

# GITA 2005 *Â€CROSSING BOUNDARIES*Â€™

## ItÂ€™s All Go for a Mobile World

Thousands of geospatial professionals took part in GITA 2005, the 28th annual conference of the Geospatial Information and Technology Association (GITA), held in Denver, Colorado from 5th to 10th March. The conference started with two days of in-depth seminars, followed by two days of educational sessions and concluded with User Group meetings for Oracle Spatial and Ten Sails Smallworld.

As conference themes of general interest there were key presentations and seminars on critical infrastructure protection, mobile computing, web services, interoperability and standards, homeland security, return on investment, and enterprise integration.

### Opening and Awards

GITA officially kicked off on Tuesday with an opening message from DenverÂ€™s Mayor John Hickenlooper. He noted that many geospatial technology companies have located on Colorado's Front Range and play a significant role in the region's economy. There are, in fact, close to a hundred geospatial technology companies in Colorado. Mayor Hickenlooper went on to note that the US Department of Labor had identified the geospatial industry as one of the fastest growing sectors of employment in the United States. The Mayoral welcome was followed by short presentations from GITA president Bob Samborski and conference chair Vince Rosales. These were followed by the presentation of awards, including a lifetime achievement award to Sakura Shinoaki of Otsuma Women's University, Tokyo, Japan and the Distinguished Service Award to Keith McDaniel. GITA Innovator Awards were bestowed upon Jones-Onslow Electric Membership Corporation, Jacksonville, North Carolina. Their system, developed over the last ten years, provides an integrated and seamless consumer information system, financial management and mapping facilities system. The second Innovator Award went to MassGIS, of Boston, Mass., one of the earliest adopters of interoperability and developer of MassGIS OpenGIS-based Web Mapping Services, always-on access to all the data contained in the MassGIS data repository using OGC Web Map Service (WMS), Web Feature Service (WFS), Gazeteer and Geocoder interfaces.

### Key Speakers

The keynote speaker was Chip Eichelberger, a motivational speaker of 21 years experience in sales and a disciple of best-selling author Tony Robbins. Using a combination of humour, anecdote and excellent speaking style, Mr Eichelberger engaged the audience and broke the conference Â€iceÂ€™. The focus of his message was about setting life goals and how to achieve them. He provided advice about identifying those little errors in judgement that can lead to disaster. Perhaps the most thought-provoking presentation for me was the one on Sentient Computing by Peter Batty PhD, of Ten Sails. He provided a far-reaching look into the use of location-determination technologies to build real-time, highly interactive spatial sensor systems. A new generation of location-tracking technologies that work both indoors and outdoors and provide location accuracy to within inches were described in terms of a whole new set of applications enabling real-time tracking and sensing of assets Â€including people. Such capabilities have real implications in terms of how enterprises deal with these new real-time sources of location-based information.

### Packed Exhibition

Nearly 130 vendors, government agencies and consulting organisations packed the exhibit floor. There were numerous product announcements, but the major interest seemed to be in mobile computing. Many of the companies on the floor were demonstrating mobile and location-based solutions. There was also considerable interest on the part of attendees in mobile computing. It appears that now the products and communication infrastructure is in place to truly support the mobile workforce and other mobile and location services-related applications.

### Educational Streams

This increased interest in mobile computing and location-related services was underscored in education streams addressing both Technology Directions and Mobile Applications. There were several especially heavily attended sessions: Emerging Technologies in the Geospatial Industry and Sentient Computing Â€From Graphical User Interface to Geographical User Interface and Deploying Mobile GIS and Workforce Management. These were only three of many excellent educational presentations. The problem was that too many of the presentations I wanted to attend were being held concurrently!

All in all, I found GITA to be an excellent conference and educational experience. I am looking forward to GITA 29 to be held in Tampa, Florida in April 2006.

