

January 3, 2006

PaMAGIC Members and Friends:

2005 has brought before us new challenges and opportunities for the GIS community. I would like to thank every member and friend of PAMAGIC that has taken the time to share their suggestions and ideas to help us reach our goals. Many of you have donated your time and energy toward a coordinated and cooperative statewide GIS network and I wanted to acknowledge the efforts you have put forth. I would like to take this opportunity to lay out the activities we have focused on during 2005 and what we are looking to accomplish in 2006.

The PA GIS Conference of 2005 initiated another active discussion around the topic of possible legislation regarding state level GIS operations and the formation of a GIS council formed by statute. PAMAGIC participated in discussions with LORL and the Executive Directors of the House Intergovernmental Affairs Committee. In November, PAMAGIC hosted a legislative workshop for members of the community to interact and discuss the strawman legislation. The attendance and input during that meeting was very positive. From the input provided, PAMAGIC formed an official response to provide insight into what the community would like to see happen. We look forward to continuing the process with LORL and the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee. Our website at www.pamagic.org contains the May strawman legislation along with comments and background on the formation of a state GIS Council. Look for a modified bill this Spring.

The continued effort to update and maintain PGDSS is another topic from 2005. In early August of 2005, we released PGDSS version 2.0 . Both the PAMAP program and the PEMA Wireless 9-1-1 Plans cite the PGDSS as important to their programs' success. During 2006, we plan to make individual layers more compatible with each other and add a new layer, Additional Transportation, to the document. I would like to thank Barry Hutchins of Lycoming County for agreeing to take on this layer. I would also like to send a special thank you to all of the subject matter experts and editors who helped bring this document to life. We have a short time frame for this year's changes and additions, therefore will be requesting community input in a few months and will need it in a timely manner. We are looking to all of you to help us meet our deadline.

In continuing with our effort to aid coordination and planning efforts in Pennsylvania, PaMAGIC has taken initiative in planning of FEMA Map Modernization efforts. The board has been working with BGT and DCED toward utilizing available grant money to produce a plan for the Commonwealth. Spring workshops will explore our alternatives in taking better advantage of this national program. If you are interested in participating, please contact any board member for more information.

Communications within the GIS Community is the other focus of PaMAGIC. After many years of Kathryn Reed's "PaMAGIC News" emails, some issues with individual email servers or services have made it necessary to find other avenues for communications. The board has decided that enrolling PaMAGIC in Yahoo! Groups would be the easiest way to eliminate these issues. Please take the time to visit that web site, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PaMAGIC>, and enroll yourself as a member. Take a few minutes to look around to see the options that are now available for communicating your thoughts and ideas. One note, please be aware that use of the service is governed by their terms, <http://docs.yahoo.com/info/terms/>.

During 2005, PAMAGIC continued the tradition of hosting the Info Swap during the annual PA GIS Conference where we welcomed in new board members and thanked those who ended their terms as board members. The personal relationships within the GIS community are as important as technical and policy decisions we must make, and PAMAGIC plans to continue the Info Swap during the 2006 conference. I would like to thank all the sponsors whose donations make this event possible each year.

In the next few months we will be sending out a request for nominations for new board members. Please take this time to consider any candidates you may wish to see on next year's board. This Spring we will be saying goodbye to Eric Jespersen, Kirk Brethauer (serving a one year term that finishes Tom Bresenhan's term), and myself. Additional information will be included in a future email regarding the nominations process.

As a final thought, I would like to take a moment to offer my sincere thanks to the members of the board and their sponsors, who have worked diligently to meet deadlines. I would also like to thank all our sponsors, who support our activities and the Info Swap every year. Finally, I would like to thank our members who help provide insight to all areas of our GIS community. I would like to encourage all members to take an active part in as many activities as possible, and send my sincere thanks to all of you who have participated thus far.

If there are any comments or concerns, please feel free to contact me directly or contact any board member. I look forward to seeing you at the Spring conference.

Saskia Cohick
President