



# Compass Quarterly



Carolina URISA Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 3

Summer 2009

## Officer's Address

### Carolina URISA Overhaul and Upcoming Election

#### Background

Responding to the limitations placed on individuals and organizations due to the economy, the Carolina URISA Officers and Advisory Board have looked inward at what is really important in regards to our role in service to you - our members. Out of this introspection, comes a renewed resolve to provide our membership with creative, tangible, practical services in response to member requests.

You have to do 'business as usual' while shouldering many more responsibilities and tightening your belts. These fiscal cut backs have resulted in slashed training budgets, the inability to travel even short distances to participate in professional events and in some cases increased job responsibilities. CURISA intends to do what it can to ease this situation by reinventing the way it does business.

In the spirit of community, CURISA intends to draw on its partnerships with International URISA, GISCI, NCCGIA, and other regional groups to continue to build on our strengths by working smarter through sharing resources with other organizations and filling the gaps to overcome the obstacles many of its members are experiencing.

Based on your feedback, CURISA has made the following commitments to implement the above directive.

#### Change to Election Process

In the spirit of laying a solid democratic foundation for representing CURISA members, the Officers and Advisory Board have reviewed and recommended going to a more regionally based selection process to ensure equal representation among membership.

Obviously the first arena reviewed in this process was the geography. NC will be divided into 4 regions and SC will be divided into 2 regions. Next, the Advisory board members will be appointed through an application process and will represent one of six regions across the Carolinas. Further, the Officers roles will change from serving one year to two year terms to provide more continuity and stability starting in 2010. Additionally, outgoing Officers will continue to serve one year to aid the transition. Finally, the timeframe for participation in the 2010 CURISA Officer and Advisory Board election process will be in the Fall of 2009.

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#### Remembering Lori Key

*The GIS community in the Carolinas lost a great person last month when Lori Key, GIS Operations Manager for Johnston County, NC passed away following an accident. Lori was not only a resource that we could all rely on and a person who contributed to the profession but she was also a friend. Lori was very highly regarded by her peers and a loving mother to her children. There is a lot to remember about Lori. We will all miss how fast she talked and her nickname for herself (GeoQueen), but most of all we will miss her smile and kindness.*

-CURISA Officers and Board

## Calendar of Events



ESRI International User Conference; San Diego, CA; July 13-17, 2009 (<http://www.esri.com/events/uc/>)

South Carolina Association of Counties (SCAC) Annual Conference; Hilton Head Island, SC; July 30-August 2, 2009 (<http://www.sccounties.org/default.aspx>)

North Carolina Arc Users Group (NCAUG) Eastern Meeting; Durham, NC; July 31, 2009 (<http://www.ncaug.com/>)

URISA/NENA Addressing Conference; Providence, RI; August 4-6, 2009 (<http://www.urisa.org/conferences/Addressing/Info>)

HAZUS Conference; Raleigh, NC; August 10-12, 2009 (<http://www.hazus.org/>)

North Carolina Arc Users Group (NCAUG) Fall Conference; Carolina Beach, NC; September 16-18, 2009 (<http://www.ncaug.com/>)

ESRI Health GIS Conference; Nashville, TN; September 21-23, 2009 (<http://www.esri.com/events/health/index.html>)

Virginia GIS Conference; Richmond, VA; September 21-23, 2009 (<http://www.fgdc.gov/site-events/2009-virginia-gis-conference>)

URISA Annual Conference and Exhibition; Anaheim, CA; September 29-October 2, 2009 ([http://www.urisa.org/conferences\\_workshops](http://www.urisa.org/conferences_workshops))

North Carolina Planning Conference; Greensboro, NC; September 30-October 2, 2009 (<http://www.nc-apa.org/>)

NCTR/URISA GIS in Transit Conference; St. Petersburg, FL; November 16-18, 2009 (<http://www.urisa.org/>)

URISA Leadership Academy; Seattle, WA; December 7-11, 2009 (<http://www.urisa.org/>)

