

Government Matters

Esri • Winter 2010/2011

GIS for State and Local Government

Alabama Issues Passport to Fitness

New Program Benefits Health and Economic Development across the State

Alabama is a beautiful state with rolling hills, white sand beaches, and historic landmarks. To encourage Alabamians, as well as visitors, to explore the enchanting scenery and improve their health, the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) created the Passport to Fitness project. The program has the additional benefit of encouraging economic development in towns across the state.

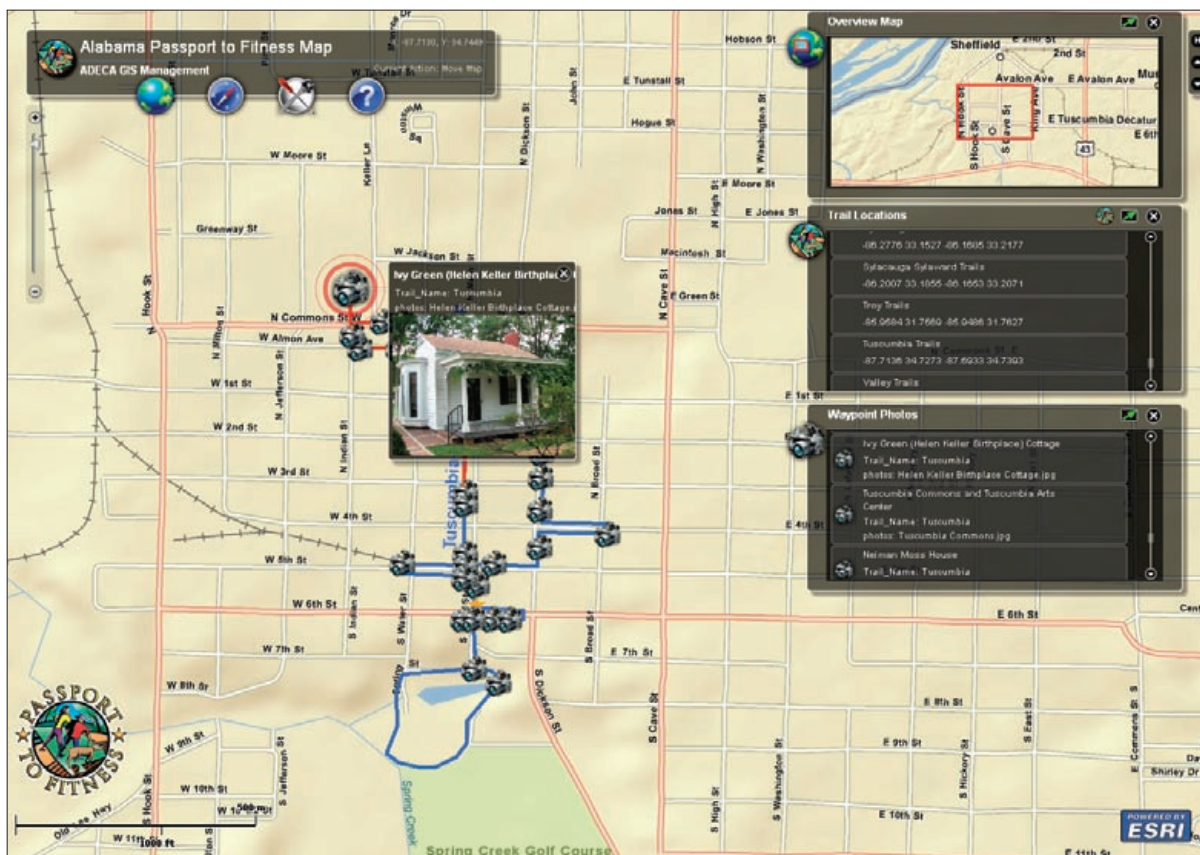
Passport to Fitness highlights 85 trails in a printed passport guide and an online Web map, accessible at adeca.alabama.gov/passporttofitness. The trails range from treks through state parks to strolls through charming towns. Fifty-seven towns have trails on the map, and the total distance for all trails equals 319 miles, about 11 miles shy of the distance from the northernmost part of the state to the southernmost tip.

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“We sent out a notification to every incorporated town, every county commission, and every chamber of commerce in the state inviting anyone who wanted to participate to submit a walking path they would like to promote,” said Paula Murphy, the compliance officer at ADECA who headed the project.

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Waypoint photos show points of interest such as Helen Keller's birthplace on the Tusculumbia Trails Helen Keller Loop.

Georgia Association of Regional Commissions Signs Esri ELA Strengthening GIS Programs Will Enhance Citizen Services

The Georgia Association of Regional Commissions (GARC) has signed an enterprise license agreement (ELA) with Esri to secure unlimited access to ArcGIS software. GARC works to advance the efforts of the state's 12 regional commissions, which serve local governments across the state. The ELA will help GARC members better meet geographic information system (GIS) technology needs in counties, cities, and towns, resulting in improved services for citizens.

"In the economic times we find ourselves in, improving the quality of service to our local governments is not only the goal of each regional commission but also the [GARC's] main goal."

