

January 10, 2008

Dear PaMAGIC Members and Friends:

So much is happening in the realm of geospatial technologies! Thanks to all those who have been a part of improving the state of GIS in the Commonwealth. With your efforts, Pennsylvania continues to move forward, but the vision is great and much work remains to be done.

There are many exciting and valuable projects going on right now, and the Board hopes to continue to pursue the PaMAGIC Vision: "The Citizens of Pennsylvania will have a coordinated, flexible, and integrated geographical information infrastructure **to support better decision making and more efficient use of limited resources.**" The last part of the Vision Statement prompted one of our major goals for this year. This goal is to promote data sharing and understand the role of data standards in data sharing in what we're calling a Standards Testbed Study. The following projects will be included in this study:

- PaMAP Vector Demonstration Project
- Federated GIS
- Greene County Data Portal
- North Central Road Vector Conflation
- Commonwealth Geospatial Enterprise Server Architecture
- NW PA Roads/Addresses Conflation
- DVRPC road centerline

Each of these projects is testing the ability to combine and use data that originates from various sources. It is our goal to better understand how these projects function, what it is that makes them successful, or not, whether the projects require standardization and what the end goal is that makes the project worthwhile to pursue. We hope to collect this information, measure and consolidate it, and inform the geospatial community of our results. The questions we asked ourselves were, how can we collectively use our resources more efficiently, and can we help coordinate similar efforts undertaken by different projects? With more limited funds, less time and fewer resources, we believe that efficiency is one of the major keys to moving ahead.

The results of this study will be reported at the PaGIS Conference in May, 2008. We will be conducting a panel discussion, actively involving the project participants to report our findings. The Board is anxious to learn more about these projects and understand just what it is about each of them that interests and benefits the project participants and communities they represent.

The 2007 InfoSwap was yet another success and great fun! Thanks to all who participated, and an even bigger thanks goes out to all those who helped sponsor the InfoSwap. Without everyone's support, its success would not have been possible.

With our target for this year being the Standards Testbed Study, we have also supported three additional initiatives. The first is the **FEMA Map Modernization** (or Map Mod) **Program**. Our goal has been to find out what we as PaMAGIC can do to better support FEMA in creating more accurate flood maps and to ensure improved, long-term floodplain management across Pennsylvania. PaMAGIC has been diligent in pursuing the formation of a Pennsylvania State Floodplain Management group, and it has successfully engaged the involvement of local, state (DCED) and federal (FEMA) personnel. The Map Mod Advisory Team has played an active role in this process. Produced by the PaMAP program, state-wide LiDAR data will be completed in 2008, and this will be extremely beneficial to the efforts of the Map Mod program. Work remains to be done for the complete formation of this floodplain group, but the future looks bright as many people from varied backgrounds have given much interest, time, and effort into supporting this program.

Keeping tabs on **Legislation** is another initiative for PaMAGIC this year. It has been our goal to keep folks informed and to encourage involvement in the legislative process. As many of you know, HB 1304, regarding the creation of a geospatial coordinating council, took the spotlight this year. A Public Hearing on HB 1304 was held on August 29th at the State Capitol building. That was followed by a Geospatial Policy Symposium held on October 4th. This Symposium served as a forum to address funding and public policy issues related to geospatial technologies and statewide mapping as well as matters surrounding the creation of a coordinating council. For more information on GIS related legislation, please check out our website.

Communications is the third initiative that we continually strive to improve upon. With use of the Yahoo Group and the PaMAGIC website (www.pamagic.org), we have put more effort into effectively communicating issues, events, job postings, and other geospatial activities going on in the Commonwealth. The Yahoo Group is not limited to PaMAGIC members, and we encourage those who are already signed up to post pertinent and important information related to GIS. It has been a helpful way for folks to serve information in an easy and timely fashion. If you are interested in signing up, please go to: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PaMAGIC/>.

In addition, we have initiated what we call 'community surveys' on various topics to try to engage more people in some of the major issues involving geospatial technologies. The first survey was related to HB 1304 and was then followed by a survey on data sharing. It is our goal to compile the results and share them back with the GIS community. The surveys and results were sent out through the Yahoo Group and are also posted on the PaMAGIC website under PaMAGIC Initiatives. We are always seeking feedback and encourage everyone to participate.

In the next several weeks, the PaMAGIC Board will be soliciting nominations for the 2008 elections at the PaGIS Conference. You will also receive a 2008 membership renewal form with the annual dues remaining steady at \$30. My term with the Board will expire this year, but serving as a Board member has given me vast exposure to many ideas and issues regarding GIS, and from that, I have learned a great deal. In addition, I have had the opportunity to meet and interact with many knowledgeable people from various disciplines and backgrounds. That has had a positive influence on my day to day employment in GIS as well as on my understanding of geospatial technologies at a broader level.

I again want to thank everyone who has given time and energy to PaMAGIC this year and in years past. We simply cannot operate without your involvement, and as long as you choose to stay involved, we will work hard to give you a voice. The PaMAGIC Board represents you, and it is our hope that you will actively participate and provide feedback in the areas that matter most to you. It has been a true pleasure to work with this Board and the many volunteers who have given their time, energy, and talents.

Thanks.



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President 2007-2008

2007-2008 PaMAGIC Board

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