



State Capitol at Olympia, Washington

THE SUMMIT

News From and For the Washington GIS Community

WAURISA President's Message

By: Ian Von Essen, Spokane County GIS Manager,
 WAURISA President

It's still cold here on the eastside but the equinox has passed and our ski season and my ski patrol responsibilities are drawing to a close so spring must be near. Along with this transition to warmer weather comes another annual event, our Washington (WAURISA) GIS conference. For the majority of us, WAURISA exists because of what WAURISA brings to us at the annual conference, an opportunity to network and learn from one another. This year's conference will be no exception.

We had a strong slate of workshop submittals by professional trainers and colleagues, so again we are having two full days of pre-conference workshops offered at prices that are hard to pass up. Workshops are offered ala carte, so you can sign up for as little or as much as you want over the two days. Be

sure to check out all the classes and schedule:

<https://waurisa.org/Washington-GIS-Conference>

Our Conference Keynote this year will be by Ty Wooten, the Director of Education at National Emergency Number Association (NENA). As many of you are aware, the Washington State Military Department has been actively engaged in directing a statewide effort to implement Next Generation 9-1-1. In concert with that effort, the WA State NG911 GIS Subcommittee will be holding their next meeting at the WAURISA conference. They will also be hosting a NG911 Panel Session at the conference which will be focused on GIS issues related to WA State's NG9-1-1 implementation. For more information concerning this specific meeting and panel session please contact Melissa Liebert who's the subcommittee chair at liebertm@co.wahkiakum.wa.us or

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Above: Artwork by Jane Wingfield www.olyksketcher.com

Top Left: (1930-1945) State Capitol at Olympia, Washington. Retrieved from the Digital Public Library of America, <http://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/pk02ck31j>

Next Generation 911

By Melissa Liebert, GIS Analyst and Cartographer, Wahkiakum County



911 Emergency Center. Detroit News (Firm), (1977) Police Dept. Emergency Center. 911 operators . Retrieved from the Digital Public Library of America, http://digital.library.wayne.edu/item/wayne:vmc45299_5 Courtesy of Detroit News Collection, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University

Febbruary 16th marked the 50th birthday of 911 in North America. Since its adoption, the 911 community has handled over 2 billion calls for help and services, but their job is becoming increasingly more difficult as modern communication technology is being introduced. Over 180 million 9-1-1 calls were made using mobile devices in 2015 and more and more people are relying on technology outside of the traditional landline system to communicate. With ever-changing technology, the 911 world has needed to adapt. The response to these changes has been

the creation of the Next Generation 911 (NG 911) system.

After several years of preparation and planning, Washington State is now nearing its own transition to NG 911 from their current 911 system. Unfortunately, the new system cannot be implemented with a quick flip of a switch. With the transition has come challenges that have often been unexpected and questions as to why a transition is necessary in the first place.

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President's Message

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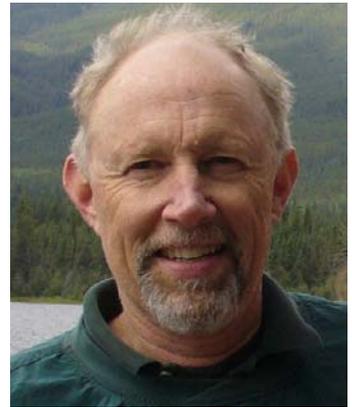
Dan Miller of the WA State Military Department at dan.miller@mil.wa.gov.

This year we will be switching up the location of our conference to Olympia, WA. One of our WAURISA long-term goals has been to improve our connections as well as our interactions with state government GIS programs and their staff. What better way to do that than to hold the conference in their own backyard. As many of you may not be aware, we now have a new WA State GIS Coordinator, Joanne Markert, who has been on the job for these last 10 months. One of the tasks Joanne has taken on has been to be an active member of our conference committee and she is currently working on putting together a WA State Government session at the conference.