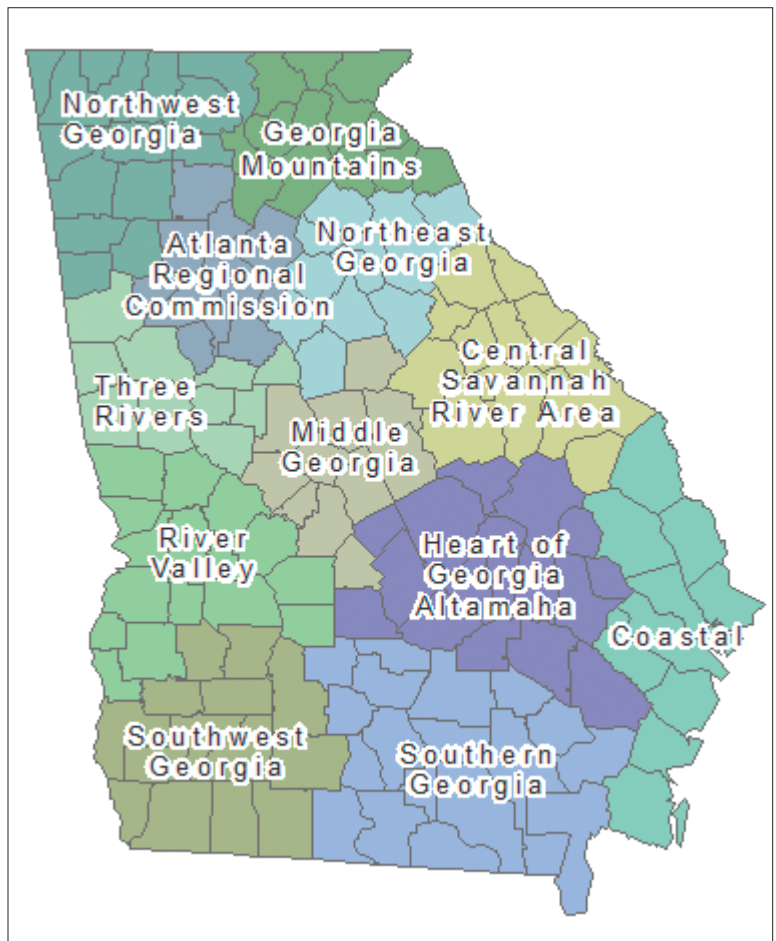
Chris Chalmers,
GIS/IT Committee Chairman, GARC

"I think this is one of the biggest landmark decisions that the executive directors of the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions has made in its existence because it not only helps the regional commissions, it helps all the citizens in the state of Georgia collectively," said Chris Chalmers, GIS/IT committee chairman, GARC. "In the economic times we find ourselves in, improving the quality of service to our local governments is not only the goal of each regional commission but also the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions' main goal."

With broader access to current ArcGIS software, GARC members will update and improve many GIS workflows and applications. For example, individual commissions will begin replicating data with one another for better contingency planning. If a hurricane damages the Coastal Regional Commission systems, commission leaders will be able to access their data immediately via the Middle Georgia Regional Commission GIS.

"Our GIS committee is outstanding; we are fortunate to have some of the finest individuals involved," said Danny Lewis, GARC president. "They recommended the ELA to our executive directors, and there was never a question that the benefits would be exactly what the State of Georgia needed to succeed. I applaud those who advocated this initiative—it exemplifies what is expected of the regional commission leaders in Georgia. We think the sky is the limit as to what we can accomplish."

For more information on Esri ELAs, visit esri.com/ela.



iOS App Puts Geomedicine at Your Fingertips

My Place History is a free app that links public health information with your environmental experience. Download it from the Apple App Store and use it to get a greater understanding of how your local environment can affect your health.

Using U.S. street addresses to create and maintain a personal place history, My Place History allows you to gather general information about your proximity to environmental hazards or exposures and unlock a wealth of geographically relevant health information.

My Place History links your personal place history to several governmental databases including

- Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care
- Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) of the United States Environmental Protection Agency
- Haz-Map—U.S. National Library of Medicine

To learn more about geomedicine, visit esri.com/geomedicine.

Gov 2.0

Visit esri.com/liveusersites to see how governments use GIS on the Web to support open government.

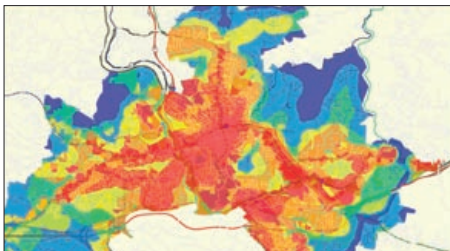
Kentucky

The Kentucky Stimulus Project mapping portal is a Flex-based site that uses an Esri template to show the distribution of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds across the commonwealth of Kentucky.



Asheville, North Carolina

A free, interactive mapping tool is used to strengthen strategic economic development activities. It facilitates business siting, neighborhood renewal, and real estate development by enabling a visitor to identify optimal locations for business activities.



Seattle, Washington

The Seattle Parking Map shows on- and off-street parking facilities and information with special focus on short-term parking in downtown and neighborhood business districts.



Esri Online

Videos

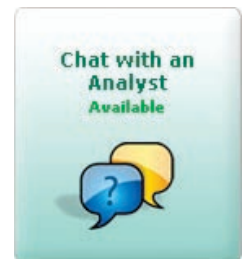
Visit esri.com/video to access an extensive library of videos including inspiring talks and technical presentations. Presenters include thought leaders such as Harvard University landscape architecture professor Carl Steinitz, GIS pioneer Roger Tomlinson, Technology/Entertainment/Design (TED) conferences founder Richard Saul Wurman, and Esri president Jack Dangermond.



Jack Dangermond talks about geodesign at TED 2010.

Live Chat with an Esri Support Analyst

From 5:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Pacific time), U.S. customers and Esri international distributors can chat with a technical support analyst online. Visit support.esri.com to begin the discussion.



Gov 2.0 Portal

At esri.com/gov20, you'll find the information you need to support your organization's Gov 2.0 initiatives. Resources include videos, case studies, and Web mapping tools and templates.

Listen to New Podcasts

Visit esri.com/podcasts to hear the latest interviews with GIS leaders.

Recommendations

- **GIS Assists Green Building**—Dr. Chris Pyke, vice president, Research Program, United States Green Building Council, discusses how GIS can be used to assist green building in many areas, such as location-based rating systems, building performance modeling, and market pattern analysis.
- **Redistricting: A Geographic Problem**—Esri state government industry manager Richard Leadbeater provides a brief overview of redistricting and describes the essential role that geospatial technology plays in it.

