

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Information and Technology for Economic Development

Albany, NY - The New York State Center for Technology in Government (CTG) today released a report showing how sharing geographic information can aid economic development in New York State. The research center, located at the University at Albany, developed a prototype geographic information clearinghouse that runs on the Internet and is available to any public or private user. CTG also developed a framework for future coordination of geographic information resources.

Geographic information has become vital to human services, environmental conservation, and business ventures throughout the country. For example, computerized GISs are used by emergency 911 services to locate accident victims and others who need immediate care. They can also be key in industrial development by providing layers of complex information, such as existing infrastructure, demographics, and natural resources to help a business decide where to locate a new factory or retail building.

The CTG and its corporate partners developed the prototype New York State Spatial Data Clearinghouse to show how the exchange of geographic data within the GIS community can be accomplished easily. The Clearinghouse primarily contains "meta data," that is, information about information that is located in various organizations around the State. Contributors (who own the electronic maps and spatial data) describe what they have in a standard way so that those seeking information can identify and retrieve or request what they need.

The report, titled *Sharing the Costs, Sharing the Benefits*, illustrates how essential geographic information is to many government and business functions. It also shows how coordinated efforts can save money for New York taxpayers. Experts estimate that up to 80% of the cost of a GIS is expended on data collection and creation, and the CTG project examined ways to reduce these costs by sharing expensive information that already exists.

The project itself was a model of collaboration. CTG, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, the State Archives and Records Administration, and the NYS Forum for Information Resource Management all worked on the project. The University at Buffalo's National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis participated as well as faculty and students from the University at Albany. More than 400 experts contributed ideas and their own collected data to the effort.

The project also contributed to the work of the NYS Temporary GIS Council by forging new working relationships among state, local, federal, and private organizations. These relationships, along with the project results, have helped Council members understand the issues and the opportunities for GIS coordination in New York State. Sharon Dawes, CTG Director, said that the project demonstrated the wide-ranging value of this technology and the critical importance of information sharing for a wide variety of public and private initiatives.

The Center for Technology in Government, an **Innovations in American Government** award winner, forms strategic partnerships with government agencies, technology corporations, and university faculty and students. Three dozen high tech companies, more than thirty government agencies, and a dozen academic researchers have participated in Center projects since its inception in 1993. Its mission is to solve problems related to public services through the use of information technology in state and local government.