Some of the other advantages that come with our Olympia location are that the conference is going to be held at the recently remodeled Red Lion hotel so you will not have to bounce back and forth between your room and a separate conference center like you have had to do in recent years. In addition the hotel has ample parking and one of our social events will be a free tour of the capital after hours. In addition this year's conference, as in previous years, will have student awards and registration rates, a newbie orientation, a resume review table, and new this year there will be a scavenger hunt. For those of you needing a little exercise I will be having an un-sanctioned, un-official, slow 5k run with the president. With WAURISA's desire to reward members who actively contribute to our conference, those of you who are presenters will be able to register for the conference at a greatly reduced price.

It takes a large number of volunteers to put on a conference of this size and to partially alleviate some of the pressure on

those volunteers we decided to take a different approach this year and fund a part-time conference coordinator. Maria Sevier, a long time WAURISA member and conference committee volunteer, has agreed to take on this role. I can truly say



she has been doing an excellent job of directing meetings, getting us organized, systematically documenting procedures and policies so that we can put on another fantastic conference.

The WAURISA GIS annual conference is an amazing forum bringing together Washington GIS users to network and learn from one another. I hope you will join us again this year! You can learn more about this conference within this newsletter as well as at our WAURISA website at <https://waurisa.org/event-2682778>. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your WAURISA President. I look forward to continue working with all of you into the future.

Sincerely,
Ian Von Essen

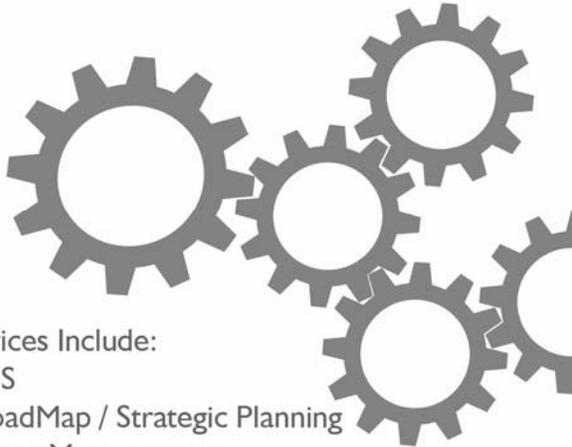
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Next Generation 911

(Continued from page 2)

Why is Next Generation 911 Important to GIS Personnel in Washington?

In the current system, the location of an emergency incident is transmitted by the wireline or wireless commercial carriers. Wireline customer's information is obtained through the billing system whereas location information from wireless calls are created by the GPS chipsets contained in the wireless device. In both systems, the responsibility of the location has fallen squarely on the shoulders of the carriers and the emergency responders have only been consumers of the information.

With Next Generation, the responders will be relying on GIS technology which will utilize several different databases and responsibility of the data's accuracy will fall on the shoulders



Above: Spokane County Com Center

of the call center, or Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). Liability and pressure being at the local level is an inevitable transition since legacy equipment is being rapidly replaced by IP technologies which are more reliable and create a system redundancy that cannot be achieved using circuit-switched equipment. Because GIS is now on the forefront of call routing, having accurate geospatial data is imperative to saving lives.

What do Washington State's NG 911 transition efforts look like?

While many may think of Next Generation 911 as an advancement to allow for text-to-911, it will also allow 911 dispatchers to receive wireless voice, video, text, and other forms of multimedia in addition to the landline calls. With NG 911, a series of functional elements are implemented in a specific order so the system works seamlessly with new and changing IP-based technology.

When **Washington** State started discussing Next Generation, they recognized that several stakeholders would be involved. On the state level, the Washington State Emergency Management Division under the Military Department is the main source of funding and direction in all things 911. Under

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Next Generation 911

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them is the Washington State Enhanced 911 Advisory Committee which is made up of representatives from Washington counties, county Enhanced 911 programs, GIS specialists, and NENA and NSGIC working groups. The GIS specialists make up of this body's GIS Subcommittee.