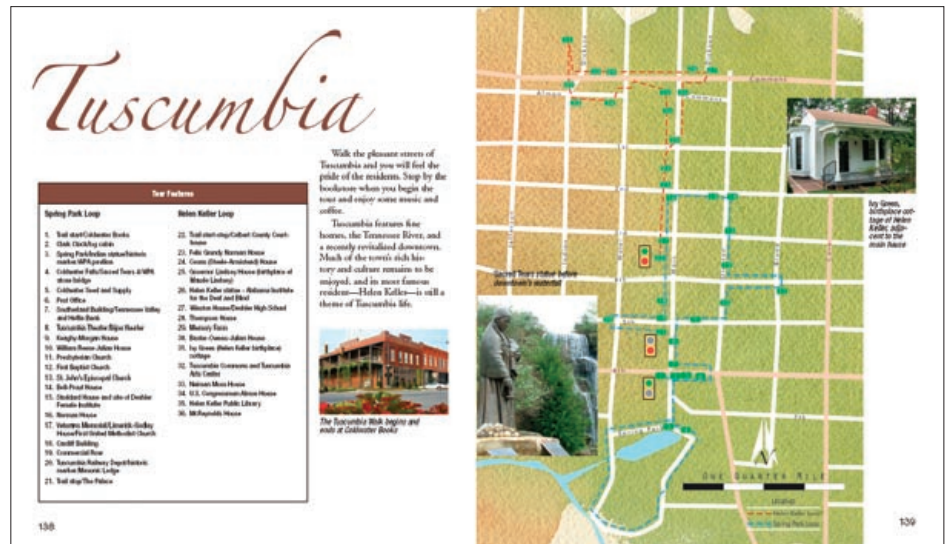
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Alabama Issues Passport to Fitness

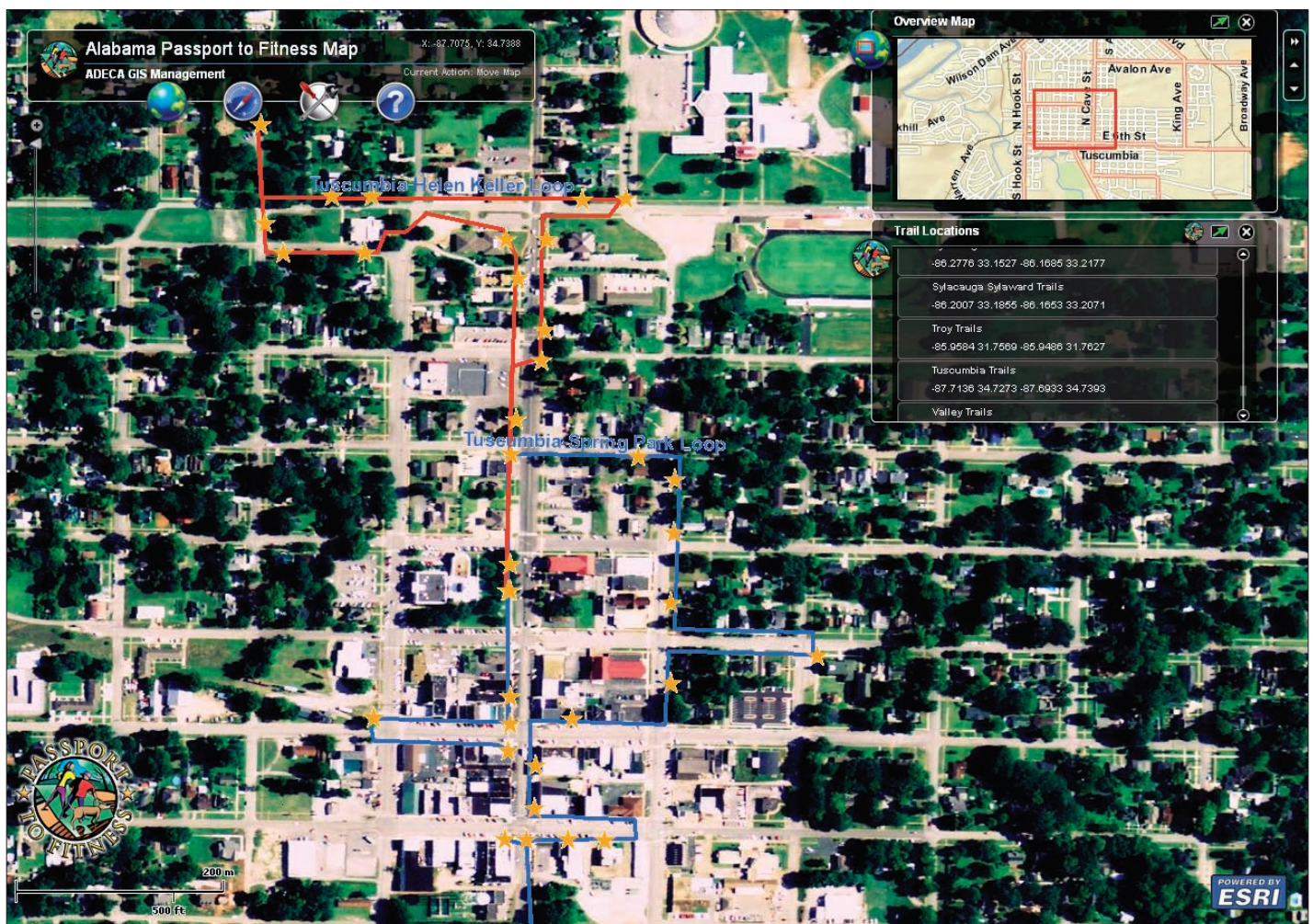
On the Web site, visitors can view the trails on a street map or with aerial imagery. Zooming in to the map shows details including points of interest, photos, and a PDF with the trail description. The PDFs are pages from the passport guide, and the maps it includes were made with ArcGIS Desktop. The photos were taken by a staff photographer and the consultant who designed the passport guide, but community members are also submitting their photos.

“I’d say a majority of the downtown-type walks are in smaller communities that people wouldn’t normally think to visit,” said Murphy. “It makes people think, ‘Hey, this weekend, why don’t we go over here. I had no idea there were this many historic sites or these kinds of activities to do.’ It’s generated quite a bit of interest.”

