

GeoElections News

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GeoElections Improves the Elections Process

The National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC) was founded in the early '90s by state GIS users to create a consortium of states with GIS interests to act as a voice to protect states' rights in the face of coordinated actions by the Federal Geographic Data Standards Committee (FGDC). To their credit, "The FGDC develops or adopts geospatial standards for implementing the NSDI, (National Spatial Data Infrastructure) in consultation and cooperation with State, local, and tribal governments, the private sector and academic community, and, to the extent feasible, the international community."

The week of August 14th, 2019, NSGIC conducted an Elections GeoSummit. 12 states participated to discuss how geo-enabling elections systems is helping to improve elections accuracy and efficiency. Benjamin Freed wrote an article in "StateScoop" about the NSGIC project.



Poorly aligned maps have potentially skewed the results of close elections. Two razor-thin races for the Virginia House of Delegates in 2017 — including one that had to be settled by a name being drawn from a bowl — were in districts that were later found to have included voters who should've been apportioned to different seats. A primary for a Georgia State House District 28 last September decided by 67 votes was rerun entirely after more than 400 voters were found to have been wrongly given ballots.

(The election was run 3 times at an estimated cost of over \$100,000 per event. This

would not have happened if GeoElections had been in use prior to distributing ballots.)

"Many state and local governments draw their electoral boundaries using an old surveyor's method called "metes and bounds" — which defines sections of land by describing physical characteristics like the end of a street or geological feature — or U.S. Census Bureau blocks, rather than the numerical precision offered by GIS data.

"When people are incorrectly placed, they're getting the wrong ballot and they're not voting for the people who represent them," said Tammy Patrick, a senior adviser at the Democracy Fund, former elections administrator for Maricopa County, Arizona...

"Although states are increasingly making use of GIS to manage critical services, the technology is still emerging in the elections space. A NSGIC survey of state election directors found that less than one-third of those who responded said their voter registration systems are capable of supporting GIS data..."

"But elections are overseen at the state, county — and in some places, like Wisconsin — city level, meaning officials at all rungs of government need reliable precinct and district maps. Patrick said one of the Geo-Enabled Elections Project's goals is to bring smaller, less-resourced jurisdictions "up to speed" on GIS as more states replace their voter registration systems with geocoded platforms, especially as the 2020 Census approaches.

Yet even at the statewide level, Patrick said, one of the biggest hurdles to more geographically precise elections is that the officials with the advanced mapping tools and the officials who oversee the voting process rarely interact. One of the goals of Wednesday's conference — and the ongoing Geo-Enabled Elections Project — is "making sure the GIS officials are participating in the elections stream."

Clearly ICW clients using GeoElections to interoperate with their voter registration systems are state of the art and operating with best practice policies in mind. A ballot cast by the wrong person negates a legitimate ballot cast by a another voter.

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VTD Project Update – Verification II

Activity	Date
Initial Delineation	December 2017 – May 2018
Verification I	December 2018 – May 2019
Verification II	December 2019 – March 2020

During the first quarter of 2018 the Census Bureau conducted the Initial Delineation phase. At this time the Census Bureau is conducting the Verification II phase. Participation in this phase is dependent upon participation in the prior phase.

During the Verification II phase currently in process, participants may engage in numerous data activities all of which are supported by GeoAuthorVTD 2018.2:

Activities

- States provide their Election Districts/Precincts/Wards
- States can review linear features and make any updates to improve TIGER addressing
 - Add/Delete features
 - Correct misaligned features

Most importantly, you will have one more opportunity and getting your data correct for 2021.

18th Annual GeoElections Conference

December 4th, 5th, and 6th, 2018 at the **Embassy Suites Hotel** located at 10220 Palm River Rd., Tampa, FL 33619. Welcome guest speaker Jennie Karalewich Lead Program Specialist Redistricting and Voting Rights Data Office, US Census Bureau. Also to be presented technical topics using **GeoElections**. Users should bring their projects on a notebook for a project workshop using your own data.



The GeoElections Conference presents a unique opportunity for elections staff to obtain training in the use of **GeoAuthor**, **GeoPoints** and **GeoElections**.

Meet your counter parts from other counties from Florida and other states. Learn how other professionals solved problems using GeoElections. The GeoElections Conference presents a unique opportunity for elections officials. We focus upon the successful use of GIS in the elections process dictated by the best practices in elections administration.

Work hard and plan to enjoy driving off an upper deck. Take your frustrations out on a golf ball with qualified instructors at Top Golf and Dinner.

For more info about the **GeoElections Conference** visit: www.icwmaps.com/ and visit Events.



See you in December

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