



Governor recognizes two exceptional geospatial technology projects

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Contact: Sally Wakefield
Council Staff Coordinator
651/296-1208

(ST. PAUL) – The Minnesota Governor’s Council in Geographic Information is awarding Certificates of Commendation to two projects that exhibit robust, innovative and cost-effective ways of using and managing geographic information and related technologies.

This year’s awards will be presented Oct. 5 at the state MN GIS/LIS Conference at the St. Cloud Civic Center. The council has awarded certificates of commendation from the governor to exemplary projects in Minnesota since 1996.

This year’s recipients are:

Environmental Data Access System (EDA): The EDA system provides easy access to water quality data collected by the MPCA and more than a dozen other local, state and federal organizations.

Discussions with stakeholders molded system design that meets their needs; letters from local government, environmental organizations and the private sector enthusiastically supported this award. The system became operational in July 2003 and within a year had more than 1,000 users displaying approximately 17,000 pages of results while downloading almost 3,000 sets of data.

Air quality data will be available in the near future on the EDA system, while ground water quality data is scheduled for inclusion in 2005. The Environmental Data Access System is meeting the needs of the state for quick and free access to data, resulting in better environmental decisions.

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Communications Office
200 Administration Building 50 Sherburne Avenue Saint Paul, MN 55155
P: 651.284.3351 / F: 651.297.7909 / TTY: 651.297.4357

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Statewide FSA Orthoimagery Cooperative: The pioneering spirit of decision-makers at four state agencies and the federal Farm Service Agency (FSA) led to this model cooperative agreement that now supplies up-to-date digital aerial photographs to all levels of government, the private sector and citizens across Minnesota. FSA color orthoimages were gathered at a cost one-tenth of what was required a decade ago and released for public distribution just three months later. The images now act as detailed electronic maps that provide resourceful information technologists with the data for hundreds of new uses. Almost two-terabytes of imagery have been served online through state web sites to over 14,000 users. The images have proven invaluable to local governments for detecting growth trends and other changes in their communities and preparing for emergencies and the demands they put on public services. Private firms use these innovative maps for engineering site planning, compliance with government reporting requirements and providing base mapping services.

A geographic information system is an integrated computer-based system designed to capture, store, edit, analyze, retrieve and display data and information as maps and reports.

The governor's council is committed to recognizing organizations that "go the extra mile" in delivering products and services that result in a more responsive government, promote public access to information and reflect the benefits of working in a collaborative environment. Recognizing achievements also helps encourage similar efforts in the future that will benefit Minnesota and Minnesotans.

Nominations for commendations are solicited through the council's web site and the MN GIS/LIS Consortium newsletter, which reaches more than 2,000 industry professionals, as well as by word of mouth. Awards are presented at the consortium's annual fall conference.

More information about the Minnesota Governor's Council on Geographic Information can be found at www.gis.state.mn.us. More information about the MN GIS/LIS Consortium can be found at www.mngislis.org.

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