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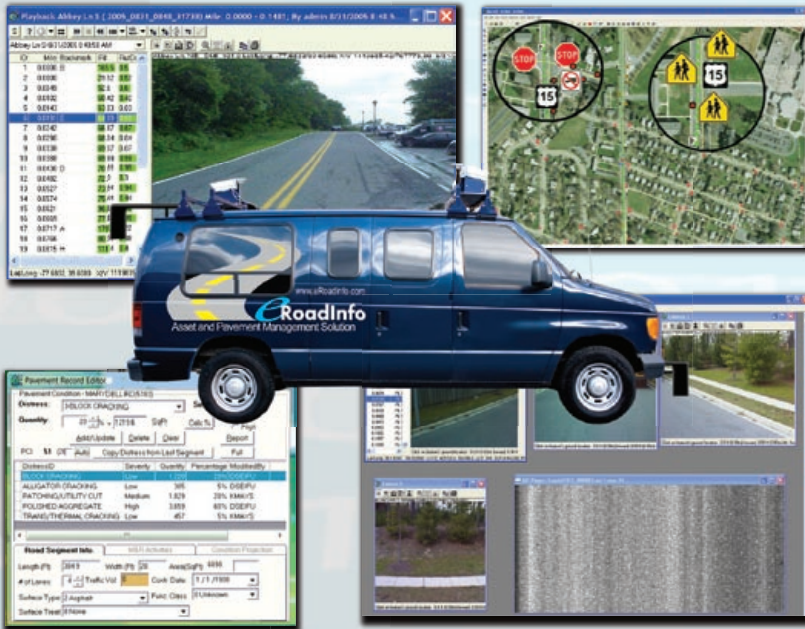


Detailed trail descriptions are available in PDF form directly through the Passport to Fitness Web map. These pages are part of the printed passport guides distributed around the state.



Aerial imagery shows two Tuscumbia trails: the Helen Keller Loop (marked in red) and the Spring Park Loop (in blue).

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Alabama Issues Passport to Fitness

It might seem unusual to have the department’s compliance officer involved in an outreach and mapping project like this. Murphy agrees.

“My director called me in and asked if I would take on a special project, and of course, with him being the director, I said, ‘I would love to,’” she joked. “I do really enjoy working out, but I think he wanted to give me something to do that didn’t involve rules, regulations, and deadlines—just something that would be interesting and fun.”

Before she knew it, she was off to Berlin, Germany, to learn about *volksmarching*, an activity that inspired the director at the time to create the Passport to Fitness project. He explained his volksmarching experiences from a trip he had recently taken but thought Murphy should experience them herself. Volksmarching involves people getting together to walk on a marked path, usually 5 or 10 kilometers. Walkers typically receive a card that is stamped to show participation, often with a small award such as a medal, patch, or pin at the end of the event. In Alabama, the program includes a passport card that can be stamped at each trail to recognize participation.

Behind the Scenery

Developing the Web mapping application, which launched in February 2010, went quickly. However, amassing the data for all the trails and creating the accompanying 152-page passport guide took about two years.

ADECA bought handheld GPS units, and Henry Moore, senior GIS specialist, ADECA, trained staff and volunteers on how to collect data. These participants walked every trail in the program.

“We put together a training exercise here in Montgomery around the capitol, then they began picking up walking assignments. They became quite good at it, and it was nice to let people get out of their daily routines and do something really fun,” Moore shared.

After developing the Passport to Fitness Web mapping application with ArcGIS Server and Esri’s Sample Flex Viewer built on ArcGIS API for Flex 1, the GIS team began using it as a template for ADECA’s intranet applications. Currently, seven sites are using versions of the template.


“It was very easy to set up, administer, and use,” Moore said of the Sample Flex Viewer. “Once we got the first site established and had our workflow down, I could take a dataset and put it online in about 30 minutes. I’m not a programmer, and it allows somebody at my level to go in and—with very little programming knowledge but with good conceptual knowledge of what we’re trying to do—make it work. And it’s turned out very well for us.”

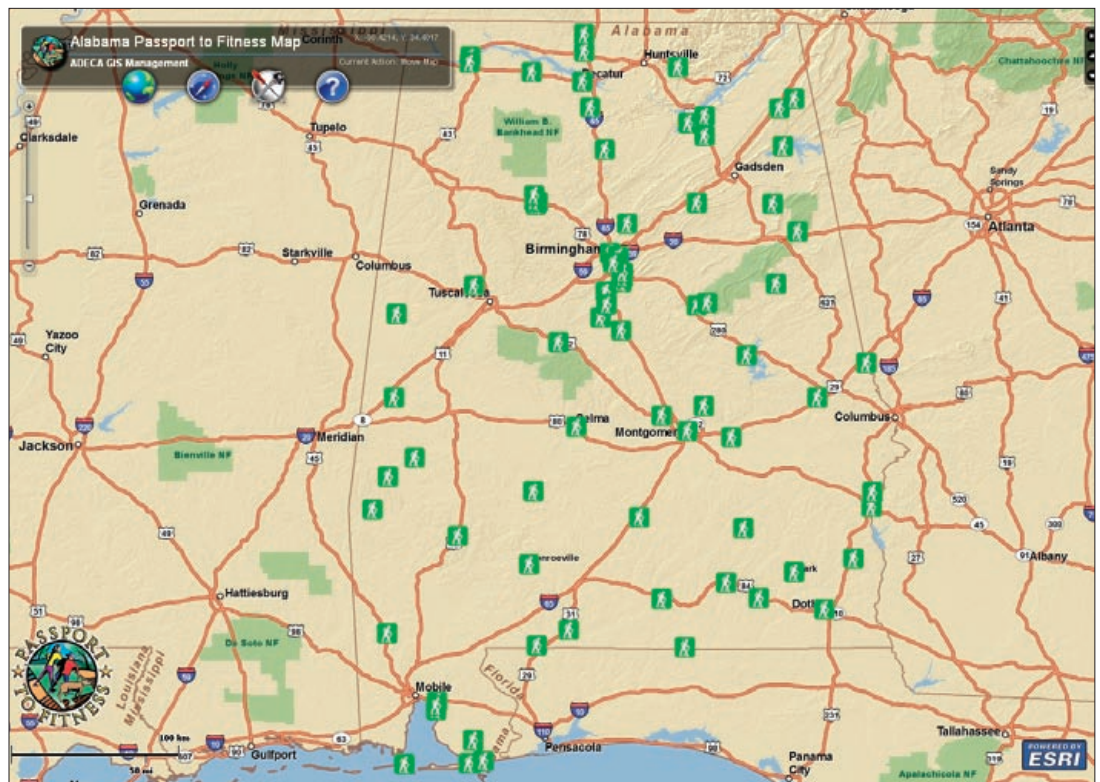
For input during the development of the proj-

ect, ADECA staff partnered with Alabama’s Departments of Tourism, Conservation and Natural Resources, and Public Health; University of Alabama at Birmingham Hospital; and Fresh Air Family, an organization that brings people in Alabama together to explore the natural world. Together, they answered questions about accessibility, degree of difficulty, variety of terrain, and other issues.

