

GIS NEWS AND INFORMATION

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Editorial Note: This electronic bimonthly communication represents the first-ever attempt at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to organize news and information for our newly formed Geographic Information Systems (GIS) users group (GIS or Public Health users). Since the group was formed just two months ago with 27 staff, we now exceed 300 and represent many CDC and ATSDR programmatic interests. I want to welcome each of you. GIS is emerging as one of the most exciting developments in public health by providing new tools for surveillance, spatial statistical applications and analysis. GIS developments in public health are dynamic by all industry standards, even when compared with the older and more established GIS areas of geophysical sciences and urban and regional planning. Our purpose is to promote GIS understanding and development for our Public Health users through communication and connectivity e.g., networking. Hopefully, *GIS News and Information* will evolve into a timely and important avenue of communication and promote dialogue and exchange among our colleagues. Our real success with GIS will depend on how well we communicate with one another. Charles Croner, PhD, Editor

CDC and ATSDR GIS Conferences

1. The February 8-10, 1994, "GIS Applications in Public Health and Risk Analysis: An ATSDR Workshop" broke important GIS ground for all of us at CDC and ATSDR. Under the excellent guidance of **Henry Strickland**, Chair, this workshop provided a host of papers, posters, and panel discussions related to GIS applications on exposure assessment, risk assessment, and other timely Public Health themes. Incidentally, ATSDR staff are doing prolific GIS work and we will try to feature some of these efforts in the future. **GIS Users** may wish to contact Henry to obtain a copy of the abstracts (if still available) reproduced from the workshop.

2. The 1995 **CDC and ATSDR Symposium on Statistical Methods "Small Area Statistics in Public Health: Design, Analysis, Graphic and Spatial Methods"** will be held January 25-26 with a GIS Short Course offered on January 24. The Symposium theme is

extremely timely for all of us and one of the sessions is devoted to GIS. Three of the four presentations in the GIS session involve Carol Hanchette, a pioneer in GIS analysis. David Padgett has been working on lead exposures to minority populations for some time. There is no cost for the symposium or short course. For more information, please contact **Jay S. Smith**, Chair, or **Don Betts**, both of whom have provided excellent leadership for this symposium.

As one of the three instructors for the **GIS Short Course**, I helped design the course as an introduction to GIS since so many of our **GIS Users** have asked for something to start them on their GIS way. We will try to put GIS in a Public Health perspective with themes related to Census TIGER files, Census Summary Tape Files, issues of Census geography (e.g., Census tracts, ZIP codes, Block Groups and Blocks), GIS activities in DHHS, sources of georeferenced digital data outside of CDC and ATSDR, geocoding and address matching operations, confidentiality,

and selected topics on GIS spatial statistical operations. I think anyone who attends will gain a solid working knowledge of GIS, and its capabilities, and be better prepared (from a GIS perspective) to examine many of the small area presentations at the symposium. I hope we can achieve those goals...and to see you there.

GIS Users Inquire

Editorial Note: In this section, we will try to relay your GIS software, hardware, database and applications concerns to our readership. Remember, there is no need to recreate a solution if one exists. The collective problem solving potential of our **GIS Users** is far greater than any one of us. And the sharing of lessons learned is part of our purpose. Let's start out by our posting the question or concern and you responding directly to those who inquire. If you feel that your solution can generally apply to others, please feel free to "cc" your response to all of us. In time, we can identify subuser groups based on software specialty, type of analysis, or other variables, and connections can tighten.

1. Chuck, I cannot print APRO (AtlasPro) on our new printer HP Desk Jet 1200C. I cannot import data to AGISW (AtlasGIS Windows) without losing the leading zeros for several states. So I turned to MapInfo. It looks as if I

cannot move Alaska with county boundaries in it under California and Arizona. Can you find someone to help me? Please contact **Jay H. Kim**

2. **Sharunda Buchanan** and I are presenting a Tuesday morning Grand Rounds seminar (November 15th) on Heat-related mortality associated with the July 1993 heat wave in the counties that include the following cities: Philadelphia, PA, Wilmington, DE, Newark, NJ, and Baltimore, MD. One factor that may be different between these cities is population density or building density or type of building structures in the cities. (Editor: can someone with TIGER and STF databases talk with Sherri about a strategy she might employ? Others working on heat-related mortality may also wish to contact Sherri) Please contact **Sherrilyn H.D. Wainwright**

Editor: I will be absent for several weeks but look forward to hearing from readers. I thank each of you for your continued encouragement and support for this startup initiative. I hope, in time, the user group and *GIS News and Information* will include the many multidisciplinary interest groups and professionals who have a stake in GIS and public health.