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Interagency Cooperation in Europe using GIS

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Local gvernments in Europe are using GIS to promote interagency cooperation and coordination to expeditev exchange of information among agencies and underpin citizen notification systems.

Local Governments in Europe Use GIS to Promote Interagency Cooperation and Coordination

By Jim Baumann

With growing populations, aging infrastructure, and an ongoing mandate to reduce costs while maintaining or expanding service levels, local governments throughout Europe are facing increasing challenges in meeting their civic and legal obligations. Geographic Information System (GIS) technology has proven to be a unique tool in expediting the exchange of information among governmental agencies and underpinning citizen notification systems. The following examples provide a view of some uses of GIS among European local governments.

* Bavarian Rural District Uses GIS to Improve Information Management and Distribution

Cham, a rural district in the German state of Bavaria, includes 39 local municipalities and approximately 130,000 inhabitants within its boundaries. The population in the district is widely dispersed, and the inherent fragmented nature of the local government structure was beset with administrative problems. A major challenge was the necessity to integrate disparate information into an efficient data management system with the ability to easily maintain and exchange data within the district.

In 2005, Cham implemented an inter-district GIS, locally known as IKGIS Cham. In addition, local public utility companies and other local government agencies agreed to participate in the development of the GIS.

To make certain that it could meet future as well as current requirements, the system was based on ArcGIS, ESRI's comprehensive product family. Application areas include cadastre, land-use planning, water/wastewater infrastructure, and regional tourism. This is all aided by the provision of homogeneous geodata including aerial imagery, digital elevation models, and precise basemaps.

With the implementation of its GIS, Cham has transformed a rural, decentralized regional government administration into a modern enterprise-based service organization. This was accomplished by optimizing its business processes between the central district administration offices and the various municipalities.

Commenting on the implementation, Wolfgang Egner of ESRI Geoinformatik said, "The extremely heterogeneous set of applications within the district was too complicated for most available GIS systems. Therefore, the district of Cham chose ESRI's ArcInfo in conjunction with the integrated, object relational ArcSDE geodatabase as the basis of its overall enterprise GIS system."

* Gävle Kommun Expands Use of GIS Throughout Public and Private Sectors

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services and local government agencies to connect in real time to a variety of datasets so that it can monitor incidents and provide input for the incident management process. This element of SurreyAlert is only accessible on the Surrey extranet to those involved in emergency management.

In the event of a major incident, SurreyAlert provides a Web-enabled communications interface combined with a GIS mapping functionality that can be easily accessed by all agencies participating in the management and mitigation of any specific emergency. The system also provides essential information to the decision-making process through its ability to be updated with relevant, up-to-date information when requested, which is essential when dealing with a major incident.

SurreyAlert also provides a means to inform and advise the public in a coordinated manner from a single point of reference for both emergency and non-emergency matters. The Web site includes a risk register that details wide-ranging