In addition to promoting the program through partner programs, ADECA is distributing passport guides in each participating community, state welcome centers, and state parks. The booklets are also given out to middle school classes studying Alabama history.

“A historic walk would be a great way to get kids out of the classroom, moving and learning, all in one fell swoop,” noted Murphy.

For more information on the Passport to Fitness program, visit adeca.alabama.gov/passporttofitness or contact Paula Murphy (paula.murphy@adeca.alabama.gov) or Henry Moore (henry.moore@adeca.alabama.gov). 



The Passport to Fitness Web map highlights 85 trails throughout the state.

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Anatomy of a Gov 2.0 Open Data Solution

Open Data

Open government initiatives are bringing a new wealth of public data online, enabling citizens and government to share a common picture of the intelligence that drives decisions across the nation. Providing access to data is an essential first step, but sharing it in an informative format is the key to fostering a new level of collaboration.

GIS technology unlocks the potential of open data by bringing it into an enlightening spatial context. This platform for place-based decision making enables transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement and stimulates entrepreneurship through the creation of new mapping applications.



1

Government Creates and Maintains Authoritative Data

Government's extensive geospatial data resources provide the most accurate picture of the complex factors at work throughout the world.



2

Governments Share Public Datasets

Open government initiatives drive governments to publish their datasets on sites like ArcGIS.com, opening access to a new wealth of information.



3

New Applications Bring Data into Context

Developers use APIs to create online mapping applications that communicate complex government data in an easy-to-understand geographic format.



4

Government and Citizens Collaborate

Data-rich Web applications enable increased transparency, communication, and efficiency.

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Widespread Adoption of GIS in Public Safety

Not so long ago, monitoring remote incidents in real time with dozens of camera feeds and sensors linked seamlessly together was something you'd expect from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) or science fiction. You wouldn't think of it as something used daily in firehouses or local city government buildings. Public safety agencies have used state-of-the-art computers and information systems to capture data for emergencies, but this type of high-tech emergency management involved multiple pieces that weren't connected, and data certainly wasn't available in real time using a single seamless interface.

GIS has long provided an integration platform for meeting the mission of public safety. This includes providing data management, planning and analysis, field enablement, and situational awareness. From 9/11 to Hurricane

Katrina to the 2007 fires in California and the more recent Haiti earthquake and Gulf of Mexico oil spill, GIS has been a foundational technology linking data and workflows.

A more recent development has transformed how many agencies prepare and respond to disasters using real-time information.

Esri developed an API—ArcGIS API for Flex—that enables people in public safety to build dynamic, rich Internet applications on top of ArcGIS Server. These agencies can create interactive Web applications that take advantage of ArcGIS Server resources—such as maps, locators, feature services, and geoprocessing models—and Flex components, such as grids, trees, and charts.

This is creating a profound shift in the use of public safety GIS. More agencies can now build an intuitive solution for creating

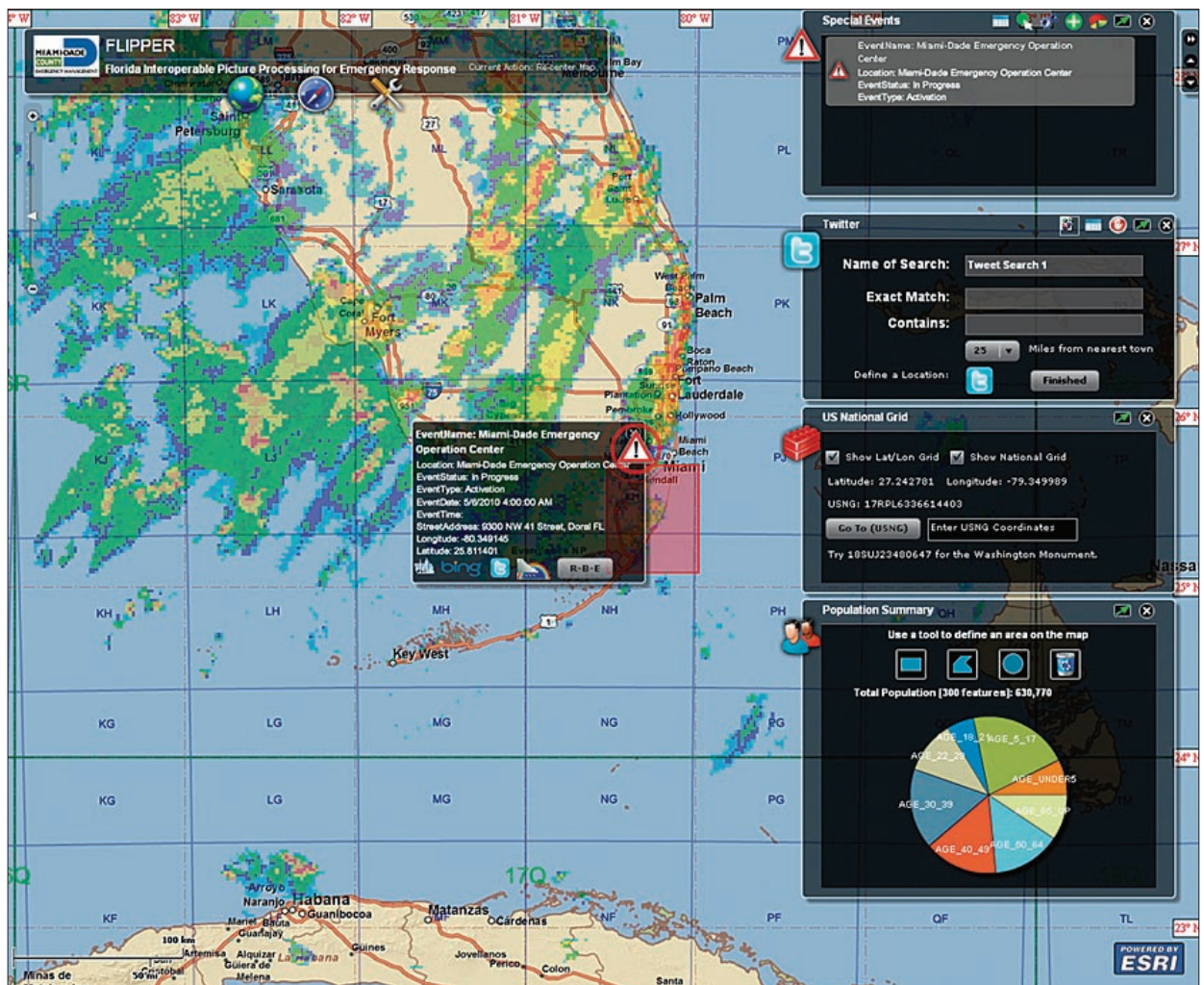
situational awareness. All types of data and information are tied together and viewed in real time using the map as the interface.

