

GITA Ontario Announces Spring Educational Event

Serious accidents can result when people or machines encounter gas lines and other buried objects when excavating. GITA Ontario Chapter's next educational event will examine the role of geospatial technologies in preventing such accidents and avoiding damage to industrial infrastructure.

Tentatively entitled "Taking the Mystery out of Damage Prevention," the event will be held at the Guelph headquarters of Ontario One Call Ltd., known as ON1Call, the not-for-profit corporation that oper-

ates the largest call centre receiving excavator locate requests in Ontario.

The event scheduled for April 2 will focus on how organizations can protect their underground assets using geospatial data and tools.

Union Gas will conduct a demonstration of its locating process and will show how GPS devices are integrated with it.

For details and registration as they become available, please visit <http://gita.org/chapters/ontario/exec.html>.

GIS Data Open to Misuse, Security Expert Warns

Geospatial professionals must be wary about publishing data that could be used to harm their organizations, and should develop due-diligence standards to help protect themselves and their data, a veteran security expert told delegates attending the GITA Ontario Chapter Fall Conference on November 7.

Canadian energy-related organizations in particular, including utilities, are known to be at risk, and published geospatial data could reveal vulnerabilities to attack, John Kopinak told the conference in a keynote address to a soberly attentive audience in the Royal Bank Theatre of the Mississauga Living Arts Centre.

Kopinak, who is director of corporate security for Duke Energy Corporation in Canada and its subsidiary Union

Gas, and former chief of police for the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, is involved with national and international police organizations. He told the delegates that terrorists view attacks on Canadian energy organizations as potential means to weaken the United States economy.

"The potential for attacks on the Canadian energy infrastructure is real," Kopinak said. "Forewarned is forearmed."

"As geospatial professionals, be cautious and be diligent in how you use, store, manage and disseminate data."

Kopinak urged geospatial professionals to work together to develop standards or guidelines for due-diligence procedures that can be applied to the publishing of data.

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Join GITA Ontario!

GITA is the premier educational association for geospatial information and technology professionals. GITA Ontario Chapter is helping to build a vibrant geospatial community across all sectors throughout the province.

We connect you with people with whom you can share information, experiences and collegial professional events that offer unique educational opportunities.

Join us! Become part of the growing Ontario Chapter. For details please see the GITA Web site, gita.org/membership/membership.asp.

Further information is available from Marc Curtis of GCS Corp., chapter secretary, at marcc@gcscorp.ca.



GITA Ontario Fall Conference A Showcase for Innovation

GITA Ontario Chapter's 2007 Fall Conference presented a sweeping view of new developments and issues in geospatial technologies affecting multiple sectors throughout Ontario.

Theme of the November 7 conference at the Mississauga Living Arts Centre was "Mission Possible." It focused on the application of geospatial technologies to support mission-critical functions. Several presentations also described new and expanded uses of the technologies.

In Eastern Ontario, for example, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) is building a partnership to capture high-resolution orthophotographs of the region for the first time. Mike Robertson, policy analyst with Land Information Ontario, gave delegates advance information about the Eastern Ontario Digital Imagery Project, planned for the spring of 2008.

Collaborative Savings

Savings for municipalities and other participants will be "incredible," Robertson said. He urged GITA Ontario member organizations to participate in this and other planned LIO imagery projects.

The conservation sector is also expanding the use of geospatial technologies through collaboration. Conservation Ontario has a pilot project called Conservation Authorities Common Internet Mapping, supported by MNR. It is based on a Web portal, www.CAMap.ca, which provides detailed information on interactive maps about land and water in several conservation

authorities. Business manager Chris Wilkinson said Conservation Ontario hopes to enable all conservation authorities to have Internet mapping and GIS-based services at a shared low cost.

In another innovation, Chatham-Kent Hydro has become the first Ontario utility to completely convert to the use of "smart" meters by rolling out an advanced metering infrastructure (AMI). Dan Charron, director of engineering and technical services, showed how the utility has linked its AMI technology to its GIS system to track the performance of the meters, and predicted that consumers will soon be able to subscribe to services that monitor and control energy use of individual appliances.

The conference also included sessions examining universal issues such as security, emergency management, productivity and change management.

Particularly well received was "Understanding Change Management in Business Transformations" by project manager J. J. Blais of Hydro One. His colleague, senior network management engineer Eldon Feaver, demonstrated Hydro One's geographically based Emergency Services Information System, the first of its kind.

Largest Trade Show

The conference gave delegates from the diverse geospatial community across Ontario an opportunity to browse the trade show of 20 booths, the largest yet at a GITA conference.

GITA Ontario Chapter announced the awarding of its first Scholarship for Advanced Applications and Research to Craig Onafrychuk, a student at Ryerson University working toward his master's degree in spatial analysis. He won the \$1,750 scholarship for developing a digital elevation model that tracks saturated areas in a landscape, predicting where wetland and flow routes will be.

