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Project Title: Idaho Geospatial Enterprise Strategic and Business Plans Development
Final report

Organization: State of Idaho, Dept of Administration, Office of the CIO, Idaho Geospatial Office, <http://gis.idaho.gov> and <http://cio.idaho.gov>

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Executive Summary

The Idaho GIS community now has a unified vision for its spatial data infrastructure with well-crafted Strategic and Business Plans. We also have an executive summary in the form of a presentation which can be tuned to a variety of audiences and a brochure for quick introduction to the ISDI initiative. In the course of the project, the statewide community developed closer ties and has a greater awareness of how we are connected and interdependent. An equally important result has been gaining the attention, understanding and support of key decision-makers that are vital to our success. We have also enlisted the partnership of related communities, such as surveyors and assessors.

Project Narrative

A major goal of this project was to generate a unified vision among GIS professionals statewide and, in doing so, draw our community closer together. Another goal was to identify an overall strategy and the initiatives required to realize the vision. We achieved both goals, as well as others, such as cultivating relationships with decision-makers and leveraging existing capabilities.

Summary of Project Activities

With the help of an Executive Steering Committee and after recruiting six regional coordinators, we held six stakeholder meetings around Idaho to collect input for the strategic plan (vision, mission, goals, current status, issues, needs and solutions). We also held an Executive Session for input from executives and senior officials. While comment periods were running, work began on the Business Plan. Both plans went through several iterations, and we convened another Executive Session, as well as a brainstorming session with a self-selected group of GIS professionals. The idea of soliciting endorsements arose from the brainstorming session. Thereafter, we began soliciting endorsements of the Strategic and Business Plan from a variety of organizations. Presentations of the strategic and business plans were made at meetings of the Idaho Geospatial Committee and the Idaho Technology Resource Management Council for approval. In addition, I presented the Strategic Plan at the NSGIC 2008 annual meeting, at the Idaho Geospatial Forum, at GIS Day in Pocatello, at regional GIS group meetings, and at the 2008 NW GIS Users Conference. We developed an executive summary of the plans in the form of a presentation designed for use by different presenters and for different audiences. The plans were formally approved on February 25, 2009. Shortly thereafter, copies of the plans were printed, a logo was

developed, and tri-fold brochure was produced. A gathering was held to close the project and distribute copies of the plan.

Key Accomplishments to Date

In Idaho, we now enjoy a collaborative GIS community network focused towards a common goal. All stakeholder groups have shaped the plans, people have renewed and increased their participation, and new people and organizations have joined the effort. The collaborative approach has attracted new talent and ideas, which have generated momentum and attracted more talent and energy.

Statewide coordination has been strengthened as a natural consequence of engaging the community in the strategic planning process. In addition, the Business Plan calls for a maturation of governance, which will bring more people and organizations into the decision-making process. The Business Plan also calls for establishing regional resource centers which will help connect local activities and coordination with statewide coordination and facilitate interaction among regional efforts that are currently operating independently. Statewide coordination has already attracted investment for Framework development, which energizes participants and generates additional momentum.

Recruiting regional stakeholder meeting coordinators proved invaluable in identifying and reaching out to community members unknown at the state level. Holding a series of meetings in various locations with a disinterested facilitator was well received and established a professional tone lacking in a previous effort. Bringing executives and senior officials together for their input and support proved to be critical to success. We maintain those relationships, and they continue to provide support, insight and act as champions. Allowing ample opportunity for comment and input kept the community engaged during the entire project period.

Next Steps

The results of the project will remain valuable and viable by working our Business Plan. That plan lays out four phases over five years to realize Idaho's Spatial Data Infrastructure (ISDI). To help manage the ISDI initiative and all its projects, our contractor created a MS Project file with custom views. The first phase includes these initiatives, among others:

- Transition current IGC to Idaho Geospatial Council with Executive Committee
- Augment coordination resources
- Establish policy for Framework data standards and template
- Confirm Framework themes and datasets
- Develop and approve Framework standards
- Seek base state funding
- Improve and mature INSIDE Idaho clearinghouse and portal services
- Evaluate and build support for recording fee legislation to support Cadastral Framework
- Prepare Communications and Promotion Plan

Several of these initiatives are already moving forward. I have requested and received executive and legislative support to add a Framework Coordinator to the Idaho Geospatial Office. That person will focus on the Framework initiatives, while I concentrate on the legal, political, outreach, and organizational initiatives. Not all Framework themes are active in Idaho; however, active themes each have Framework theme and dataset leaders guided and supported by me at the Idaho Geospatial Office. Each leader is moving their theme forward. This growing network will develop into a Framework leadership group providing mutual support, enhanced coordination and vertical stewardship issue resolution.

Our biggest need is stable funding. I have recently received our Governor's support for pursuing recording fee legislation. If successful, that would help Cadastral Framework beginning July 2011 at the earliest. Core state funding is required but unlikely to occur in the near term. Given this likelihood, we need assistance to implement ISDI initiatives without significant monetary infusions from state sources for the next two years. Of particular concern are furthering those initiatives relating to supporting regional activities to assure alignment with ISDI and to make progress toward more equitable capability and benefits throughout Idaho, which is one of our goals. We could also use assistance to facilitate a statewide conversation resolving data sharing issues to achieve some Framework datasets.

While we are working on long-term funding streams, we need support for sustaining communications, supporting in-person regional work sessions on a regular basis, and seed funding for organizing and establishing regional resource centers. For data sharing, we need resources for legal services, meetings, facilitation, and the ability to offer "carrots" in return for data. We need assistance designing and implementing a distributed enterprise approach for our technical infrastructure. Other types of assistance we will need are current, successful models for some Phase 1 and 2 initiatives, funding for pilot projects related to Framework and stewardship, funds to develop a communications and promotion plan, funds for facilitator/expert to assist in reaching consensus on difficult issues, and funds to support leadership meetings and statewide and regional meetings (virtual or in-person). Ultimately, we all need an accounting method for tracking benefits.

Attachments

Final Strategic and Business Plans
Executive Summary presentation
ISDI brochure

Feedback on Cooperative Agreements Program

What are the CAP Program strengths and weaknesses? Overall, the program is excellent and has all the requisite ingredients for success. A one-year time period may be too short for some projects.

Where does it make a difference? Brings national goals and concepts into concrete, achievable plans and actions; facilitates statewide conversation and jump-starts collaborative action

Was the assistance you received sufficient or effective? Yes, on both counts

What would you recommend that the FGDC do differently? This program does a terrific job of

matching opportunity to the need. There's nothing I would change based on my first experience. The biggest challenge is tuning the funding categories as we make progress but also allowing for latecomers/returnees that are lagging behind the curve.

Are there factors that are missing or additional needs that should be considered? Not that I'm aware of.

Are there program management concerns that need to be addressed, such as the time frame? As mentioned above, sometimes one year is insufficient to get a body of work accomplished. However, the ability to request an extension can accommodate this somewhat.

If you were to do this again, what would you do differently? Our project was successful. I can only hope to have similar experiences in the future. More specifically, I learned from reviewing applications in the 2009 cycle that I don't need to be so precise about in-kind labor rates on the CAP application. This will save time and make it easier to put an application and budget together. I also learned that planning a project close event on sunny Friday afternoon at the beginning of spring break is unlikely to garner good attendance.