

NYSGISA Regional COVID Coordination Meeting, November 4th 2020 1:30pm – 2:15pm

Attendees:

Ross Baldwin, Chair

Doug Schuetz

Bill Ostranger

Liz DeGironimo

Steve Pollackov

Frank Winters

Sheri Norton

Alan Leidner

Notes

The meeting centered around a discuss led by NYS GIO Frank Winters.

Frank offered the Regional Committee use of the State's WebEx and suggested we reach out to Michele to make arrangements.

There was discussion about a plunge in the COVID positive rate in Orange County from 27% to less than 3% over a brief period of time. The thinking is that members of the community are being encouraged not to take COVID tests to avoid or lift red zone designation and the resultant closing of businesses and institutions. It was suggested that wastewater testing might be a way of determining COVID positivity.

Frank said that it might be necessary to conduct wastewater tests in all communities so that no community would feel singled out.

Ross mentioned that the recording of the last call with Frank could be found on the NYSGISA website.

Frank reported that the state geocoder is be used extensively and in the last month alone received 40 million hits. Counties are updating their data in the State's street name and address data base. In the last week there were 23,000 updates by local GIS offices. Updates in the database are used by 9-1-1 and for a number of COVID related applications. Frank praised the spirit of collaboration in the State's GIS community.

The Electronic Clinical Laboratory Reporting System (ECLRS) is batch geocoding all COVID testing, both positive and negative. ECLRS is using a commercial geocoder because the State's geocoder is currently only available over the web which is considered a violation of HIPAA, even though it is only addresses that are being transmitted. State GIS is working on providing the State geocoder directly on laboratory sites. Frank said that good address information should be

captured and geocoded at the first step of the data capture process – first hands on the keyboard.

Frank believes ECLRS is getting positivity information from NYC that has been geocoded using the City's application. He is hoping that the method for geocoding NYS address data will be standardized to make sure the basis for identifying new cluster zones is consistent across the state. The mapping of cluster zones is now more structured than in the beginning. The State DOH Epidemiology division is closely involved. Geographies used for mapping range from census blocks to zip codes. It was good foresight to align census tract boundaries with street centerlines even at a time when dealing with a pandemic was not even thought of. Another example of how the original intent of a GIS application extends to other, unanticipated uses.

Every Tuesday night COVID zones are redrawn and re-issued. DOH creates the boundaries based on GIS information and then Frank's team makes the maps for the Governor. Map production is becoming increasingly scripted/automated. They are also responsible for maps and listings of schools and colleges in restricted zones. The data can be found on the NY Forward website. Considering standing up a web service in CIRIS so State agencies, counties and municipalities can download data. Individuals interested in getting the URL for the web service connecting to data on state COVID hot zones should get in touch with Frank.

Governor Cuomo uses Frank and Team's map as a backdrop. Serves as good GIS branding.

Alan L. announced that he will be working with the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) on a Health/Pandemic related Concept Development Study (CDS) to eventually produce a Health standardized data model similar to the underground infrastructure data model now being worked on by OGC. Alan said he hopes he can involve members of the Regional COVID community in this initiative.