

**A Homeland Security Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
Strategy:
Providing responders with a multi-jurisdictional view
when an emergency hits
Southwest Homeland Security Regional Council**

This regional GIS (geographic information system) effort is part of a larger strategy to coordinate GIS efforts across the state. The catalyst for this project was the formation of Incident Management Teams in each of the Homeland Security Regions. The goal is to create a critical information network about infrastructure, assets and key populations that will provide first responders and policymakers with information needed to make timely responses in the event of a terrorist threat or response.

The Southwest Homeland Security Regional Council is the third of the regional councils to provide funding for this effort. It is anticipated that this will be a multi-year effort with year one focused on planning and initial implementation.

Year 1: Planning Efforts

The goal of these planning efforts is to delineate the status of current GIS efforts in the 18 counties within the Southwest Homeland Security region so future implementation efforts can work to ensure that critical data will be available when a disaster strikes that requires outside response or crosses governmental jurisdictions. These planning efforts include:

- 1) **Inventory current GIS efforts** including data, personnel and equipment.
- 2) **Disseminate the critical uses for GIS** including the associated data layers needed by the responder community.
- 3) **Communicate the need** for GIS and the associated critical data layers. For those that already have GIS data, create a data sharing process that ensures data is up-to-date and that data that crosses county lines "matches." For those that do not have GIS data, determine what would be needed to get the information. The information from this step will inform future year funding requests.
- 4) **Identify ways to use technology** to more easily facilitate the updating of GIS data from local to regional to state levels.
- 5) **Develop and communicate vendor standards** so data that is developed can be utilized across jurisdictions.

Year 1: Initial Implementation Efforts

Planning efforts will be wasted if dollars are not made available to also provide some initial implementation funding.

- 6) **Provide seed grant money for local responders** with little or no GIS information to catalyze GIS efforts (identified with the information from steps 1 – 3). For example, purchase GIS desktop software, buy GPS units to accelerate data gathering, GIS training, etc.
- 7) **Utilize the Southwest region** to identify ways to use technology to more easily facilitate the updating of data from the local to regional to state



levels. This includes purchase of a regional external hard drives, flash drives and the needed GIS software.

Your Involvement

This regional GIS effort will require the involvement of individuals from the GIS and responder communities from all 18 counties in the Southwest Homeland Security Region. To help coordinate the initial efforts, a Project Support Team was formed by the Kansas Homeland Security GIS Coordinator and a member of the council. Members of the Support Team are:

- **Jessica Frye**, Kansas Homeland Security
- **Nicholas Graf**, Kansas Homeland Security
- **Ivan Weichert**, Kansas GIS Coordinator
- **Ken Nelson**, Data Access and Support Center
- **Eileen Battles**, Data Access and Support Center
- **Ingrid Landgraf**, U.S. Geological Survey
- **Kathleen Harnish-Doucet**, The Kansas Collaborative
- **Joel Wright**, The Kansas Collaborative
- **Oscar Thomasson**, Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office

The first step, the GIS inventory, is set to begin on April 27, 2009. The second and third step, the dissemination of the critical uses for GIS and communication of the need (via sub-regional MVP stakeholders meetings) is set to begin in August. More information will be provided as dates and locations are secured.

There will be two separate offerings of a two-day "Introduction to ArcView GIS" course. There are enough spots for all 18 counties (1-2 persons per county) to attend a course. Lunch will be provided each day of the course but other travel related expenses are to be covered by the individual or county. Locations and additional information will be provided as it becomes available. RSVPs will be handled by Jessica Frye (see below for contact information).

The Regional Council also formed a GIS Technical Subcommittee to help coordinate the completion of the project. The Chair of the subcommittee is Cathy Hernandez, Finney County Emergency Manager.

For more information on the Southwest Regional Council please visit <http://www.ksready.gov/Southwest.shtml>. All documents related to this project can be found there.

For more information on this effort, please contact one of the following individuals:

Jessica Frye, Kansas Homeland Security
jessica.frye@tag.ks.gov (785) 274-1610
Eileen Battles, Data Access and Support Center
battles@kgs.ku.edu (785) 864-2289
Kathleen Harnish-Doucet, The Kansas Collaborative
kathleen@teamtechinc.com (913) 706-8797

