OFFICIAL MINUTES
OF THE
MISSISSIPPI COORDINATING COUNCIL FOR
REMOTE SENSING AND GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

AUGUST 2, 2005

PRESENT

Charles Chisolm, Chair, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
David Litchliter, Vice Chair, Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services
Robert Latham, Mississippi Emergency Management Agency
Clay Lewis (for Leland Speed), Mississippi Development Authority
David Shaw, Mississippi State University
Nick Wilson (for George Lewis), Mississippi Municipal League
Chuck Carr, Central Mississippi Planning and Development District
Joe Blount, Mississippi State Tax Commission
John Michael Simpson (for Larry L. "Butch" Brown), Mississippi Department of Transportation
Everard Baker, Mississippi Forestry Commission
Gene McGee, Mayor, City of Ridgeland
Andy Taggart, Madison County Board of Supervisors
Joel Yelverton, Mississippi Association of Supervisors
Jim Steil, Technical Users Group Chairman

ABSENT

Tommy Moffatt, Senator, Mississippi State Senate
Dannie Reed, Representative, Mississippi House of Representatives
Eric Clark, Secretary of State
Barbara Collier, Tax Assessors/Collectors Association
Rick Ericksen, Mississippi State Board of Registered Professional Geologists
George Phillips, Mississippi Department of Public Safety

    Chairman Charles Chisolm called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and welcomed those present. Mr. Chisolm requested that everyone introduce themselves. Since a quorum was present, Mr. Chisolm asked for a vote to approve the Council meeting minutes for December 2, 2004, and March 1, 2005. The minutes were approved.

    Chairman Chisolm announced that it was time to elect the chairman and vice chairman of the Council as required by law. Joel Yelverton nominated Mr. Chisolm to serve as chairman for another twelve months; this was seconded by Chuck Carr. Andy Taggart nominated David Litchliter to serve as vice chairman, which was seconded by David Shaw. The nominations were approved.

    John Rounsaville, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality's (MDEQ's) contact at the Governor's Office, was introduced by Mr. Chisolm. Mr. Rounsaville believes that remote sensing is very important in everything from economic development to security.

Craig Orgeron of Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services (ITS) updated the group on the Express Products List (EPL) development. The Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) contract is completed and covers the entire product line. The contract with Map Info is pending and completion is imminent. There are no negotiations with Intergraph on the master list. In a meeting on July 12, ESRI advised Tippah County on setting up their initial GIS project. On August 2, Jane Woosley of ITS hosted the second EPL User's Group meeting. One discussion point was how to get GIS workstations to those counties who do not have the funds, with a goal of getting hardware and software to them.

Cragin Knox presented information on planned and ongoing activities regarding the Council's interactive website. Renee' Murray of ITS gave a demonstration of this website, featuring the data acquisition coordination page linking to information about ongoing and planned projects. The web address is giscouncil.ms.gov. The website is undergoing final testing by ITS. On August 15, the product will be given to Mr. Knox for him to check before putting it on line.

Bud Douglas of the Mississippi Department of Human Services (DHS) presented the Geo-coding Committee report. The GIS WebFocus Application Interface that utilizes geocoding is now operational. The program uses the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA) standard. Two recommended solutions for keeping the data updated are base map and pilot project. Jim Steil commented that URISA will be having an addressing conference in Austin, Texas, and that people from MARIS will be attending.

The discussion on warehouse/clearinghouse development was led by Craig Orgeron and Jim Steil. The requirements phase, which involves talking to government entities at all levels, is ninety percent complete. So far, 160 requirements have been collected. These will be validated. The most important needs from the most people will be done first. The next step will be obtaining approval from the Technical Users Group and then developing a plan for the Request for Proposals (RFP). John Michael Simpson of the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) said a good example of the final product is Earth.Google.com, though the Mississippi layers would be at greater resolution.

David Litchliter informed the Council that the Enterprise for Innovative Geospatial Solutions (EIGS) is sponsoring a conference at the Marriott in Jackson on August 30 at no cost. GIS applications will be discussed. Those who are interested in attending may sign up on the website www.eigs.olemiss.edu/exchange.