Washington State has hired a vendor to manage and implement NG 911. The first phase of the NG 911 implementation process will commence in May 2018 and is being introduced on a county-by-county basis, beginning with counties in the eastern part of the state. Counties and PSAPs will be connected to a statewide ESInet, or Emergency Services IP Network, which will allow information sharing across the entire state network, and eventually, across the entire country. The geospatial component of the project will be added in January 2019 and the State is expected to be fully NG 911 by the end of next year.

What are the challenges in the transition to NG911?

Because Washington State is considered a "Home-Rule" state, each of its 39 counties has a different approach to how they are tackling the challenges coming from a NG911 transition and there is not one state mandated way to go about the process. This has been one of the largest challenges in the transitioning project. Because each 911 and GIS system was developed under different circumstances, the starting point for each system's transition is different, so it is difficult to create one, generic workflow that all counties can follow to ensure that their data has a near 100 percent accuracy. The skill and knowledge level of those working with GIS is also variable across the state which means that the solution for

(Continued on page 8)

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Ty Wooten is the Director of Education for the National Emergency Number Association (NENA). Ty is also the principal instructor for the Center Manager Certification Program (CMCP), a 40-hour course providing the essential tools for effective management of 9-1-1 centers. Before joining NENA in 2012, Ty was the President of Public Safety Consulting & Management.

He also served as the first Director of both the Hancock County, Indiana 9-1-1 Center and the Indianapolis International Airport Communications Center. Throughout his 24+ years of experience in public safety, Ty has held various positions in law enforcement—as a firefighter, EMT, and hostage negotiator.

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Next Generation 911

(Continued from page 6)

one county may have limited applications when applied to another county because the person implementing the solution doesn't have a clear understanding how to implement it.

With emergency responders relying on GIS data, it is essential that counties and or PSAP have well-supported and funded GIS programs. To accommodate this necessity, some PSAPs have turned to their county GIS personnel while others have sought the help of vendors. GIS personnel tasked with NG911 performed a self check-up to determine the state of their GIS data and how it compares to the state standards for NG911. Once completed, comprehensive plans and funding schemes were created to outline the needs of the organization to comply with the published standards and requirements.

This has been a wakeup call for some GIS departments. Next Generation 911 requires a higher level of spatial accuracy than most other GIS applications. The cost of obtaining such high accuracy and moving data from one format to another has been determined to be costly for many. Unfortunately, many working on the data acquisition and compilation have needed additional funds, and while some have been provided by the state, it hasn't been easy to obtain with tight budget legislation moving through Olympia and county budget constraints.

Determining how to comply with data standards has also been a challenge. The National Emergency Number Association (NENA) is the organization that is leading the country toward NG 911 and is the main body that creates standards of operation. Compliance with NENA standards has been an issue since NENA, historically, has not been quick in producing standards and often states are ahead of them in their implementation schedules. This is a problem



