

Anderson County & ETCOG Partner for Regional Benefit

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During the last year, ETCOG has partnered with Anderson County in the development of highly detailed emergency response maps at county and fire district levels. These maps are designed for all weather conditions and can be used to seek air support in heavily wooded areas of Anderson County. ETCOG and Anderson County emergency responders have relied on the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) and Global Position System (GPS) technologies throughout this project, during several meetings and workshops, for data collection, decision making and map development.



Geographic Information System (GIS) is a spatial database system that provides powerful decision making tools for every facet of public governance from producing simple hard copy maps to analyzing complex crime patterns. GIS tools are used by emergency responders to respond to accidents, housing specialists to analyze the quality and condition of housing, environmentalists to identify the location of hazardous waste sites, social service workers to identify the location of elderly and disabled, waste management officials to route vehicles, police to analyze crime patterns, public works crew to maintain road inventory, etc.

Global Position System (GPS) is a complex technology built on a constellation of 24 satellites and their ground stations. GPS provides powerful tools for navigation, tracking, mapping, timing, etc. Anderson County, in partnership with ETCOG, continues to leverage the use of these technologies in all areas of county governance. ETCOG is currently evaluating mobile technology solutions suitable for deployment in the county patrol cars. ETCOG is also assisting in the development of an Emergency Incident Resource Information System (EIRIS) through which emergency responders can access building floor plans for schools, public buildings, hospitals during SWOT situations.

Under the leadership of County Judge Linda Ray, our partnership with Anderson County will now benefit the entire region. Judge Ray and the Commissioners Court recently approved the utilization of state allocated emergency service funds to strengthen ETCOG's GIS program through the purchase of hardware and software tools. This contribution helps ETCOG move one step closer toward accomplishing the ambitious goal of developing a state of the art GIS technology center for East Texas. The goal of this technology center is to incubate the development of specialized GIS tools for implementation in all areas of public governance.

The GIS and GPS resources that will be purchased under the partnership with Anderson County will promote the advancement of GIS and GPS technologies throughout the East Texas region. GPS handheld devices such as GeoXH; GPS antennas such as Zephyr and Hurricane; GPS software such as Pathfinder and Terrasync; map making and laminating equipment; print-plot-scan systems to digitize large format floor plans, site plans, plat, drawings, maps to build and support emergency pre-planning databases in 9-1-1 dispatch centers, are a few resources that are being acquired.

ETCOG envisions eventually providing these tools to all its stakeholders through a combined resource sharing program that will empower members of all communities within the ETCOG region to have access to these advanced tools. ETCOG will now have an added capability to offer training to staff from all its member entities in all areas of public governance: emergency services, public works, utilities, building inspections, animal services and health inspections, to name a few.

Similar to its ambitious pursuits in the fields of GIS and GPS technologies, ETCOG has been striving through all of its program areas to provide improved services to East Texans. ETCOG will continue to seek best methods and practices while building strong relationships to better serve our region.