been completed. He then asked the audience what their vision of the future was. Finally, Jim introduced the plenary keynote speaker, Gary Kent, PLS, a former President of ACSM.

Gary Kent, who is the Director of Surveying at the Schneider Corporation in Indiana, spoke on "Geographic Information Synergy." He emphasized the importance of leadership and the key elements involved in embracing the role, in order to make a difference. Gary defined the audience as leaders in surveying, engineering, and other industries. "Leaders are responsible to



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help create the future,” adding that “we are all leaders and bear a heavy burden. It is our role to explore our possibilities in terms of our collective work with GIS.” Gary echoed the theme of the day, as he emphasized the importance of sharing data and ensuring its accuracy. “To ignore data accuracy defeats the purpose of GIS,” he proclaimed. “Data is what we do. Leadership is who we are.”

On Sunday, the Summit continued with many specialized 90 minute multi-track or "break-out" sessions. No complimentary box lunch was provided, however. While rushing over to the Surveyors Special Interest Group (SSIG) annual business meeting, held during the lunch break in a room clear over at the other end of SDCC, I was able to grab a couple of steeply priced sandwiches and a drink from an indoor concession stand along the way. SSIG produced some positive ideas and improvements for communication. Donnie Sosa assured us that the survey summit speaker presentations will be available soon on CDs.

Many of the Saturday and Sunday sessions seemed to hit the mark right on the head, in regards to a gap generally perceived to exist between Surveyors and GISers. There was one particular presentation on Sunday that spanned an entire 1-1/2 hour morning session. It was put on by Michael Dennis, a dynamic licensed land surveyor from Arizona. He gave an excellent MS-PowerPoint multimedia presentation, using some wonderfully blended multicolored contour maps that he personally generated. Mike was able to drive home the important issues about the many different sources of survey error and how these errors impact GIS and on how they are often misunderstood by GISers. I was quite impressed. Afterwards, I invited Mike Dennis to speak in an upcoming GLIS speaker session, at the Spring ACSM Conference next April in Orlando. For details on other presentations, please refer to the URLs at the end of the article.

An exhibitor sponsored reception called "The Expo" was held Saturday evening. The ACSM, a "Gold Sponsor" (\$5K fee) at the week-long event, was given a rather small booth ("S2"), one chair and a small table. There was definitely lack of sufficient space to display our many different promotional materials for the four MO's, previously shipped to us by Trish. By the way, thank you, Trish! It quickly became obvious that most of the promotional material was going to have to stay in the boxes. We decided that material from CaGIS, and to some extent NSPS, had to be excluded, in favor of the GLIS and AAGS material. By streamlining our normally larger exhibit, we felt the most important information could be made more available to the many attendees that evening. We were also told that for an additional \$5K fee next year, we could have a larger exhibit area too, similar to what the several "Platinum Sponsors", such as NOAA/NGS, Trimble, and Topcon, had and also we would be allowed to use our self-standing displays too. Other exhibitors, such as *GeoInformatics*, *American Surveyor*, FIG, GITC, Leica Geosystems, *POB*, and URISA, had the same exhibit constraints as us. For the sake of a few hours and perhaps a hundred or so attendees, it is probably not worth the extra money, right?

Never-the-less, quite a few people came by our small ACSM booth that evening, meeting with Gary Jeffress, John Holhol, Ronnie Taylor and/or myself, during the rather festive two-hour reception that featured very tasty appetizers, as well as delicious adult beverages. There was even a group playing some rather pleasant music.

After the reception, we boxed up the materials which, along with several other boxes and display cases, were to be transported two floors down and a few thousand feet laterally to the main Exhibit Hall, sometime later that night or the next day. We were promised by the ESRI coordinator that we'd have a much larger booth and table for our ACSM exhibit opening on Tuesday. Those were indeed comforting words.



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The first official social function for the UC was the "Welcome Reception" Sunday evening in the SDCC main entrance area. Featured were a centrally located jazz band and two dozen or so wire mesh barrels positioned along one wall. Above the barrels were distinctive posters commemorating each year's UC. The buttons, free for the picking, were replicas of the original buttons handed out each year since the very first UC held in Redlands, CA in 1982. It was interesting how the "oldest buttons" went the quickest.

Also there was an interesting panoramic display depicting the interesting story of ESRI from its humble beginnings in the late 1960's, when Jack was a grad student at Harvard's Computer Mapping Laboratory. Naturally, there was an ample supply of fine munchies and adult beverages to socially lubricate us. Finally, there were these sign posts apparently designed to encourage people from the same geographic area to mingle around and meet. Unfortunately very few people mingled around California's located right next to the band! Maybe, it was too loud?

Early Monday morning, several of the ACSM people met at Booth #504, only to be surprised by the sight of no table or chairs, only back and side drop curtains and thin carpeting! We later found out there was an additional fee for these obviously needed items, including an additional charge for a wastepaper basket! During the morning rush, the matter was apparently resolved, because sometime during lunch there appeared the "missing items". By mid-afternoon, the ACSM display was completed, well in time for the official opening the next morning at 9am.