## Chapter Contacts

Kristian Forslin, President	North Carolina Railroad Co.	<a href="mailto:kristianforslin@ncrr.com">mailto:kristianforslin@ncrr.com</a>
Andrew Shore, Vice President	City of Burlington, NC	<a href="mailto:ashore@ci.burlington.nc.us">mailto:ashore@ci.burlington.nc.us</a>
Cyndi Hendricks, Treasurer	Brunswick County, NC	<a href="mailto:chendricks@brunsko.net">mailto:chendricks@brunsko.net</a>
Tim Muhs, Secretary	NC Dept. of Agriculture	<a href="mailto:tim.muhs@ncagr.gov">mailto:tim.muhs@ncagr.gov</a>

### Advisory Board

Pat Bresnahan; Richland Co., SC

Julia Harrell; NC DENR

Cyndi Hendricks; Brunswick Co., NC

Katie Brewer; MSD of Buncombe Co., NC

### Advisory Board

Brian Ritter; Pickens Co., SC

Jo Anne Manley; City of Monroe, NC

Amy Durden; Elizabeth City, NC



## Member Spotlight



This quarter CURISA asks one of our members, Lisa Harrington from Alexander County, NC a few questions...

Please tell the readers a little about your career. I am currently the GIS Technician/911 Addressing Coordinator for Alexander County. I have been here for a little over 10 years now.

How are GIS resources structured within your organization? Our county is a very small county compared to many in our state. We have my supervisor, George Brown, GIS Coordinator and myself. That is our department. Others in the county use GIS but we are the GIS Department.

What GIS software does your organization use? ESRI'S ArcGIS as well as custom written applications.

What is a typical work day like? Is there a typical work day in GIS or local government? We are currently working flex time so a typical day may run from 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. I usually open email and answer any of those that need answering and from about 8:00 I may be bombarded with phone calls or emails or have very few. I also work on updating our existing data. Usually once a week I will take my laptop out to do addresses for new constructions in our county. This may run from a couple to as many as 12 - 15 in a week.

What do you most enjoy about your present job? I like being able to help people. People call me and ask where this or that is and when I can help them, it's great! I also like being able to go to my boss and offer ideas about what we can do to make GIS better for our county and he listens and we are able discuss ideas we have. I like finding ways to further clarify our data so that it will be useful and try to anticipate what we will need in the future.

What is your educational background? I graduated high school and didn't go to college for too many years. Then I went to Catawba Valley Community College and earned my Associate Degree in Information Systems- Computer Programming.

What influenced you to choose this career and at what point did you choose it? When I first started working for the county we had an old dBase database for info and paper maps that were kept under lock and key! Measurements were done by a DMI that attached to a car's Odometer which I figured by a formula we had. I was told that "a few" changes would be made shortly when we went to GIS mapping. My job has changed dramatically since I began it and I honestly think if I had known how much it would change from the start, I probably would have ran the other way. So I guess I didn't really choose it, it was chosen for me and I decided to stay. But I really do love it now. Most days.

What do you think it takes to be successful in this career? I think you have to want to change and not be static. I think you have to be a little adventurous and try to think "what will we need to know in the future?" Not just "what have we needed in the past?"

What has been the biggest change in GIS since you began your career? Everything! When I first came to work for Alexander I had heard about GIS, but I wasn't really sure what all it meant! I have had some ESRI classes and learned a lot from conferences, but learned way too much by trial and error.

What major projects are you working on now or have just completed? We are currently updating the attributes of our address points layer. When it was set up our building type of Commercial Business could encompass anything from a chicken house to a restaurant. Due partly to the recent bird flu scare, we have decided to change the attributes to identify poultry operations and further classify what all of the businesses are.

What professional GIS organizations are you a member of? I am a member of CURISA & NCAUG.

Do you have any advice for people who are interested in a career in GIS? This summer we have an intern from a community college that thinks he might be interested in GIS. He is helping us with some things that we haven't had time to do and learning about GIS in the process. This is a great way to help decide if GIS might be good for you! Also going to GIS conferences would help also.

*(Continued on page 4)*

Lisa Harrington



Lisa works for Alexander County, NC as a GIS Technician / 911 Addressing Coordinator. She has some interesting insights into the GIS industry and how they do things in the County.



We are looking for interesting subjects for our next interview!

