

OUTREACH EVENT REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Attendee's Name: Joseph Kerski, Geographer, USGS
Location: Casper, Wyoming
Meeting Date(s): 5-6 October 2000
Other USGS Attendees: None.
Purpose of Meeting: **Conduct 2 workshops, and Operate USGS Exhibit at Wyoming Technology Conference / Wyoming Interdisciplinary Conference**

Summary:



Our USGS exhibit from above.

A joint session of the Wyoming Technology Conference and the Wyoming Interdisciplinary Conference (WTC) brought together educators from elementary to college, and from geography, science, civics, economics, technology, history, and mathematics, from all across Wyoming. I have been working with Wyoming educators since 1995, including 2 technology workshops at the University of Wyoming and the Wyoming Extension Showcase on Technology (1998, with Lance Clampitt). What the state lacks in population, it makes up for in educational technology. Some towns are very small, but with excellent computer labs running remote sensing, GIS, and AutoCAD laboratories (with Lusk WY being an excellent example). Most of the DOQs and other data sets for the state are online at the University's State Data and Visualization Center.

This conference allowed us to connect with teachers who might not be familiar with us, namely, history and economics teachers, as well as science and geography teachers. In addition, physical geography, one of our strengths, is increasingly written into state and

national standards. Many teachers are not familiar with this aspect of geography and appreciated our presence at the conference. Approximately 300 educators attended the conference.

One of the unique aspects of WTC was that it was held at Natrona County High School. This presented difficulties to cart all boxes up the stairs without benefit of an elevator or loading ramp. The conference also presented a challenge to unload the displays and monitor at RMMC at 1am after driving back from Casper, but it was excellent to work with educators in an educational setting and well worthwhile.



Band practice!



Natrona County High School - Home of the Mustangs and Fillies!

I conducted 1 workshop on how to use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in the curriculum. I sought to illustrate how GIS integrates grade levels, curricular areas, and also facilitates partnerships between educational and governmental institutions. GIS is a powerful tool to explore patterns of demography, commerce, and physical features. I also conducted 1 workshop on Map Mysteries, which involves the use of USGS topographic and thematic maps to explore and uncover mysteries about the human and physical environment. One of the professors at this workshop took much of what I had left over at the end of the exhibit day to distribute to the teachers in his seminar at Casper College.

Our exhibit was in the gymnasium of Natrona County High School. The traffic was lighter than expected but overall it was a good way to connect with teachers from several disciplines across Wyoming. I featured a custom-made poster for this conference, as well as a GeoMac [fire research] poster, Yellowstone National Park satellite imagery, geography education materials, historical and current NAPP photos to illustrate land use change lessons. I distributed some superseded maps of Yellowstone and the world which, of course, were huge hits. I demonstrated our digital data, websites, and presentations on a computer and monitor, and used the publications rack for materials.



The USGS contributed maps for the door prize drawings at the end of the conference.

Acknowledgements:

I thank the USGS for supporting our presence at this conference. At the end of the conference, the conference organizers sent me one of the kindest thank-you letters I

have ever received. We clearly gave away more items and had more traffic than any other exhibitor at the conference.

Recommendations:

- 1) We might want to pursue an educational exhibit at the national NCSS conference, which is held each November, to reach more educators. NCSS attracts 15,000 teachers to the national convention and it would be another opportunity to work with those in social studies including those that are 'outside' geography.
- 2) These are exciting times for geography education, with the resurgence of public interest in the subject, and the new national K-12 standards in geography. Education receives a great deal of publicity. The USGS should continue to pursue educational venues with both an exhibit and a presentation whenever possible.
- 3) GIS is being increasingly used in secondary and even primary schools. The USGS should continue to investigate the educational potential of GIS packages so that we can make informed answers to customers who seek to use our data in a GIS.
- 4) The NAPP photo quiz is a great way of drawing and keeping attendees near the USGS exhibit. I would hold up the photos for the quiz several times and people would stop and congregate around our exhibit. I have a listing of the photos I used in my quiz (such as Grand Canyon, Crater Lake, New York harbor, Pittsburgh, etc) that I am happy to share, if anyone would like to create the same one, or a similar concept with your own photographs.



Getting ready for the big game with cross-town rivals Kelly Walsh High School.

end of report