Organizations everywhere are building their own systems using ArcGIS API for Flex to more effectively carry out their missions. The following are just a few examples:

Miami-Dade County

The Miami-Dade County, Florida, Department of Emergency Management has unusual challenges, even for an agency that expects the unexpected. Since the city of Miami is a tourist mecca and hosts major sporting events, like the National Football League's 2010 Super Bowl and Pro Bowl, providing safety and preparedness can be an arduous undertaking. This is only made more complex by the area's risk of natural disasters.

For Miami-Dade County, Florida, live information, such as Twitter and National Weather Service data, is shown in combination with population and the U.S. National Grid on the same map.



The agency has developed a solution to meet these challenges. The Florida Interoperable Picture Processing for Emergency Response (FLIPPER) was built to make more information available using the Web and a highly intuitive map interface.

FLIPPER is built using ArcGIS Server and the Flex Viewer. It is integrated with WebEOC, a Web-enabled crisis information management system from Esri partner Esi of Augusta, Georgia, that provides secure, real-time information. FLIPPER gets the data from WebEOC and links it to additional live data feeds.

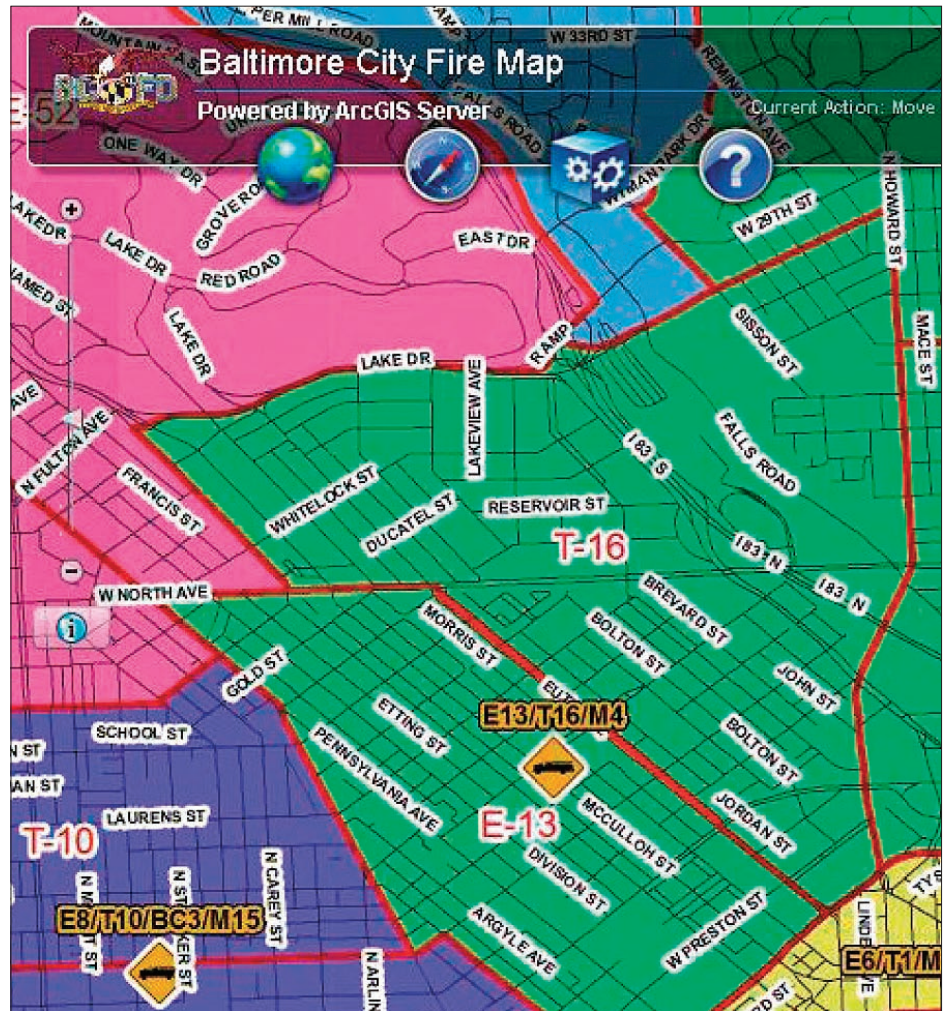
As the Gulf of Mexico oil spill stretched from weeks to months—and with the impact potentially lasting for years—FLIPPER supplied real-time information from the State of Florida Web site when and where it was needed as the office tracked the oil response.

FLIPPER also helped the county with international responses. “For the Haiti earthquake, we reached out to help with the response, and FLIPPER was a tool we used,” says Soheila Ajabshir, systems manager, Department of Emergency Management, Miami-Dade County.

FLIPPER has many tools available. It supplies Request by Exception (RBE) functionality, which allows a person to view more than 6,000 critical facilities, such as schools, fire, police, hazmat sites, and hospitals, based on a set vicinity. Tools and applications, such as Twitter, Bing Maps, hazardous plume modeling, live traffic, the U.S. National Grid, and population estimates, are tied to FLIPPER and viewable via the unified map interface. FLIPPER is designed to use WebEOC pre-populated boards/data, such as mass migration and nuclear plants.

Baltimore Fire

Led by fire chief James Clack, Baltimore, Maryland, City Fire Department serves a geographic area of 81 square miles and a population of more than 640,000 residents. The department has more than 1,800 members, who are divided into two management



The red lines distinguish the Baltimore, Maryland, inspection area (designated area for hydrant, home visit, and building inspections) for each fire company.

branches—Emergency Operations and Planning and Administration. The department responds to more than 235,000 emergency 911 calls per year.

