Federal Geographic Data Committee Cooperative Agreements Program 2007 Final Report – Missouri September 29, 2008

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301 West High, Room 280

P.O. Box 809

Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

Project Leaders: Tim Haithcoat, Missouri Geographic Information Officer

(573) 522-1650 or (573) 882-2324

Tim.Haithcoat@oa.mo.gov or HaithcoatT@missouri.edu

Pam Kelrick, GIS Coordinator, GIS Consortium

(660) 665-0408 gisc@cableone.net

Collaborating Organizations:

Dan Ross State of Missouri, Chief Information Officer

(573) 526-7746 <u>Dan.Ross@oa.mo.gov</u>

Rachel Anderson (Financial) State of Missouri, Fiscal and Administrative Manager

(573) 526-3863 Rachel.Anderson@oa.mo.gov

Pam Kelrick GIS Coordinator, GIS Consortium

(660) 665-0408 gisc@cableone.net

Mark DuewellProgram Director, MSDIS(573) 882-1404duewellm@missouri.edu

Steve Marsh MGISAC Chair

(816) 881-4584 <u>marsste@gw.co.jackson.mo.us</u>

Project Narrative:

PROJECT STATUS SUMMARY

The two primary objectives for this project included: 1) development of strategic and business plans; and 2) outreach and education to promote the plan and distribute a local 'How To' guide for geospatial development. While the general ideas inherent within these objectives remain, the activities to achieve those objectives were changed from the original project agenda. Those changes were primarily a reflection of a change in the grant principle investigator, Missouri's GIO, Timothy L. Haithcoat. The strategy reflects a 'stakeholder-first' approach. Eight regional meetings (rather than 3 central state meetings), scheduled across the state, informed the creation of the strategic and business plans. Second, the 'How To' guide became a reflection of the needs identified during these eight regional meetings.

All 8 regional planning meetings were very successfully held around the state. The final meeting took place on April 10th to wrap up the Strategic Planning process. There were many tangible successes from all of the planning meetings.

First, the regional meetings were a constructive listening and feedback opportunity to get a clear understanding of local government obstacles and needs.

Second, all of the meetings concluded with conversations about how to continue organizing and reinforcing needs and opportunities.

Third, we began a conversation between these regions in the state by showing the results of pre-meeting and post-meeting survey results to participants. These surveys show priorities and opinions in the regions for database development, funding, resource needs, and administrative support.

Fourth, we have built an on-going database of local contacts and champions for future reference and collaboration.

Fifth, we have created new alliances and solidified old relationships with statewide professional associations such as the Missouri Society of Professional Surveyors, Missouri Mappers Association, and the Missouri Assessors Association. This network is critical to achieve broad stakeholder buy-in and support for Missouri Spatial Data Infrastructure (MoSDI) initiatives.

Finally, the meetings provided local participants a forum for networking among themselves, in some cases for the first time.

The information and working relationships built during this process have been, and will continue to be, a rich contribution to our strategic and business plans, and most importantly an on-going measure of success and feedback. These meetings have also served the stakeholder groups as they learn about services, resources and opportunities available for them to start or improve their GIS program.

The focus of the 'How To' guide document evolved over time to respond to some of the issues, needs, and requirements that arose in the regional meetings. The document incorporates more information about decision-making, consortium building, funding, policy, program management, contracting and standards, and data stewardship while minimizing technical details. The regional meetings seemed to indicate that more tangible outreach and education needed to occur for decision-makers, not so much for people who were already technologically literate. This guide will be specifically helpful for local governments in Missouri, but many principles will be applicable in other states. Missouri has discussed the prospect of adapting it for other states through the development of a Rural GIS Summit being pursued in association with Iowa. The guide will continue to evolve as we anticipate adoption of more standards and legislation affecting GIT implementation in the near future.

To date the sum of our successes are a product of the number and range of people who have, and continue to, participate in this process. A total of 133 people participated in the regional meetings from many sectors, including private, government, non-profit, state associations, academic and volunteer organizations. As well, we had 91 people fill out a 10-question Strategic Planning survey for use in the Strategic Planning process. Both 'regular supporters' and new contributors have engaged in this process with time, resources, lively discussion, and passion. The revised implementation strategy complements the current needs of our state geospatial development programs better than the original proposal. In addition, the process has been a unique opportunity for the people already working within the Missouri GIT community to have evidence to guide better coordinated planning and outreach. In the past, our efforts have been more piece-meal and reactionary.

Many challenges have been overcome for the successful execution of the 50 States Initiative activities. The GIO position within the State was in transition during the early start-up period for the contract. It was finalized in mid-October 2007 and a new GIO reworked the Strategic Planning process through regionalization. This caused many delays for the implementation of contracts associated with the 50 States Initiative. As soon as the contracts were in place the implementation process proceeded smoothly. We are fortunate to have a relatively good structure in place (largely due to the Missouri Spatial Data Information Service) for this coordination and implementation, but in order to move forward we needed to develop relationships with a still broader range of practitioners. The most effective practice for the grant was the mindset and approach that the process of building relationships was just as important as the grant products for long-term benefit. The process of engaging such a broad and deep stakeholder group will perpetuate measurable success beyond the timeframe of the strategic and business plans. This grant has given us the opportunity to begin and engage that conversation successfully.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND NEXT STEPS

A number of specific successes have been noted previously in this report, but key overall accomplishments were also achieved – beyond original expectations. **Communication and coordination** among existing, new and anticipated GIT participants has been greatly accelerated due to the outreach and on-going dedication to the newly formed relationships. **Sharable documentation** (i.e. strategic and business plans) of thoughtful, justifiable and supportable statewide goals can be distributed among all stakeholder groups. **Evidence-based planning**, as a result of the regional meeting surveys, has created a direct and on-going connection with critical stakeholders, Missouri's local governments. In addition, the evidence provided clear priorities for the local government 'How To' guide. The **scale of success** has been established with clear and measurable goals. These key accomplishments represent success not only for the grant process, but most importantly on-going success for our state coordinating groups.

The success of our planning process supports our confidence to proceed through our next steps. The strategic and business plans will be implemented in phases by all of the state coordinating groups. Legislative, emergency management and funding mechanism activities will be more informed because of the documentation from this process. Communication and coordination is growing and evolving with two immediate efforts, distribution of the local government 'How To' guide and the 'Rural GIS Summit' (the RGS is designed to be an outreach/educational event for

isolated and rural communities struggling to develop a GIS). Both the 'How To' guide and the Summit may also spread to neighboring regions or states. Finally, we intend to continue development and refinement of the Missouri Spatial Data Infrastructure (MoSDI), a portal for the NSDI, emergency management agencies and other data users.

FEEDBACK ON THE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS PROGRAM

- As previously mentioned, the 50 States Initiative CAP Program was an ideal opportunity for Missouri and the outcomes will be long-lasting for all of our stakeholder groups, not just the coordinating groups.
- O Understandably the CAP program must require product deliverables, but a stronger emphasis on the goals of the plan development process would increase the efficacy of the outcomes. One example could be to request that grant submissions address how the process of developing the strategic plan will support implementation.