

Meridian NW

Newsletter for the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the Geospatial Information & Technology Association
December 2005 Vol. 4, No. 2

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I near the end of my term as President for 2005, I'd like to update you on what we've been up to this year as a chapter. We got a lot accomplished this year and had a lot of fun doing it. Our key goals for 2005 were to reach out to our members through regular e-mail and newsletter communications, provide educational and networking opportunities for our members through local events and initiatives, and to give back to the geospatial community through education scholarships. I'm proud to say that we achieved those goals and then some!

We started off the year by having a presence at two local events. We staffed a GITA booth at the Geo-Tec conference in Vancouver, BC. This gave us an opportunity to network with conference attendees and answer questions about PNW GITA and what we do as a chapter. At the second event, a local WAURISA (Washington State Chapter of URISA) meeting, we provided refreshments and gave a short presentation of who we are and what we do. Again, there were members on hand to answer questions.

We put on two events this year. The first was a June Speaker meeting in Portland, OR that was comprised of four presentations followed by a panel discussion on GIS certification. This event was well attended and free for GITA members. The speakers were excellent and there were networking opportunities during the breaks and at lunch. Our final and biggest event of the year, of course, was our annual PNW GITA Fall Conference in Leavenworth, WA. It featured two days of great presentations, vendor exhibits, and lots of opportunities to catch up with old friends and make new GIS contacts. The highlight of the conference was presenting scholarships to 3 dedicated GIS students.

Our chapter has grown by another 27 members and we are now at 134 members strong. Whether you're a new member or a member who's been enjoying the benefits of GITA membership for some time, we'd love to hear your ideas on how to keep this chapter growing and strong.

Have a safe and happy holiday,
Carolle

Carolle Bruce
PNW GITA Chapter President

PNW GITA Chapter Awards 3 More Scholarships

Mike Murray, Treasurer

Congratulations to Elisabeth Leaf, Rebekah LaBar, and Carolyn Robb. Each of these terrific students received a \$1000 scholarship from GITA Pacific Northwest Chapter at our Annual PNW GITA Fall Conference after being selected from a pool of excellent applicants.

Each year, our chapter awards scholarships to students following courses of study that involve GIS. Each applicant submitted a packet of information about themselves and their studies. The packets included a letter describing themselves and their GIS studies, a recommendation from their GIS professor, and their transcripts. All applications received by the scholarship committee were from excellent students who are well acquainted with GIS. The 3 scholarship winners were selected because they demonstrated a passion for their area of study and for their dedicated use of GIS.

Elisabeth Leaf is a senior at the University of Washington, Tacoma campus. She is combining Urban Studies with a heavy emphasis on GIS. She intends to follow an Urban Planning career.

Rebekah La Bar is also a senior and attends Central Washington University in Ellensburg, Washington. She has already used GIS techniques for several papers involving weather patterns in Washington State. She has chosen Meteorology as a career and intends to use GIS to learn more about weather and climate.

Carolyn Robb is a student at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) in Burnaby, BC. She wins high praise from her professors and intends to follow a career in GIS.

At our PNW GITA Fall Conference, Elisabeth, Rebekah, and Carolyn each gave a short presentation about their studies, their use of GIS, and their plans for a career using GIS. We as a chapter are proud to honor these students and look forward to the time when they will join us as daily GIS users.



L-R: Nancy Hultquist, Professor, CWU; Rebekah LaBar, CWU student; Board members Theresa Taafe and Mike Murray



L-R: Mike Murray, PNW GITA Treasurer; Carolyn Robb, BCIT student; Ross Miller, BCIT GIS Department Head

Fall Conference in Leavenworth, WA a Hit! Volker Elste, Past-President, Conference Chair

A big thank you to all who attended this magnificent event and special thanks to our Speakers and Vendors. The theme "Beyond GIS" was appropriate. GIS (Geospatial / Geographic Information Systems) or GIT (Geospatial Intelligence Technology) in a Utility workflow is the enabler for many applications: asset management, OMS, Mobile Computing, Work Force Management, Analysis, CIP and more. The speakers did a fine job in sending that message home. We had presentations from large investor owned utilities to smaller REA Coops and local governments - a great mix.

As we all know, our charter is to provide education to our GIT community and from the proceeds sponsor scholarships. This year, we are fortunate to award 3 scholarships, British Columbia Institute for Technology, University of Washington and Central Washington University. See the Scholarship report for details. Thanks to the award recipients for attending.

Our program focus for next year has been selected as has our venue. At our conference, you have voted for the top applications and top technologies that interest you. The topics that you voted on were based on the analysis summarized in the GITA Executive Report. They are shown below in the order of interest based on the national sampling. A total of 95 votes were cast in each category and the results are shown in percentages. Each year we see a different mix. This year we deviate slightly from the national sampling in our local chapter area of interest. As a chapter, we seem to be most interested in field automation / workforce automation but nationally, that application area comes in third place. However, we are in line with the national sampling in that we seem to agree that one of the top technologies is mobile computing.