For every single call, emergency responders need to know as much information as they can about the incident and its location before responding. Building information is often captured and maintained using large databases, but getting that information quickly and easily to fire personnel responding to a call can be a challenge. Paper notebooks with building preplans help responders know what they’re walking into, but they can be cumbersome.

Baltimore Fire is piloting the use of ArcGIS API for Flex to push out building information quickly and easily to responders. The agency,

which is an Esri 2010 Special Achievement in GIS Award winner, has in just two years built a robust ArcGIS platform. It has developed successful applications, such as its GIS-based digital Peg-Board, that are changing the way the agency serves its citizens. The ArcGIS API for Flex application is a new method being tested to better supply building information using an intuitive map display.

“This application will aid first responders to view and become familiar with the location of vacant buildings in their districts,” says Peter Hanna, firefighter/paramedic and GIS manager, Baltimore Fire. “The first objective of fighting a fire is that everyone goes home, and this joint effort between the city’s housing

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Widespread Adoption of GIS in Public Safety

authority, which collects the data, and the fire department, which is building the application, will help greatly in firefighter safety efforts.”

Fire staff members can view the data and pan and zoom to any of the 4,000-plus buildings deemed “dangerous” by the city’s housing authority. They can then click a particular building icon to see available information specific to that structure.

Virtual Beverly Hills

Known for its affluence and celebrity residents, the City of Beverly Hills, California, also has many emergency management concerns. It hosts major events like the Golden Globe Awards and the Los Angeles Marathon, has dignitaries visiting from around the world, and is situated in an area prone to natural disasters. All this has spurred the city’s need for actionable, cross-jurisdictional geospatial information. To this effect, Beverly Hills


designed and deployed a unique, city-level version of Virtual USA—an initiative aimed at improving decision making for local, state, tribal, and federal homeland security practitioners. Called Virtual Beverly Hills (VBH), the comprehensive system—based on ArcGIS—helps users prepare for and respond to special events, earthquakes, wildfires, and hazmat and explosive material incidents as well as daily operations like analyzing crime patterns.

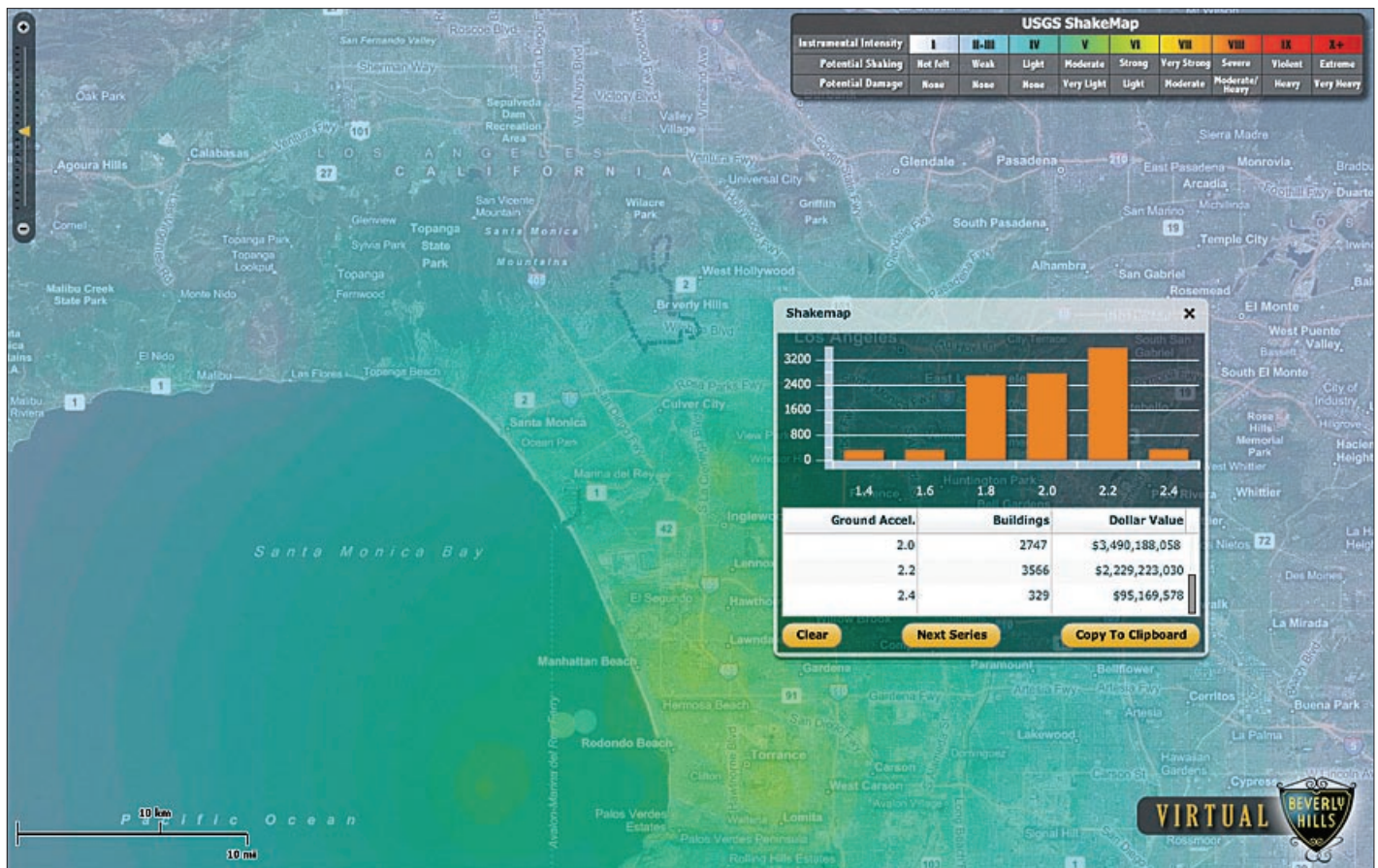
“The power of GIS to manage and analyze spatial data, together with its performance and presentation advantages, offered us a good combination,” says Lema Kebede, GIS manager of the City of Beverly Hills. “We were able to develop advanced spatial analysis and intuitive reporting tools. This is essential for emergency management and public safety, where speed, usability, interoperability, and availability are critical.”

