

**Fifty States Initiative Project
Interim Report, Category 3 - 2006**

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Organization:

Louisiana Geographic Information Center
E-313 Howe Russell Bldg.
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, La. 70803
<http://lagic.lsu.edu>

Project Leader:

Craig Johnson
(225) 578-3479 office
cjohnson@lsu.edu

Collaborating Organizations:

Calvin "Pat" O'Neil
USGS Geospatial Liaison for Louisiana
NSDI Partnership Office
Lafayette, La. 70506
337-266-8699
pat_oneil@usgs.gov

Project Narrative:

Summary of Project Activities:

The Louisiana Geographic Data Center (LAGIC), the state's primary point of contact for geospatial information, proposed to improve Louisiana's geospatial preparedness by conducting a series of workshops with emergency responders to identify operational requirements for infrastructure data.

LAGIC identified methods of improving data coordination, distribution, and exchange of these critical geospatial resources. The workshops and geospatial data surveys focused on the following goals:

1. Determining the infrastructure needs of our emergency responders
2. Documenting the spatial accuracy and attributes of existing infrastructure data
3. Creating an inventory of these critical geospatial data sets, with appropriate safeguards to protect confidentiality, contracted licensing agreements and information deemed sensitive by federal and state officials

4. Devising a plan for the distribution, and exchange of this data that meets the needs of emergency responders and the concerns of private industry.

In addition to the outreach effort with private utility companies, LAGIC coordinated the drafting of a state strategic plan.

Key Accomplishments:

LAGIC completed the Louisiana Geospatial Strategic Plan (attached).

LAGIC conducted four workshops in conjunction with state utility companies; two in Southwestern Louisiana (the area impacted by Hurricane Rita) and two in Southeastern Louisiana (the area impacted by Hurricane Katrina). The purpose of the workshops was to acquaint utility companies with available state geospatial data, inventory their spatial data assets and to determine their geospatial data needs.

Statewide Coordination Improvements:

Utility companies had never previously participated in state geospatial activities. Since the outreach effort began, representatives of some of the larger state utility companies have attended numerous state geospatial conferences and workshops. LAGIC has coordinated two data exchanges between utility companies and local government.

Inclusiveness:

The Louisiana Geospatial Strategic Plan received input from federal, state and local governments as well as universities and members of the private sector. The Strategic Planning effort involved two new groups of stakeholders that had not previously participated in state geospatial coordination efforts; private companies and universities.

Results of Coordination Practices:

The development of the State Strategic Plan provided an opportunity for new stakeholder groups to participate in state geospatial activities.

The outreach effort to state utility companies was the start of a long term effort to recognize private sector contributions to the state geospatial community. This initial outreach effort needs to be followed up with mutual data sharing agreements and other efforts at inclusion.

Next Steps:

Future of this Project

- 1) The state Strategic Plan will need to be updated regularly as circumstances change. The Louisiana GIS Council would be the conduit for scheduling annual meetings to decide on amendments to the original strategic planning document.
- 2) Outreach will need to be expanded with the new stakeholder groups to keep them engaged in state geospatial activities.
- 3) Formal agreements will need to be developed between utility companies and the state GIS Council, for data sharing and data coordination, especially in emergency situations.
- 4) The state needs to develop a Business Plan to identify specific steps that could be implemented to move the state Strategic Plan forward.

Need for Assistance

The state GIS Council would benefit by the example of other states, especially states with limited resources. Our state would benefit by reviewing the “Best Practices” of other states as they initiate their Strategic and Business plans.

Attachments

Louisiana Strategic Plan for GIS Development

Feedback on Cooperative Agreements Program

The CAP Program has been an effective tool for Louisiana in encouraging the state to complete the state strategic plan with input from a variety of stakeholders. The state has been the recipient of other CAP Grants that have allowed the state to develop training materials for metadata and other data standard workshops.

My only suggestion for improvement in the CAP Grant process is the possibility of multi-year grants. It can be difficult to get significant change in attitudes to occur in one year.