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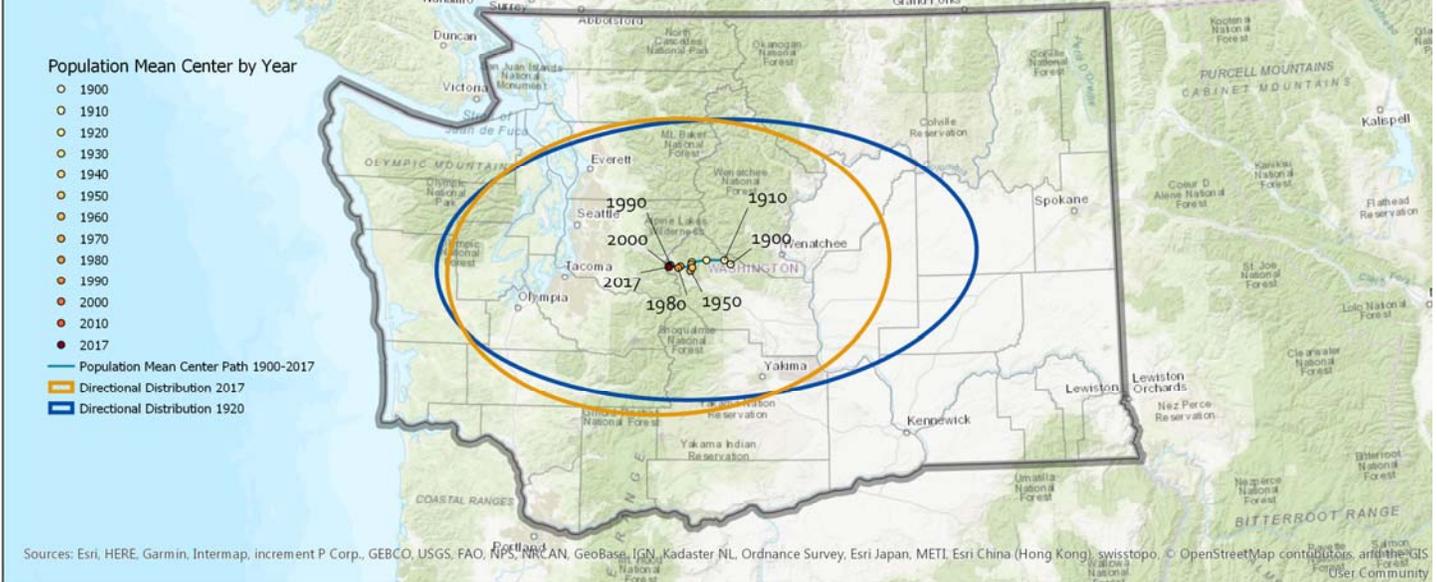
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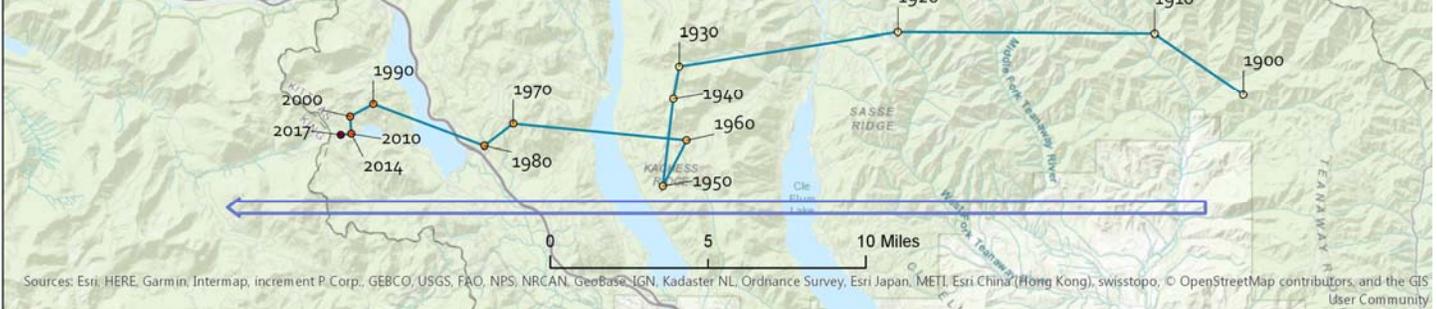
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