



GIS Newsletter

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Shawnee County, 1515 NW Saline, Topeka, KS 66615
www.snco.us/ap/mapping.asp

GIS Newsletter Introduction

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 GIS Day
- 1 Contest
- 2 Planning Dept Uses GIS
- 3 EM Uses GIS for Locating Sirens
- 4 Tax Sale Big Success

This newsletter has been created as an additional way to communicate how GIS (Geographic Information Systems) is used within the various departments in Shawnee County. The newsletter is also designed to hopefully invoke ideas from individuals in the county who may think of additional uses of GIS as a cost saving or efficiency tool.

This is the first edition, being delivered on GIS Day, November 19th, 2008. Please check out the links below to see what GIS Day is all about.

<http://www.gis.ku.edu/gisday/2008/>

<http://www.gisday.com/about/index.html>

http://www.gisday.com/cd2008/fliers/what_is_gis.pdf

Please see *Introduction* on page 2

Contest

*"GIS Day is today,
November 19th. It is an
annual occurrence where
GIS is recognized all
over the world."*

Up for grabs is an item valued at \$25 dollars. Here's the contest: be the first person to email Lee Allen (lee.allen@snco.us) with the correct answers to the following questions and win the prize.

Using the GIS website (<http://gis.bartwest.com/shawneecounty/>), answer these questions:

- 1: For the parcel with Parcel ID number 1451503005023000, how many acres is it?
- 2: For the same parcel, what is the zip code?
- 3: What voter precinct is the parcel in?

Please see *Contest* on page 3

Planning Department Utilizes GIS Everyday

By Barry Beagle, Planning Director

The Planning Department utilizes GIS in each functional area of the department. For land use planning, GIS provides aerial and thematic data for an area or property under consideration. When considering a land use proposal (e.g. rezoning, conditional use permit, subdivision proposal, etc.) land use relationships can easily be identified along with significant environmental features and infrastructure information. There are many other aspects where GIS is utilized in land use planning.

GIS also plays a significant role in the departments permitting function. GIS provides confirmation of ownership along with other property information essential in the evaluation of building and development permits. It also confirms the location of existing improvements, dimensional data, utilities, etc. that is helpful in evaluating a permit application.

GIS also play a big role in assisting the general public with regard to information about Shawnee County, specific property(s), environmental features, confirmation of service providers and areas of service, streets and transportation, etc. GIS also provides essential background information about property when conducting an investigation in response to an alleged zoning violation.

GIS gives us the capability to do community planning.

Introduction from page 1

GIS Day is not only geared toward getting the word about what GIS is, it is also about teaching people what can be done and how it is a valuable tool to businesses and the community.

"Quiz after quiz has shown that kids today don't know where any place is. How often have you heard this lament about "geographic ignorance" or "geographic illiteracy," as it is commonly called?"

Now, take that complaint and turn it around. What does it say about geography? It says geography means knowing *where* places are. That's what geographers call "place-name geography." It's vital, but it's the least of what we expect budding geographers to learn.

Geography is more than you think. Geography is to space what history is to time. It is a spatial way of thinking, a science with distinctive methods and tools, a body of knowledge about places, and a set of information technologies that have been around for centuries. Geography is about understanding people and places and how real-world places function in a viscerally organic sense. It's about understanding spatial distributions and interpreting what they mean. It's about using technology to study, in the words of the late professor J. Rowland Illick, "why people do what they do where they do it." Geography is a dimensional science and humanity based on spatial logic in which locations, flows, and spatial associations are considered to be primary evidence of earth processes, both physical and cultural. Its hallmarks are spatial analysis, place-based research (e.g., regional studies, area studies, urban studies), and scientific integration. Does geography really matter for grownups? Of course it does. Geographic knowledge, understanding, and skills matter, for instance, in formulating foreign policy, designing and using GIS, and just about everything else in society that involves locations, movements, and flows."

--From, "Jerome E. Dobson - ArcNews Spring 2007."

"GIS gives us the capability to do community planning."



GIS Day Logo.

Emergency Management Uses GIS to Aid in Locating Sirens

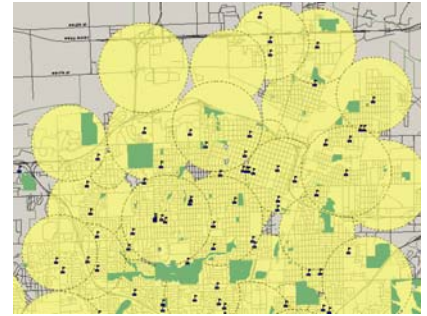
By Lee Allen

Emergency Management is utilizing the power of GIS to visualize where sirens are currently located and where sirens may be needed in the future. GIS technology has greatly enabled better decision making in regards to siren locations.

Using the ESRI ArcMap software, locations of high density neighborhoods, parks with large outdoor facilities, schools, and other criteria can be accurately examined together to identify whether there is adequate coverage.

The aerial photos make it easy to see where there are large softball complexes, soccer fields, schools with stadiums, and other places where people might gather outside. These are locations where large masses of people will be away from weather radios during an emergency like an approaching tornado.

GIS also allows a company assisting with the project to exchange data back and forth easily, without actually having to physically meet when changes or different scenarios are worked on.



Siren Ranges help identify places where new sirens may be needed.

Contest from page 1

4: What is the Tax Unit for this parcel?

5: What is the park's name directly to the west of this parcel?

All of these questions can be answered with just a few clicks on the website.

If you have not used the website before, please visit

http://www.co.shawnee.ks.us/ap/document/snco_wms_help.pdf to view the help document which will guide you along as you try to figure out the answers.

By the way, constructive comments are always welcome regarding this website.

“Up for grabs is a \$25 prize.”

Counselor's Office Uses GIS to Help with Tax Sale

By Lee Allen

The County Counselor's Office recently implemented a newer approach to advertising land in the tax sale. Using GIS, a map was created detailing all of the parcels that were up for sale yesterday, November 18th. This map was used as a tool along with the master list of sale tracts to help potential buyers see where properties are located before they are purchased. The map was posted on the Shawnee County Home page along with the property list.

Enabling this was the Shawnee County web master David Eldridge who continually posted the new list and map as it was updated.

"We [Shawnee County] brought in over \$288,000 - I think that is a record sale, and I believe it's because we all did a fantastic job getting the word out", said Kristy Moore.

In addition to this map, Kristy used GIS to create maps to be mailed out to surrounding owners of a property up for sale to make sure that they knew they would have the opportunity to purchase it. Also, the owner names and addresses could be easily taken from GIS and placed into a document for a mail merge.



If you would like to contribute how your office utilizes GIS, please forward brief article to lee.allen@snco.us.