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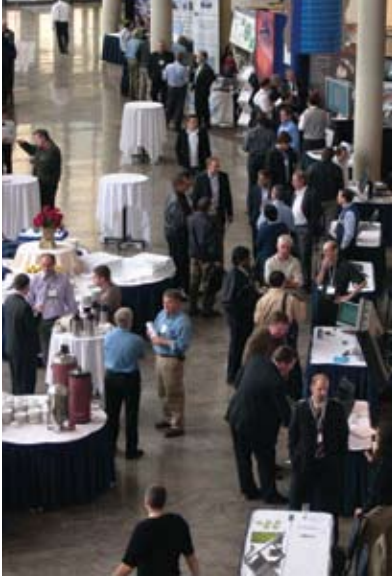
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Above, delegates visit some of the 20 booths in the trade show at the Mississauga Living Arts Centre.



Below, John Kopinak of Duke Energy/Union Gas, left, prepares for his keynote speech with help from GITA Ontario Executive Committee members Armando LaCivita of ESRI Canada, middle, and Laverne Hanley of Union Gas.



Left, Doug Banting of Ryerson University, left, accepts a scholarship cheque on behalf of student Craig Onafrychuk from GITA Executive Committee member Mike MacLean of the City of Peterborough.



Above, Chris Wilkinson of Conservation Ontario, seated, confers before his presentation with Mike Wallace of Bell Canada, a GITA Ontario executive member.



Above right, Geoff Zeiss of Autodesk Canada address delegates on productivity issues.



Above, Mike Robertson of the Ministry of Natural Resources describes initiatives of Land Information Ontario.

Aging Workforce Seen Worsening Productivity

Serious problems facing Canada's industrial infrastructure must be countered by better management of geospatial data, a senior executive of Autodesk Canada says.

A massive need for repairs and upgrades to roads, bridges and buildings is coinciding with a declining workforce that threatens to undercut already low productivity in the construction industry, Geoff Zeiss, director of technology in the Geospatial Business Unit of Autodesk Canada, told a session at the GITA Ontario Annual Conference.

The average construction worker produces 20 per cent less than in 1964, Zeiss said, citing figures from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"So we've got more stuff to do, we've got fewer people to do it and we've got declining productivity – this is a serious problem."

The shrinking Baby Boomer workforce is affecting many kinds of industries. For example, in the North American utility industry, as many as 60 per cent of today's experienced workers are expected to retire by 2010. Consulting firm Booz Allen is forecasting a 20-per-cent drop in utility productivity as people with years of knowledge are replaced by newcomers.

"This is motivating companies to invest in technological solutions," Zeiss said. "Companies in the IT sector in particular are investing a lot in trying to help solve these problems."

New geospatial technologies are aiming at making workers more efficient. Geospatial enablement is being into relational databases and other IT products. Rule-based design applications are being developed so that planners don't need so much experience.

Within organizations, the most important productivity concept is to have a "single point of truth" – a central source for data that can be universally shared by means of open standards that enable multi-vendor interoperability.

"You don't want data redundancy," Zeiss said. "Having a single point of truth is probably the most critical thing you can do to help solve some of these problems."

New Members Enrich Our Association

By Kris Philpott, President, GITA Ontario Chapter



GITA Ontario Chapter is working to become the most valuable educational resource for geospatial technology experts and professionals in Ontario.

Recent events have given us optimism that we are well on our way to achieving that goal.

Our Annual Fall Conference on November 7 was a vigorous success, well attended and bursting with information. The trade show alone – 20 booths strong! – was a showcase for GIS practitioners from all sectors. I was extremely impressed by the quality of the speakers' presentations.

One of the best outcomes of the day, to me, was the large number of students who attended our conference, expressed interest in GITA Ontario and used the event to learn, learn, learn.

Another reason for optimism comes from our new members. There are 19 of them listed below, and they are very welcome. Our association will be enriched by the involvement of such people.

Looking back, in 2007 our association grew to the point where we are now offering greatly enhanced value to our members.

And looking ahead to 2008, GITA Ontario will provide even more educational resources and events that bring together this diverse community.

Welcome New Members

Gord Allen	Geospatial Insight
Karen Baillie	PowerStream Inc.
Al Buckle	Teranet Land Information Services Inc.
Frank Bulatko	Toronto and Regional Conservation Authority
Alex Cestra	PowerStream Inc.
Andrew Cooper	Region of Peel
Todd Daigle	Horizon Utilities Corporation
Kirk Guerin	Union Gas Limited

Dave Jutla	Toronto Hydro
Jury Konga	Town of Richmond Hill
Nicole Li	Toronto Hydro
Craig Mann	QSP Geographics Inc.
Gordon McElravy	TELUS
Nick Novosad	Union Gas Limited
John Rampal	Region of Peel
Douglas Scaife	Intergraph Canada Ltd.
Scott Stover	York Region
Anthony Valentini	Region of Peel
Alice Wu	Region of Peel

ABOUT NETWORKS ONTARIO

Networks Ontario is the quarterly newsletter of the Ontario Chapter of the Geospatial Information & Technology Association.

<http://gita.org/chapters/ontario/exec.html>

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