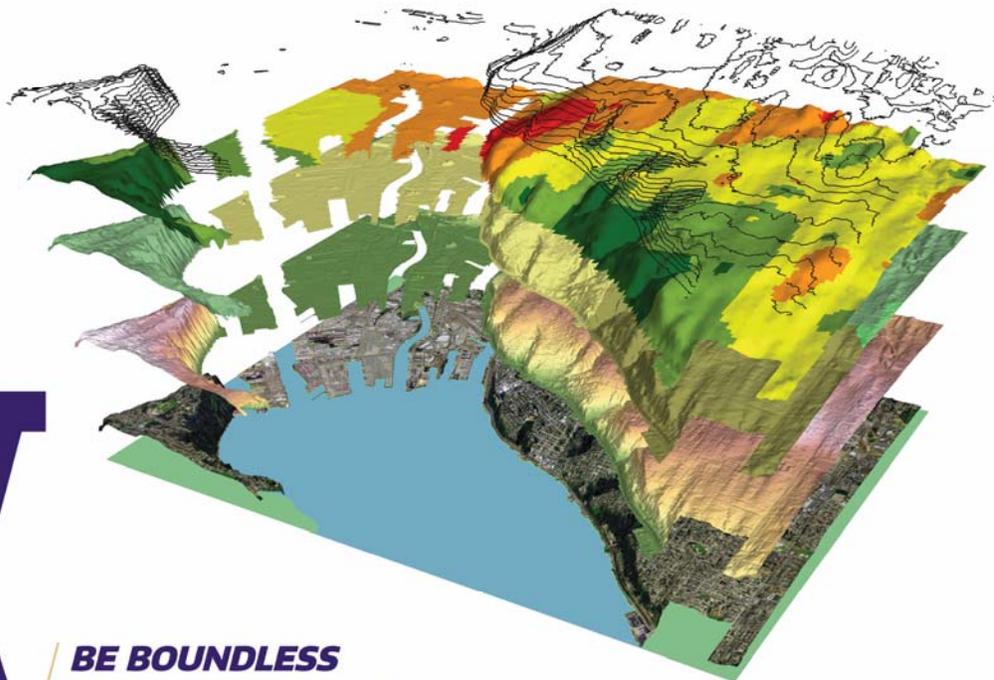
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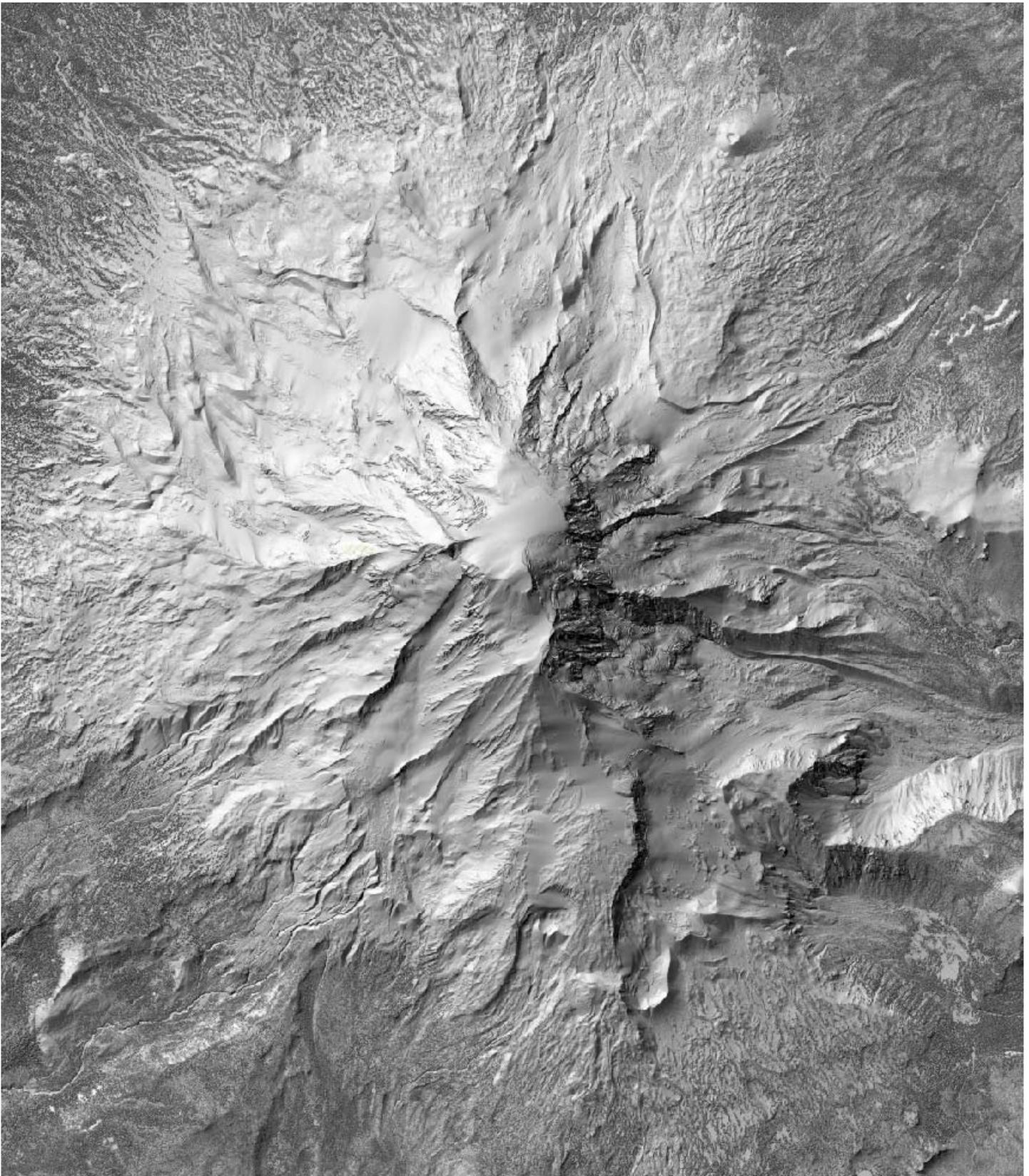
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(Continued from page 8)