During the exhibit setup time on Monday, the rather famous UC Plenary Session was also taking place. The day was highlighted by two inspiring presentations, the usual morning one from ESRI CEO Jack Dangermond and another equally inspiring one from a world renown

naturalist who goes by the name of Jane Goodall, the ESRI UC keynote speaker for 2005. Jane spoke Monday afternoon about her famous chimpanzee research programs mesmerizing us!

Also, when ever possible that day, I took advantage of the relative quietness of the nearly finished Exhibit Hall, quickly walking around the hundred of thousands of square feet of exhibit area, looking at the literally hundreds of exhibits, even watching some interesting software demos. Naturally the most amazing demos were those put on by the NGA, the U.S. Army and Air Force and the Homeland Security people. In addition, the ESRI Book Store, in the front of the exhibit area, was also officially open on Monday, thus taking up some of my time in order to look over its ample contents.

Beginning Sunday, there was a growing collection of award winning GIS mapping products on display in the "Map Gallery" area, upstairs from the Exhibit Hall. Although available for viewing earlier, the Map Gallery was formally opened with a great reception Monday evening. The highlight was a huge line, formed by those many people bent on getting a book or a map signed by Jane Goodall. In addition, there were many college educator informational booths next door and a special exhibit area on the other side of the Map Gallery. There was indeed plenty to see and do.

I spent a considerable amount of time unsuccessfully searching for a land surveying, right of way record mapping, parcel mapping, infrastructure, even perhaps an unusual transportation related application, other than the predictable ones dealing with public utilities, highway route planning and environmental review. The only entry from my state DOT was our internally available, i.e., not for public sale, state highway map allegedly made with ArcGIS.

For those interested and clever enough to garner invites, there were also many other social



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functions and receptions taking place, mostly sponsored by various "user groups" (UG) and special interest groups (SIG). For example, on Sunday night, I went to one such function, held at a local microbrewery in the Gas Light District, thanks to a ticket from a dear friend who's employed at the same state DOT as myself. The party was sponsored by the ESRI Transportation SIG or "TSIG." It featured the diminutive and loveable "ESRI Ernie", who functioned both as a host and a guest of honor, due to his birthday falling on or about the same day. After a great buffet and several different complimentary beers, our dessert was a large delicious multi-layered cake, complete with vertical pine trees and a dual lane highway! Where's the Alka-Seltzer?

On Tuesday evening, there was a social function sponsored by the California-Nevada-Hawaii Regional UG (RUG?) It was held out on the back patio of the SDCC, at about the same time as several others, each rather loosely cordoned off, thus making it possible for one to easily meander between the several functions. In addition, according to the schedule, there were many other complimentary socials to occur later.

The 2005 ESRI UC was socially culminated by the famous "Thursday Night Bash" which Jack puts on every year. This year it was held at a nearby band pavilion, located immediately adjacent to a portion of the San Diego harbor directly across from beautiful Coronado Island. Yes, it was indeed tough to leave wonderful San Diego, but my work called me home! Oh did I mention the daily high temps were 80 with nothing but clear blue skies the entire time?

Now back to the more mundane things. My principle task and purpose for being there was to help work the ACSM booth, for at least a day, along with Dr. Aileen Buckley (CaGIS), Dr. Gary Jeffress (GLIS), John Holhol (representing all four MO's he said and FIG-USA too?), Gary Kent (NSPS) and Ronnie Taylor (AAGS). Josh Greenfield (GLIS) also stopped by Tuesday for a

quick visit. Unfortunately, Professor Jeffress could not stay past Sunday afternoon, since he had to teach a one-week course at his university in Corpus Christi, Texas, beginning the very next day. Since I didn't stay beyond Tuesday, I can't report on what took place after my departure that evening. But if Tuesday was any indication, I think ACSM had reasonably good exposure to several thousand people, many of whom seemed interested in the role of surveyors within and alongside GIS. Many people picked up our GLIS brochure, 2005 Summer Newsletter and the revised 2005 GLIS membership application.

One thing that I personally culled from working the booth with John Holhol was our need to add some items to our next Board Meeting agenda, under Member Communications, i.e., items regarding the format, frequency and manner of distributing the GLIS Newsletter in the future. John expressed some fairly strong opinions. I feel some of them were good constructive criticisms that we need to seriously consider. One item I feel partly responsible for is the apparent "postal non-compliance" with our latest issue. I'm referring to the fact that some printed text appears where the USPO says must be blank! Maybe that's why many of our members apparently didn't receive their GLIS Newsletter.

In concluding, I think any surveyor who's doing, or wants to do work, connected with GIS, should attend the next ESRI Surveyors Summit - "Bridging the Gap", to be held in San Diego about the same time of year, give or take a few weeks. For further information about the two conferences held this year, please see:

<http://www.esri.com/events/survey/index.html>

<http://www.esri.com/index.html>

<http://esriuc.blogspot.com>

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