

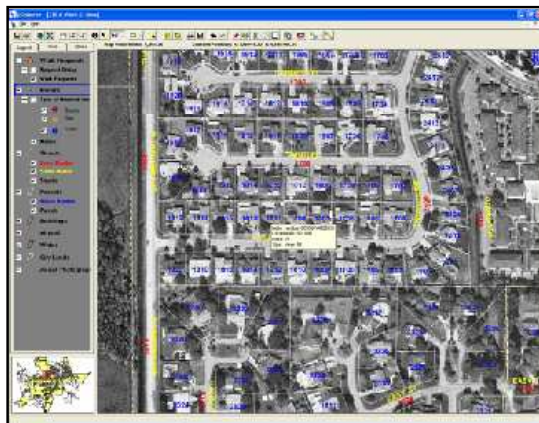
GIS and Masters will take Pearland Far City of Pearland, Texas



Case Study:
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City of Pearland, Texas

When the City of Pearland adopted the use of GIS and brought Michael Masters in to serve as GIS Coordinator, it's not certain whether they realized just how far GIS and Masters would take them.

Masters joined Pearland in his current position during the second year of an implementation plan drawn up by Geographic Technologies Group. Pearland, one of the fastest growing cities in the Houston metropolitan area, had a drastic need for GIS technology.



The implementation plan provided a recommendation for Pearland to adopt a number of the LG public safety products, including LGviewer, LGdispatch, LGcrimes, and LGmobile.

Pearland is making good use of these products in public safety and has further expansion in the early planning stages to ultimately include the Fire Department, EMS and the Emergency Operations Center. Currently the Police Department and E-911 dispatch center are taking full advantage of the products.

"On the public safety side, the feedback has been very positive," said Masters. "Our dispatchers are using LGdispatch and the maps provided are more accurate, and they can get to the information easier."

Masters is pretty modest when speaking about his role in GIS. He notes that the detectives with the Pearland Police Department have been using LGcrimes and the GIS Department has been tweaking the program to meet the City's needs.

"I try and provide the best information available to them," added Masters. "I just lead them to the water, and it's up to them to find new ways to use the products."

GeoManager has been an especially good application for Pearland according to Masters. "It (GeoManager) has been a sweet tool in creating layers for all of the other products we use," said Masters. "I would stress this as one of the most important tools anyone working with GIS can have."

Funding for extensive GIS programs is limited for many municipalities, but Pearland has been very fortunate. According to Masters, the success of the current applications has been instrumental in receiving additional funding in subsequent years.

"We have been through two updates so far," said Masters. "Since we keep getting funded through the budget, it has to mean we are being successful with what we are doing."

Pearland has brought GIS to the public through the city website located at www.cityofpearland.com. A link on the City's homepage labeled City of Pearland Maps will bring users to a full menu of options for GIS data access.

The site offers GIS interactive maps, GIS download city maps, and GIS data downloads. Interactive maps include seven key areas and departments serving Pearland. Users can locate and create maps for everything from water and sewer infrastructure to school and voting districts.

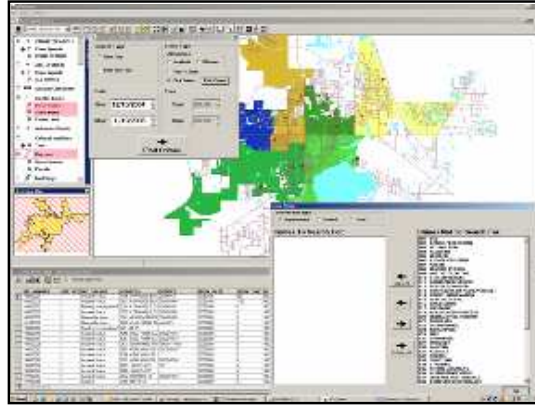
The GIS downloadable city maps include zoning, land use, and city limit maps complete with aerial photos – available for download in PDF format.

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The GIS data downloads also provide similar information, but there is also a link available to download ESRI's free GIS data viewer software ArcExplorer. The site is very user-friendly, even for GIS novices.

But perhaps it is Masters' work on a larger scale that helps define Pearland as one of the area's leaders in GIS technology. Masters has been appointed Head Chair of the Geographic Data Committee (part of Houston-Galveston Area Council), which is the voluntary association of counties, cities, and independent school districts in the Gulf Coast Planning Region of Texas.



The GDC is a consortium of regional area geographical data users (primarily GIS - Geographic Information Systems) who are both public and private organizations and are involved in the process of collectively sharing, distributing, and acquiring digital geospatial data. The group meets monthly and affords Masters the opportunity to see just where his efforts rank him among many of the surround municipalities.

He's proud to say Pearland is way ahead of many of his counterparts. "Comparing us to other governments, Pearland seems to be way ahead of others in implementing GIS and this makes us feel good about what we're doing," said Masters.

Pearland also uses GIS in a number of other on-going projects within the City government, including impact fees studies and street inventories. Twice a year, Masters will use GIS during an update to the Mayor and City staff and will give live demonstrations on how various staff members and departments are using GIS to make them more efficient in their jobs.

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