when states are attempting to move to a fully Next Generation environment but do not know what the national standard for data will be. Because the standard regarding the format for geospatial data is still in draft form at NENA, the GIS Subcommittee, under the State Enhanced 911 Advisory Committee, created and adopted an interim standard document so that they could move forward without waiting on NENA. While this solution works in the short-term, it may cause problems if the state standard is drastically different than any document that NENA produces.

During this year's WAURISA conference, the keynote speaker, Ty Wooten, who is the Director of Education for

NENA, will be discussing not only Next Generation 9-1-1 during his address but will also be part of a panel that will discuss the intricacies and challenges that face GIS professionals when transitioning to Next Generation 911 on both the local and national level. By the end of 2019, Washington State's emergency management services will be working in a fully NG 911 environment, but challenges will continue to arise. If any are interested in a more in-depth look at NG 911 in Washington and how it will impact your work, please attend the NG 911-themed WAURISA sessions.

Congratulations to Ann Stark, 2017 GIS Person of the Year



Congratulations to Ann Stark, Senior GIS Analyst, City of Bellingham the recipient of the 2017 Summit Award. Ann's contribution to the Washington State GIS community has been, and continues to be, outstanding and inspirational to us all. Her drive to bring GIS professionals together to develop solutions and expand knowledge and resources has helped many throughout the region. Ann exhibits professionalism on all levels. Her drive for excellence in the GIS profession along with her outreach, volunteerism (former WAURISA President), coordination, and mentoring makes her a very worthy recipient of the WAURISA's GIS Person of the year.

Left—Ann Stark, GIS Analyst with the City of Bellingham receiving the 2017 the Summit Award plaque from (right) Don Burdick, GIS Project Manager & GIS Coordinator with the City of Bellingham.



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Meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month.

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Cowlitz-Wahkiakum GIS User Group

Meets the first Wednesday of each month at 3:00 pm at the Cowlitz County Administration Building, general meeting room (GMR-3rd flr), 207 North 4th Ave, Kelso WA (*unless other location is announced*).

Contact [David Wallis](#)

King County GIS User Group

www.kingcounty.gov/operations/GIS/UserGroups.aspx

Meets 1st Wednesday every other month at 11:00am at the KCGIS Center, 201 S. Jackson Street, Seattle WA, Conf Room 7044/7045.