MDEM Development/DFIRM Initiative was the next item on the agenda. Steve Champlin of MDEQ gave a powerpoint presentation on the Mississippi Flood Map Modernization Initiative (MFMMI) update. The total FEMA funding for FY2003-FY2005 is $6,989,000. Recently, FEMA approved additional funding of $79,000 through the Map Modernization Management Support (MMMS) program to pre-scope seventeen counties for FY2006. Bill McDonald of Mississippi Geographic Information, LLC, (MGI) gave the names of the various firms which compose MGI and what they do. They are Waggoner Engineering, Inc. – planning, scoping, engineering and Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRM) production; Watershed Concepts – engineering and DFIRM production; EarthData International – topographic data development; Dewberry and Davis – quality assurance, quality control, and post-processing; URS – engineering and DFIRM production; River Science – engineering; and AJA – pre-scoping and outreach. The preliminary DFIRM for Harrison and DeSoto Counties should be ready by September, 2005. Robin Hoban of EarthData International discussed LIDAR acquisition and timing. For example, they are planning now for the coming winter flights. Activities include planning meetings with stakeholders, flight plans, cost estimates, resource allocations, and scheduling.

John Michael Simpson of MDOT led the discussion on the digital orthoimagery project. MDOT has $1,000,000 that they want to use on digital orthoimagery, but it needs to be done now.

They want to work with the counties. Butch Brown approves of this if others contribute, too. A committee will meet soon to make a scope of services and find some participants. Then Council approval will be sought.

Joel Yelverton gave a report on activities of the Mississippi Association of Supervisors (MAS). At a recent MAS meeting on the coast, a panel discussion on GIS was held which heightened the level of understanding and interest. Interest was driven by the need for cadastral mapping for tax purposes, planning, and economic development. Tax Commission Rule 6 drives what counties must do for tax mapping. The Tax Commission also sets the schedule of when counties must be re-mapped. Mr. Yelverton suggested regionalizing the state in order to combine flights. Cragin Knox and Jim Steil met with the Tax Assessors and the Tax Commission. The Tax Assessors were asked to guide the GIS Council in cadastral mapping needs. Tax Rule 6 currently refers to aerial photography instead of digital photography. Counties need guidance, not mandates. Jim Steil added that when the counties go digital, they can still get a paper product map if they prefer.

Charles Chisolm told those present that beginning in 1995, Jimmy Palmer, a former executive director of MDEQ, started going to Washington, D.C., to try to get funding for MDEM. About two years ago, the GIS Council, MDEQ, and Mississippi State University coordinated in contacting Washington again. We are now seeing some results of this. Dr. Shaw said we should be able to get some federal funding in the next budget session.

Business plan development was presented by Craig Orgeron. A National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC) study identified that states need a sustainable funding source to support GIS activities. He suggested a subcommittee should be formed to explore this. He also suggested that the subcommittee should research funding models in leading states, analyze and document findings, create a realistic and attainable funding model, present findings to the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), and then the PAC should present their findings to the Council. When volunteers were requested to be on the subcommittee, Joel Yelverton volunteered. Mr. Chisolm said ITS will lead this endeavor under the auspices of the Council. This process will take many months, and something should be sent out to the entire group to solicit people.

Education and outreach efforts were reported by David Shaw. An inventory of training activities is being developed. We need to start internships and co-op opportunities to help the counties. Jim Steil told the members that the Geospatial Information and Technology Association (GITA) is planning to come to Mississippi to develop core competencies. GITA is a non-profit educational association for GIS professionals. David Litchliter said ITS has a good intern program with Mississippi State University.

Jim Steil gave a brief TUG report. The Mississippi Municipal League (MML) meets in August and TUG will be represented there. There will be a meeting on August 10 at Stennis Space Center. URISA addressing conference will be held in Austin, Texas. Any Council member is considered a NSGIC participant. The Gulf Coast Geospatial Conference will be in the fall.

Cragin Knox reported that since Phil Sullivan is now working in the private sector, we will need a new chairman and vice chairman for the PAC. Mr. Knox will send a letter to Mr. Sullivan from the Council thanking him for all he has done. Mr. Knox said he had talked with Rosemary Aultman, Mayor of Clinton, and she would be willing to serve as chairman for one year. He had also spoken with Jimmy Ladner, Hancock County Tax Assessor and Collector, who is willing to serve as vice chairman. Joel Yelverton nominated Ms. Aultman and Mr. Ladner, and David Shaw seconded the nomination. Gene McGee made the motion to approve these nominations and they were approved.

The next Council meeting will be held Tuesday, October 4, 2005, at 1:30 p.m. in the Commission Hearing Room of the MDEQ building at Southport Center. John Dorman of North Carolina may be a speaker at this meeting.

Chairman Chisolm adjourned the meeting at 4:10 p.m.