



FORSYTHCOUNTY
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COUNTY'S GIS MOBILE EMERGENCY RESPONSE SYSTEM
RECEIVES INTERNATIONAL HONOR

*Project designed for preparedness, response and recovery in
emergency situations*

FORSYTHCOUNTY, Georgia – The Forsyth County Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Department has been honored for its GIS Mobile Emergency Response System (ERS). The recognition comes as part of the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA) 2009 Exemplary Systems in Government awards. These awards recognize exceptional achievements in the application of information technology that have improved the delivery and quality of government services.

Forsyth County was one of only two award winners internationally in the single-process systems category. Systems in this category are outstanding and working examples of applying information system technology to automate a specific single process or operation involving one department or sub-unit of an agency. The system application results in extended and/or improved government services that are more efficient and/or save money.

Forsyth County developed its GIS Mobile ERS in order to enhance the preparedness, response and recovery phase of emergency management for the county. The system is designed to be used as an emergency support function for the Forsyth County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) or deployed in the field to provide direct support to first responders. The Mobile ERS uses pre-made templates for quick map and report making, provides extensive base data, and integrates models that allow for what-if analysis in the field.

“Knowing the many challenges faced by first responders, the feeling was that we could

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help them perform their jobs more efficiently by being able to provide data and map coverage right there on site,” GIS Director John Kilgore said. “This is a system that can provide support throughout all phases of a disaster, from planning through response and recovery operations. It is a powerful platform for complex planning and analysis, and assists with faster decision-making.”

“Developing a tool such as this truly takes a team effort,” Kilgore continued. “From the data maintenance to the application development, everyone on the GIS team worked hard to make receiving this honor possible.”

In developing this system, the county utilized common sense design methods to deliver real-time GIS and analysis tools to emergency responders. Additionally, the county’s use of the Homeland Security data model was forward thinking and will allow the system to be easily integrated into wider emergency response situations if needed. According to URISA, this application can serve as a good example for other entities wanting to create an emergency response system that keeps people in the field and in the control centers ‘in the know’ during critical situations.

URISA is a non-profit professional and educational association that promotes the effective and ethical use of spatial information and information technologies for the understanding and management of urban and regional systems.

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