

Guest editorial for March, 2006 issue of Geospatial Solutions

Greg Buehler, GITA Annual Conference 29 Chair
Director of Field Operations
Open Geospatial Consortium, Inc. (OGC)
gbuehler@opengeospatial.org

Title: Imagine the Olympics in Tampa!

Imagine what it would be like if London, by some misfortune, could not host the 2012 Olympics and imagine that Tampa, Florida was unexpectedly chosen as the alternate site. Think of all the up-tempo preparations in the Tampa area that would require sharing of spatial data through open systems and institutional cooperation. Think about the Olympic security scenarios that would require sharing of much of the same data, scenarios that could go smoothly IF the open systems and institutional cooperation were set up beforehand.

This is the drama that will unfold in the interoperability demo at the Opening Session of GITA's 29th Annual Conference and Exhibition on Monday, April 24 1:30–2:45 p.m. The demo scenario will be staged (Tampa doesn't currently plan to host the Olympics), but the interoperability will be real. Tampa officials have provided data and are working with vendors to set up open interfaces for a dramatic live, online demonstration of what is possible when cooperating organizations take advantage of the latest technical advances in interoperability. The demonstration will feature integrated data, products, solutions, and services from multiple organizations – showing how standards-based, commercial off-the-shelf geospatial software, data, and services can be used to remove the barriers within a geospatial community. Attendees will see how critical and complex tasks that used to take days now take a fraction of that time to complete, all through the use of open architectures and standards-based implementations.

GITA's Annual Conference and Exhibition is the premier event for professionals involved in geospatial information technologies. There will be one-and-a-half days of in-depth technical seminars followed by two-and-a-half days of educational sessions. Preconference seminars will offer attendees the opportunity to concentrate on some key issues that are critical to successful project planning and implementation. The conference will feature 12 half-day seminars, beginning on Sunday morning and concluding on Monday. The technical program, beginning on Monday afternoon and running through Wednesday, will feature more than 200 speakers who will present conference papers on a wide range of topics. The exhibition will provide a showcase for state-of-the-art information technology products and services. More than 100,000 square feet of exhibit space will house more than 150 software and hardware suppliers, consultants, conversion companies, and other geospatial industry suppliers. There will be scheduled social events, "Birds of a Feather" sessions, a poster session and contest, and much more.

I invite Geospatial Solutions readers to attend. The theme is "No Barriers: Connected. Responsive. Prepared." That's all about saving money, time and lives. Serious business. But remember, too, these GITA conferences are fun and Tampa is beautiful in April! I hope to see you there.