

Success Stories

Geospatial Information Making a Difference

CHALLENGE:

Mapping Fire Hydrants to Ensure Public Safety

Seconds count when responding to a fire emergency. To assure public safety, knowing the location and condition of fire hydrants before firefighters arrive on the scene is a priority for the City of Farmington Hills, Michigan. Fire fighters need to know the location of the closest fire hydrant in working condition to any incident. If the hydrant is covered by vegetation, buried in a snow bank or covered by dirt when fire fighters arrive on the scene, they have to waste valuable time making it accessible.



Accurate maps let fire fighters know that hydrants are ready to use in an emergency

ACTION

Armed with maps and Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment, a data collection technician gathered information on the location, make, model, and condition of every hydrant in the city. Repair crews were sent to correct problems identified in the field. The city created metadata and developed a fire hydrants data layer that is available to the public and is shared with Oakland County for use in developing their water data network.

RESULTS

- Accurate maps were created for the Fire Department showing where all 4,700 hydrants were located
- A fire hydrants layer was added to the GIS enhanced computer-aided dispatch mapping system so dispatchers can notify fire fighters where the nearest hydrant is when responding to a fire
- Fire hydrant maintenance was improved by identifying problems during field data collection that can affect their operability
- The hydrants layer was used with GIS to assist the Fire Department in identifying “dry areas”, which do not have accessible fire hydrants



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