

Date: April 17, 2020

Subject: Notice from WAURISA

Members of the GIS Community in Washington,

It is with sadness that I must notify you of the cancellation of our annual Washington GIS Conference, which was planned for May 18 – 21 at the Hotel Murano in Tacoma. Also canceled are the workshops which had been scheduled for the first two days. All registration fees will be refunded.

As most of you are aware, the annual May conference is the highlight of the year for WAURISA. And everything had been coming together so nicely. Our conference committee has been meeting and planning and arranging since last September, workshop instructors were putting together their training materials, vendors were designing their displays, speakers had submitted their abstracts, students had sent their submissions for the Dick Thomas Award, nominations were being reviewed for our Summit “Person of the Year” award, and many of you had already registered for a workshop or the Conference or both.

All that work will not go to waste, however. We plan to put all the Conference and workshop planning “on ice”, so to speak. When the time is right, will bring it out, warm it up, add a bunch of freshness to it, and conduct the next Conference on a date to be determined.

Our Board has much to discuss and decide, as our calendar year moves forward without our centerpiece event for the first time in as long as any of us can remember. Can we work with our workshop vendors to offer you quality training classes on-line sometime soon? What kinds of events could we sponsor that would be most appealing and healthy for attendees in the coming months? How can we recognize the great work that goes on in our state, in the workplaces and schools, with no stage or crowd in front of the stage? I cannot give you answers today, but do know that we are as eager as you are to find innovative ways to remain close as colleagues and friends.

Look for announcements and communications to come!

For now, stay safe and stay sane. Many of you are busier than ever, either buried in work to support out-of-the-ordinary operations or just trying to make ends meet. For myself, I’m learning to live and work in the same space, keep track of what day it is when they all run together, and to relish the opportunities solitude affords. I’m also learning that collaborating with people, accomplishing things, meeting deadlines and expectations, making maps, managing data, running reports and conducting meetings can all be done from home. And for extended periods.

Seize this opportunity to innovate and bridge gaps. We will all have much to talk about and learn from each other at WAURISA’s next gathering. I look forward to it.

Stephen Beimborn,  
President of the Washington Chapter,  
Urban & Regional Information Systems Association