On the Technology Front: Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Symposium

P eriodically, everyone wonders “how did we ever do without…”? People have made that statement about the internet, cable TV, cell phones, 2 car families and an ever-growing list of items. For the planning business, one of those new additions has been Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Being a business concerned with understanding the travel patterns in our cities, and creating solutions to make them more efficient, understanding and explaining trends is vital. Consequently, geospatial tools have become a major component of planning for all MPOs and State DOTs.

Several points about GIS are difficult to quantify but are at the core of the importance of GIS. There is an ever growing list of items. For the planning business, one of those new additions has been Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Being a business concerned with understanding the travel patterns in our cities, and creating solutions to make them more efficient, understanding and explaining trends is vital. Consequently, geospatial tools have become a major component of planning for all MPOs and State DOTs.

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Before you visit, we encourage you to read more about this vital resource. AMPO and The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) are working together to provide a forum for sharing the best geospatial practices of these agencies in achieving transportation goals and a method of disseminating technology changes to the MPOs.

The GIS Symposium is currently under development. Why not submit a presentation abstract about your latest accomplishments to the Planning Committee at http://www.gis-postal.com.

For more information, check out the Symposium web site at www.amp.org. From the website you can find the pre-Symposium educational workshops, technical tours, view the Preliminary Program in January or get included on a latter with latest up-to-date conference announcements. The Symposium aims to focus our knowledge of GIS. Presentations and papers from past sessions are accessible on the web site.
Survey Says
AMPO Research Supports Increased PL Funding

Since the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) enacted by Congress in 1991, MPOs have seen increases in responsibilities on numerous fronts without additional dollars to support these new activities. Each dollar of increased metropolitan planning funds spent in FY92 had to support 80% more programs than each dollar spent in the first year of ISTEA. In addition, MPOs will likely be asked in a product of the 2000 census and many of these will be small MPOs, which have been historically underfunded.

The first area causing stress in funds for MPOs is in a key position to customize such technology by phone. What works well in one region may not work well in another, which is why the MPO is in a key position to customize such technology to its neighbor’s needs.

To address the funding issue, AMPO and its MPOs are making advances in metropolitan planning and project planning. The two major areas of increasing responsibility are security issues in the post-9/11 world, and additional Management and Operations (M&O) tasks. In the security area, MPOs indicated that they see a growing role for their involvement in traffic modeling for evacuation plans, airport facility planning, emergency preparedness, statewide assessments of critical assets and vulnerable facilities, and coordination with E-911 services which need to be addressed after 9/11.