

BAAMA President's Message May 2001

Participate in Our GIS Community!

This October URISA will hold its 39th International Conference in Long Beach, California. This will give BAAMA members a good opportunity to observe what other chapters are doing for their members, as well as to learn about and contribute information to important GIS-related issues. BAAMA has provided a model for other chapters, and also has received many new ideas from our counterparts in the US and Canada.

As an international organization, URISA recognizes that local chapters are becoming more and more competent to independently produce quality GIS-related educational programs, such as our recent CalGIS 2001 conference. In response, URISA is changing its focus to that of introducing emerging technologies and exemplary implementations, along with a new role: that of advocacy for our GIS profession on public policy issues.

With the emergence of a Geographic Information Coordinating Council organized by the California state government, local and national professional associations are becoming more engaged in such public policy issues as:

- the certification of GIS Professionals
- the distribution, sharing and sale of public -agency geographic information
- the development of standards for framework data layers
- the legal responsibilities for GIS basemap creation and maintenance

Do some of these issues interest you? We'd like to have a greater impact in educating young people about GIS. We'd like to contribute GIS expertise to social and environmental issues in our region. We'd like to have a voice in the public policy decisions in Sacramento, Washington DC, and internationally. We'd like to be more of a clearinghouse for GIS-related information about educational classes, employment, service providers, data sources, and application techniques. But, we can't do everything we'd like to do because of the demands of our day jobs!

We need help from another dozen volunteers to expand our activities and commence new ones. Some of you may be ready to give something back to the community that has helped your professional development. Many of you could contribute a little time at least to let us know your opinion on some of these initiatives through BAAMA's electronic forum (www.BAAMA.org). It is Your participation that enables BAAMA and URISA build a professional community. Here are some things you can do:

- Let a BAAMA Board member know your opinion of our meetings, conferences and policy initiatives
- Ask your colleagues to join BAAMA
- Attend BAAMA Board meetings to volunteer (first Tuesday of every month)
- Plan to attend and participate in the URISA 2001 Conference in Long Beach. (www.URISA.org)

With a smile, and steadfast commitment, I remain,
Your BAAMA President and Left Wing Commander,

Bruce Joffe