VBH integrates various datasets to provide

instantaneous access to situational information from multiple sources. Its enterprise geodatabase hosts more than 120 detailed layers representing all departments. More data is automatically generated from the city’s property records, police record management systems, and human resources databases. Live spatial feeds include thematic earthquake shake maps, fire perimeters, weather, closed-circuit television, automated vehicle location, and reported emergency incidents. In addition, users have the ability to view any GeorSS feed. VBH’s security profile controls what data and tools are available for each user. Additionally, integrated analytic tools generate real-time reports.

More Information

For more information, contact Russ Johnson, Esri (russ_johnson@esri.com). 



Virtual Beverly Hills is used to visualize real-time earthquake ground acceleration value recorded by the U.S. Geological Survey/California Institute of Technology.

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Oakland County, Michigan, Mitigates Foreclosure Impact

Oakland County, Michigan’s Planning and Economic Development Services Division is mapping foreclosures to help cities, townships, and villages effectively target services to properties and homeowners in need. In 2009, the county issued 8,734 sheriff’s deeds in contrast to 2,670 in 2005, before the foreclosure crisis began.

“As the foreclosure crisis emerged a few years ago, we knew we had a wealth of GIS data that could support local government efforts to manage the crisis,” noted Bret Rasegan, supervisor, Planning and Economic Development Services. The department provides help, especially technical assistance, to the 61 cities, villages, and townships in the county, which serve an estimated population of more than 1.2 million.

Staff in the Planning and Economic Development Services Division understood that when government leaders see where foreclosures are occurring, they gain a clearer understanding of where the impact is most severe. Code enforcement officers know where to target blight prevention efforts and public safety officers can more easily understand where

they should increase patrols to stem crime that so often occurs near abandoned houses. Local governments can also use geographic information to strategically deploy housing counseling in areas of highest need.

“A lot of times the local governments are strapped for staff and resources, so having another piece of information at their fingertips when supporting the public is helpful,” said Ryan Dividock, associate planner, Planning and Economic Development Services.

Typically, the division provides GIS maps and data upon request, but the county began proactively offering foreclosure mapping services in June 2009. Community requests range from trend data to specific information on key properties such as when the sheriff’s deed was issued. The custom maps are created with ArcGIS Desktop and delivered as PDFs, though local governments with advanced GIS connect directly to the county’s GIS to pull the raw data they need to run their own analyses.

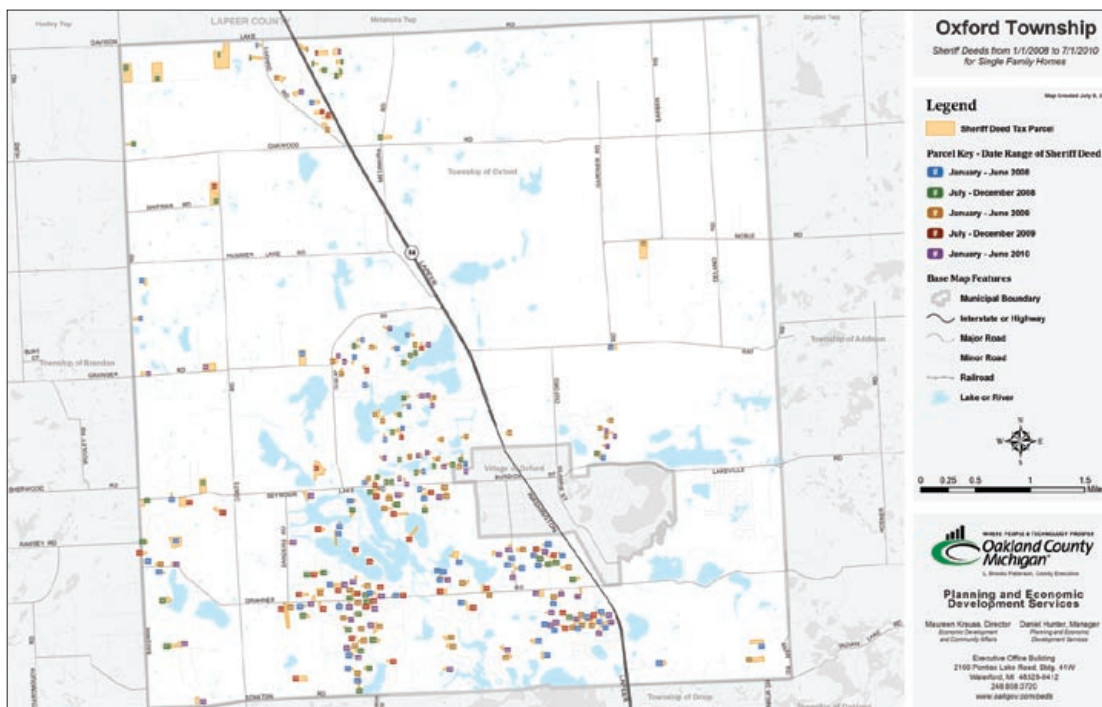
“The mortgage foreclosure analysis services give us valuable information that not only assists in showing the location of the foreclosed properties in Oxford Township but

also provides detailed information including the property address, sale amount, ownership, and SEV [state equalized value],” said Curtis Wright, Oxford Township clerk. “The information will serve in planning for future revenue lost from these foreclosed properties and their resale values.”

The Planning and Economic Development Services Division also helps local governments target funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP). The foreclosure maps are helping local governments invest NSP funds in the right areas. “We initially thought that there would be pockets of foreclosures in our community and expected that we could focus the majority of our NSP dollars on stabilizing those areas,” said Mark Stec, director of planning, City of Hazel Park Planning and Economic Development Department. “However, as a result of reviewing the maps provided by Oakland County, we found that the problem was much more widespread than we originally thought.”

The maps of Hazel Park showed that there wasn’t a single area of the community that was hit the hardest, so foreclosures weren’t clustering in specific neighborhoods. “This allowed us to open up our program to benefit the entire geographic area of our community,” Stec said. “Had we not received the foreclosure mapping service, we would have focused in on a certain area and neglected other areas that were in need of stabilization.”

For more information on the county’s program, contact Oakland County associate planner Ryan Dividock at dividockr@oakgov.com.



This map of sheriff’s deeds shows clustering in the central and southern parts of Oxford Township, January 2008–July 2010.



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