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GEOGRAPHIC TECHNOLOGIES GROUP

Understanding Local Government

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Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Proves to be a Valuable Return-On-Investment, Even in Tough Economic Times

Goldensboro, N.C. - With Florida's newly enacted 2007 Property Tax Reform in full swing, many local governments are beginning to make drastic budget cuts.

The 2007 Property Tax Reform for the State of Florida, reduces the amount of property tax that a county, city, or independent special district can levy. In accordance with the law, a local government cannot generate any more tax revenue than was generated from the last year's total property tax revenue. This loss of revenue has meant budget cuts across the board. Local governments have been forced to re-examine spending and put vital programs on the back burner. "Cities and counties...say they will have to make tough choices regarding law enforcement, libraries, parks and other services residents demand (St. Petersburg Times, 3/22/2007)".

Although the budget has been cut in the City of Oviedo, Florida, officials still realize the importance and potential return-on-investment for GIS in their City. Community leaders felt that the overwhelming return from implementing their GIS Strategic Plan would out-weigh any cost associated with the investment and utilized Geographic Technologies Group (GTG) to put their plan in action. After an extensive assessment and identification of ways GIS will assist in saving the City time, lives, and money, GTG staff presented the budget to City Council. GTG focused on the business case for GIS, and the Oviedo City Council unanimously decided to move forward and make GIS a priority for the City. Curt Hinton, CEO for GTG, stated, "Oviedo was making very tough choices. However, GTG was able to demonstrate that having GIS was critical for the City in regards to doing more with limited resources, providing quality services, and meeting federal and state mandates."

In a city 30 miles away, Titusville, Florida, officials are struggling with the same budgetary concerns felt in Oviedo. Job cuts are on the horizon and funding for community facilities, such as libraries, is uncertain. "There is a \$15.3 million county plan to build or expand four libraries in Brevard, eventually increasing the county's total to 18 libraries. About \$4.7 million has been slated for the Rockledge Library...But all projects are in limbo (Florida Today, 4/9/2007)". Making necessary decisions to ensure the well being of the community has been a daunting task for officials. After carefully considering all budgetary options, Titusville's leaders came to the same conclusion; the implementation of GIS within the City of Titusville could not be cut from the budget. The City's Management Information Systems Department (MIS) was able to prove the value of GIS for the City and the overall return-on-investment that it had to offer, even when funding is tight. Together with GTG, the City was able to secure the funds needed to continue implementing GIS.

For more information on how GTG can help to prove the business case for your organization, please visit www.geotg.com, or contact us toll-free 1.888.757.4222.

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