Examples of successful GIS Day events from a range of organizations

Whether you are a seasoned event host or new to hosting an event, these success stories will provide you with ideas and inspiration for your next event. This document includes abridged success stories from 2011/2010. The examples cover a range of organizations; domestic and international, that held GIS Day events of varying sizes and audience type. If you need additional suggestions, or have questions, please email us: gisday@esri.com

University of Florida/IFAS Osceola County Extension

University of Florida/IFAS Osceola County Extension Services and Osceola County GIS Studio organized a GIS Day activity in Kissimmee, FL. Ten (10) exhibits, twenty-one (21) exhibitors and approximately seventy-four (74) total attendees visited the map gallery and outdoor educational displays. GIS practitioners networked, the public interacted with government and businesses that use GIS and viewed maps designed to help solve local problems related to voter redistricting, property purchases, road work, flood planning, community planning, parks planning, water management and more. A 4-H Geo TEAM family had a great time helping visitors learn to use GPS units to geocache nearby.

Forsyth County, GA

Forsyth County hosted local Home School Students for a GIS Educational Event. Our program introduced students to GIS and how it relates to geography, and then individual presenters explained to students how GIS is being used in Forsyth County. The students enjoyed learning about how GIS helps solve problems and answer questions in their county. Favorite topics included how Sawnee EMC responds to and plans for power outages caused by ants and squirrels, how the FCFD uses GIS to make sure everyone in the county is within five road miles of a fire station, how the USACE can track every mile of shoreline and boat dock impact, and how the planning department uses GIS for short-term (new Cracker Barrel – yeah!) to long-term (more parks and green space – double yeah!) planning.

Ajman municipality & planning department (UAE)

We held the event in our GIS Center where we invited senior school students to get involved with the daily GIS tasks through workshops. The aim was to give them not only an awareness lecture about GIS but to convince them that GIS can be found everywhere and they can consider it as a major in their college life. The success about our GIS Day event spread through the country via the newspapers and other media. Everyone was happy with the event. Special thanks to GISTEC who participated with us in this event.

McLean County Regional Planning Commission (Illinois)

McGIS presented at Illinois State University (ISU) and Heartland Community College to GIS classes on GIS Day. Several other offsite visits continue or are scheduled to audiences from the general public, academic institutions, realtors, appraisers, assessors, engineering/surveying firms, and/or not-for-profits until early 2012.

Informi GIS (Distributor- Denmark)

52 students, ages 12-14, registered graffiti in their local area using Juno GPS units and then analyzed the results via maps on ArcGIS Online. We started the day with a short introduction to GIS and how and why geography matters - outside the classroom too. Then the students took to the streets with maps that showed what area they had to cover.

By accessing the ArcGIS Mobile app Informi GIS built for the occasion on their GPS units, they registered graffiti in their local area. First they selected whether a piece of graffiti was a tag (like a signature), a piece (larger picture/painting), or a mix of both, then documented it with a picture, wrote in any comments - was it nice or ugly, was it on a utility control cabinet, lamp post, and so on, and finally selected the position. All the registrations from the different groups were then collected and shared on ArcGIS Online. In total the students collected more than 140 registrations of graffiti in their local area.

"A project like this primarily involves geography but the students also learn how to handle IT. And by working on this they also play an active part in society. They learn more about being a 'good citizen' and might end up helping the municipality save some money by giving them the knowledge of where the graffiti is exactly," says Geography teacher and GIS Day responsible at Munkegårdsskolen, David Agerbæk Jeppesen.

City of Oceanside (California)

To celebrate GIS Day, the Water Utilities Department of City of Oceanside, California, held a GIS Map/Poster Gallery and demonstration in the City Hall lobby on November 16-17, 2011. This event was for the City of Oceanside community as well as its employees. The event was extended to Thursday to showcase the GIS Map/Poster Gallery to more people, including those who came to the weekly Oceanside Farmers' Market. The educational posters on GIS and some maps, including the City of Oceanside Emergency Evacuation map and the map of watersheds, were displayed in the City Hall.

GIS Professional

This year I thought I would talk to the Geography classes at Citrus Valley High School (CVHS) about GPS-- how it works and how it is used--and have the students get some hands-on experience in using a GPS unit. I used a highly accurate GPS unit to walk around the CVHS campus and marked the coordinates of 25 different spots around the campus. I then printed out a map of the campus, and on the back side I printed six random coordinates from my list, along with a number.

In my talks, I took around 30 minutes talking about how GPS works, after which I formed the students into teams, each with a map and a GPS unit. The students then walked around the campus trying to find each coordinate. When they found one, they were to mark the coordinate number on the map. When they returned to the classroom, they could compare their results to a display I had made of the campus with all 25 points marked on it.

After the students returned to the classroom, I then spent around 30 minutes explaining the issues in converting a round globe to a flat map on paper, and why there are so many different ways to do it. The students learned about SADD (maps distort at least one of Shape, Area, Distance, or Direction).

The last part of each class was the most fun. Using the Geography Facts DVD-I divided each class into two teams. A team got a point each time one of their members was the first to shout out the correct answer to a question. I also threw out candy to each student with the first correct answer. At the end of the game (and the class), the captain of the winning team was awarded a GIS Day T-shirt.

Laramie County Community College (Wyoming)

Representatives from the National Weather Service, USGS, the Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities, Cheyenne Metropolitan Planning Organization, and other members of the local GIS Co-op talked with visitors, presented map displays, demonstrated technology, and shared other geography and GIS information related to their work. We had several students, faculty, staff, and members of the general public stop by and see what we were up to. This was a great opportunity for students to network with the local GIS workforce as well as a recruiting venue for our Geosciences Dept. here at LCCC

Eotvos Lorand University (Hungary)

This year the Department of Cartography and Geoinformatics of Eotvos Lorand University celebrated GIS Day with the participation of 35 children from grades 5 to 8 of the Remetekertvarosi Elementary School of Budapest. The event was divided into three parts: Multimedia presentations about GIS, Cartography, map-based web games, and GPS; Geocaching activity; visit to the Collection of Globes at the Department. An exhibition of Maps made by Hungarian children was also organized.

West Hall High School/Georgia Power Company

GIS professionals from Georgia Power Company representing Economic Development, Distribution, Environmental Affairs, Transmission, and Land business units and Zac Miller and Alex Clark of Gainesville State College, spent the morning talking to students West Hall High School in Oakwood, Georgia in the school's main hallway and visiting classrooms to talk about GIS, the use of GIS technology in the company, GIS careers and opportunities, and also what kind of GIS opportunities are available at Georgia Power and Southern Company and education opportunities at Gainesville State College. The GIS professionals also put up a map gallery for the students to view and discuss. During the main event, the School Principal, Dr. Gregory Williams congratulated and awarded prizes to four student groups in the presence of more than 100 students. Each winning group also presented their maps to the audience. After the awarding, Dr. Williams was tasked to cut the GIS Day cake decorated with an aerial map of West Hall High School which the students and the visitors enjoyed delightfully.

The event was a huge success in getting young students to be aware of GIS technology and careers and how GIS helps in making communities a better place to live in. It also promoted Georgia Power as a citizen of the community by encouraging and supporting employees partnering with local teachers in educating students with the benefits of using technology.