

ASPRS 2008 Conference

The annual ASPRS 2008 Conference took place this year in the city of Oregon (USA), with the theme “Bridging the Horizons: New Frontiers in Geospatial Collaboration”™. <P>

Over 1,250 attendees made it to the conference in the Oregon Convention Center. After two days of pre-conference activities, the opening session, ‘Turning Point: The Future Direction of the Geospatial Industry’, was led by Mike Renslow, a photogrammetric consultant with Renslow Mapping Services. He moderated a panel of five geospatial-industry leaders discussing where the industry was heading and what could be done to prepare for the future.

Presidential Address

In her plenary address Kass Green, president-elect of ASPRS (American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing) told the meeting, “We are known as the standards setter in the geospatial community.” ASPRS had strong accomplishments and goals, but there were also challenges ahead. ASPRS membership remained flat, despite a growing geospatial community. Land was increasing in value, but conflicts were also growing in number, creating a greater need for geospatial information. “The world needs our knowledge,” she said, and gave many examples: Brazil, Indonesia and Korea. In Indonesia, the World Wildlife Federation used Google images to monitor changes taking place due to poor forestry techniques. “It’s our duty because we know how to monitor the landscape.” Executive director James Plaskar followed Mrs Green to the rostrum, giving a state-of-society address.

HB 55

In 2005 Oregon passed House Bill 55 (HB55). The result of a four-year effort by a taskforce of surveyors, photogrammetrists and GIS professionals, it defined GIS surveying inclusions and exceptions that clarify the relationship between survey, GIS and photogrammetry. HB55 mirrored model laws and rules developed by the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying. The panel discussion during the session on ‘GIS, Surveying, Photogrammetry, and Changes to Oregon Law’, led by Dean Anderson, IT director for Polk County, Oregon, focused on the effects the legislation is having on the industry. There was concern the law would throw affected industries into a tizzy, but this has not apparently been the case. Instead it has raised standards of quality and awareness in the GIS community of differences between surveying and GIS. Oregon is the first state to adopt the model law and others have contacted the state about its success. “Most states are struggling with this, if not all,” Anderson commented.

Exhibition

Nearly eighty exhibitors populated the trade show, many from the West Coast and Canada. Major players included Leica, ESRI, Riegl, Optech, BAE Systems, Applanix, and Intergraph. Software vendors were most abundant, but equipment manufacturers and engineering and survey firms offering aerial mapping and [photogrammetry](#) also joined the ranks. Leica sported its Erdas Imagine software, actually a suite of raster-based programs. Designed for extracting information from imagery, it allows analysis of data from virtually any source and its presentation in formats ranging from printed map to 3D-model. Erdas is the new name for Leica Geosystems Geospatial Imaging. Software companies from abroad included Myriax of Australia, Pioneer Geomatics from Korea, Stora Enso of Finland, Pasco, with facilities in Japan and Thailand, Pasco-Certeza Computer Mapping in the Philippines, and Eastdawn from China.

Cameras

Digital aerial cameras continue to increase in popularity. Jena-Optronik of Germany displayed its Jena Airborne Scanner JAS 150s, and DiMAC (Digital Modular Aerial Camera) Systems displayed its Wide, Light, and Ultralight models. Each DiMAC camera module is an independent assembly that acquires individual images. Lens selection and number of modules used may be adapted to project requirements. Modularity allows for easy upgrades and access to components for service. The Spectral Instruments SI5 Aerial Camera features a large, monolithic 100-megapixel digital image sensor and matched lens to improve image acquisition quality. This yields the geometric accuracy of a film camera with the advantages of a digital imaging system. A computer inside the camera body affords high-speed data throughput and image processing in transit. One issue with the digital camera is storing the huge amounts of data generated during flight. Ampex Data Systems offered its DSRs 600e and 1000e solid-state recording systems: small, rugged packages designed for airborne applications requiring high data rates and storage capacity. The Jena-Optronik approach is rugged hard disks that can be swapped during flight.

Lidar

Lidar continues to be increasingly used in aerial mapping, and efforts are underway to get terrestrial and aerial Lidar users into sync with each other. Riegl announced the release of its VQ airborne laser scanner. Using time-of-flight measurement, the compact, lightweight unit may be mounted in any orientation as well in narrow spaces, making it suitable for corridor mapping. Companies such as Valtus Imagery Services, Virtual Geomatics, and Overwatch Geospatial offered software for processing Lidar data. During the technical session “Photogrammetric Triangulation Models”, representatives from BAE Systems talked about the replacement sensor module, a generic, open-source concept that involves replacing with a single sensor the many currently used for aerial mapping. Other talks included ‘Reliability of CORS-based GPS Data for Highway Aerial Triangulation’ and the Caltrans program to improve the safety of surveyors in construction zones on road projects.

Final Remarks

Portland nestles between the Cascade Mountains to the east and the Pacific coastline to the west. Built along the Willamette River near its confluence with the Columbia River, it has become known as the City of Roses. Next year’s conference will switch to the east coast, taking place in Baltimore, Maryland from 9th to 13th March, as ASPRS celebrates its 75th anniversary.