Top Applications:

12% **TROUBLE CALL / OMS**
8% **ENGINEERING WORK ORDER DESIGN**
19% **FIELD AUTOMATION / WORKFORCE AUTOMATION**
15% **WORK MANAGEMENT**
13% **DATA MAINTENANCE**
7% **ENGINEERING ANALYSIS**
8% **CIS INTEGRATION**
2% **DISTRIBUTION AUTOMATION / SCADA**
12% **CONVERSION / DATA CAPTURE**
4% **EXECUTIVE INFORMATION / SUPPORT SYSTEM ACCESS**

Top Technologies:

23% **MOBILE COMPUTING**
20% **INTERNET / INTRANET**
16% **DATA ACCESS AND PORTABILITY**
14% **GPS**
4% **DATA WAREHOUSING / STORAGE**
5% **GIS SOFTWARE CHOICES**
11% **DIGITAL ORTHOPHOTOGRAPHY**
6% **OO SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT TOOLS**
1% **NONPROPRIETARY PROGRAMMING**
0% **WINDOWS / 2000 / XP**

For next year's fall conference on the beautiful wind blown rugged coast of Oregon we are looking for presentations that match our areas of interest above. Please start thinking about ideas now, so we can offer another outstanding educational forum.

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Here are some quotes from this year's fall conference:

Dave Ward, Optimal Geomatics – *“a high value conference - a must attend”*

Dann Borden, Franklin County – *“once again the best bang for the buck, even if you don't win the fishing pole”*



GIS Professional Organizations in the Pacific Northwest - Challenges and Opportunities to Build Communities

Karen Stewart, Member at Large

The 3 Day 2005 Washington GIS Conference presented by the Washington State Chapter of URISA (WAURISA) May 9-11 offered a panel discussion regarding GIS Professional Organizations. I sat on this panel along with Mike Murray and several other GIS Professionals.

This moderated panel discussion focused on the community of GIS professionals and users in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) and the various organizations and user groups that help support their professional needs.

The panel discussion was successful in its goal to stimulate dialog between representatives of various GIS-related professional organizations and user groups, as well as to provide a forum for the user community itself to communicate their priority GIS professional organizational needs. Each panel member provided an overview of their organization followed by moderated discussion and audience questions. The panel consisted of local 'grass roots' user groups as well as

state/provincial/regional chapters of the national professional organizations URISA, GITA and ASPRS. A quick summary of some of the discussion follows below.

How much does it cost to be a member of these organizations?

Local user groups have no cost to participate. Membership in regional chapters of ASPRS and GITA is limited to members of their national group. In essence, the local chapter is a benefit of the national membership. For URISA the national membership and local chapter memberships are separate. Local grass roots organizations provide a no-cost local substitute and limited access to other GIS professionals who can share the knowledge they have gained by attending national events for those who cannot get the funding to attend these and other events.

What is the ideal relationship between local grass roots user groups and the local chapters of national organizations?

Some panel members expressed a vision of a three-tiered environment whereby each group met unique needs on a complementary basis. In this vision, National provides top tier and state and provincial chapters provide a coordinating transitional link to the local 'grass roots' user groups. "Grass roots" user groups focus on local issues and local networking. These groups were described as potential 'starter'

organizations for those new to a region or new to the GIS field. The role of the local GIS user group is to prepare those with interest and motivation to move up and participate in larger associations at a state, provincial, regional or national level. With the three-tiered structure, many issues surface at local GIS user group meetings and 'bubble up' to state/provincial chapter meetings where they are subjected to a wider discussion and analysis. State/provincial or regional chapters have a better chance of distilling 'best practices' in response to issues. This provides benefit to the local group as alternate or best practices trickle back down. All three groups (local grass roots, state/provincial/regional and national) benefit from straddle members. That is members whose interest and participation straddles across two or even three of the tiers. These members seem to be the key in helping to ensure that strengths of each tier are leveraged for the mutual benefit of all members and the GIS community.

Conclusions

Everyone attending the panel discussion showed great interest in the long-term viability and effectiveness of all three tiers of our GIS groups. This led attendees to the conclusion that these groups are viewed as important components that contribute to a healthy professional environment.

PNW GITA Announces Fall Conference Venue for 2006 **Carolle Bruce, President**

Mark your calendars! The 7th Annual PNW GITA Fall Conference will be returning to the beautiful Salishan Spa & Golf Resort on the central Oregon coast on October 23rd & 24th, 2006. We held a successful conference there in 2003. This facility has been renovated extensively since we were last there and boasts full conference facilities including a large ballroom for our conference proceedings, spacious exhibit space, high-speed Internet access, and a full business center. All rooms feature a fireplace and private balcony, a perfect retreat. Please visit www.salishan.com (see pictures below) for more information about this property.



As always, we want to hear from you. Please let any of the board members know if you have suggestions on how we can continue to improve our conference offerings or are interested in presenting a paper or exhibiting at our next conference. We look forward to hearing from you.

PNW GITA Bids Farewell As One of Our Founding Members Retires

Finally, we want to thank Mr. Mike Murray from the City of Portland for his outstanding leadership over our first 6 years and for his many contributions, as founder, president, and treasurer of the PNW GITA chapter and as a good friend. From all of us, the board and the members, best of luck in your new venture.

Pacific Northwest Chapter of GITA Board of Directors for 2005

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