Northwest Washington GIS User Group

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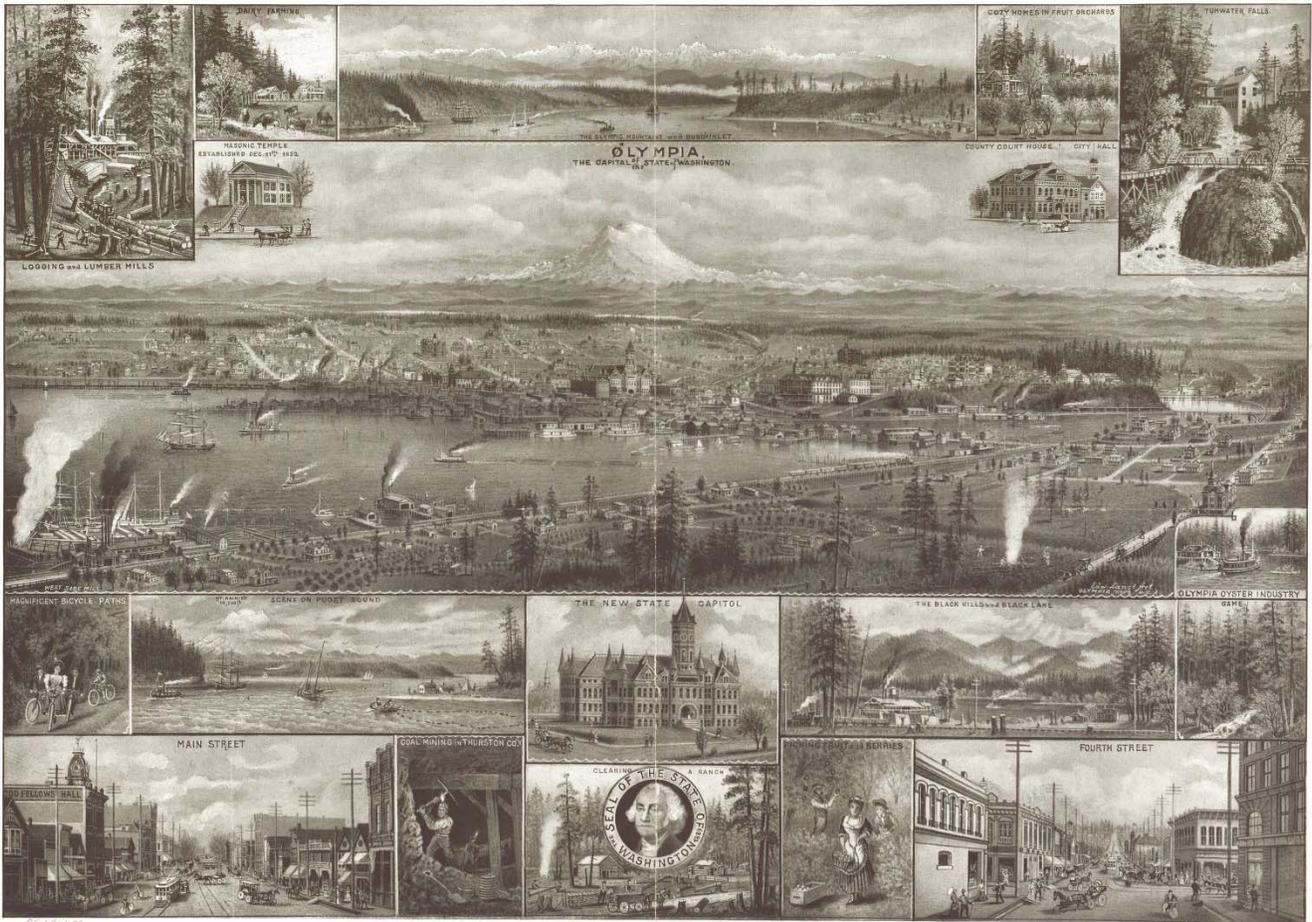


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