This is an excellent opportunity to showcase someone's talents, learn from and about fellow members, and share with CURISA members.

If you know someone who you would like to see interviewed and hear what they have to say about CURISA, GIS, etc., please email the editor at: <mailto:kristianforstin@ncrr.com>



## Member Spotlight

How do you feel about how far educational institutions have come in terms of GIS curriculum in the past 5 - 10 years? Our local high school has offered GIS classes for several years but due to budget issues will not next year. I know that before then, no one had probably even heard of GIS. I know that colleges are adding classes and some have a really great selection of courses, but I feel that other colleges will start to add the classes in it is financially feasible.

In your opinion, what are some 'hot button' issues affecting the GIS industry right now? I think right now the 'hot button' issue for any industry is money. States and counties are running out of it and GIS Professionals (like everyone else) want more of it to better the equipment and develop software and applications but cutbacks are here for us. And I think this is probably true in the private sector also. With GIS, when people find out what all you can do, they start to expect more and more whether you have more resources or not.

What was your first job? My first real job was straight out of high school. I worked in a furniture factory and hated every day of it. I like my present job at least 1000% better!

What is the best thing about your life right now? I love where I'm at right now. I have a great husband, Randy and son, Parks that I love very much. Going home is like going to a sanctuary. We have 11 acres of mostly woods and it's so peaceful there. Sitting under the umbrella on the back deck is almost like being on vacation every day.

Where do you live now? Tell us a little about the area. I live in northeastern Alexander County across from a smallish Mountain known as the Rocky Face Mountain. My husband's father grew up less than a mile from where we live. There is talk that the Mountain will become a small county park and as long as the "feel" of the area doesn't change, I'm excited about this happening. It would be great to walk trails on the Mountain and see the surrounding area.

Thanks, Lisa!

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## Officer's Address...Cont'd

*(Continued from page 1)*

In response to the ever changing landscape of the GeoSpatial Industry and its affects on our membership, the roles and responsibilities of each Officer has been revised to provide a more detailed description of the specific tasks of each office in a very flexible format to allow Officers to work their individual strengths while serving in a coordinated fashion. The Advisory Board roles provide an additional level of support for the completion of CURISA tasks and leadership.

### **From Conference to Workshops**

Due to the economic downturn the Board agreed to temporarily shift its resources from the annual CURISA conference to providing workshops. As more emphasis is placed on continuing education needed for GIS certification, CURISA has decided to seize this opportunity to begin working on a solution to this challenge in the form of one-day workshops held across the region or on-demand workshops held at any time.

For example, regionally-based one-day workshops can significantly reduce members travel costs. By utilizing our existing relationships with URISA international and GISCI, we can take full advantage of their workshop offerings, including paid instructors who roam the country teaching workshops. By participating at the table with these larger organizations, as their initiatives progress we can shape these resources into alignment with the proposed CURISA workshop program.

It follows that expanding CURISA's involvement with the biennial NCGIS conference (one of the largest state GIS conferences in the US) as a co-sponsor also supports our goals of removing obstacles for our members. Participation in the NCGIS Conference is yet another opportunity for our membership to give back to the large community and reap professional service points which support the GIS certification process. The motto here is creating 'win-win' connections for event organizers and participants.

CURISA understands that in lieu of our annual conference we must provide our members with valued services. It is our hope that the workshops and heightened participation in the NCGIS Conference will do exactly that without the immense effort and cost of a two or three day large venue conference.

### **Conclusion**

During this patriotic season, go back to your democratic roots. Remember that this nation that we live in was created by and for the people. With freedom comes the responsibility of participation. At the micro-level, the current Officers and Advisory Board of CURISA look forward to your participation in shaping the future of our organization. We encourage you to contribute your strengths, in whatever capacity, to the Carolina GeoSpatial community. Through everyone contributing to the local and regional organizations such as CURISA, we can connect and provide practical, useful, and much needed services to the Carolina GeoSpatial Community as well as serving as a model to the rest of the states and even the world.

Please vote during this Fall's election and throw your hat in the ring for leadership at whatever level you feel comfortable. The responsibility of positive change rests with you.



Katie Brewer

## URISA and GISCI Corner

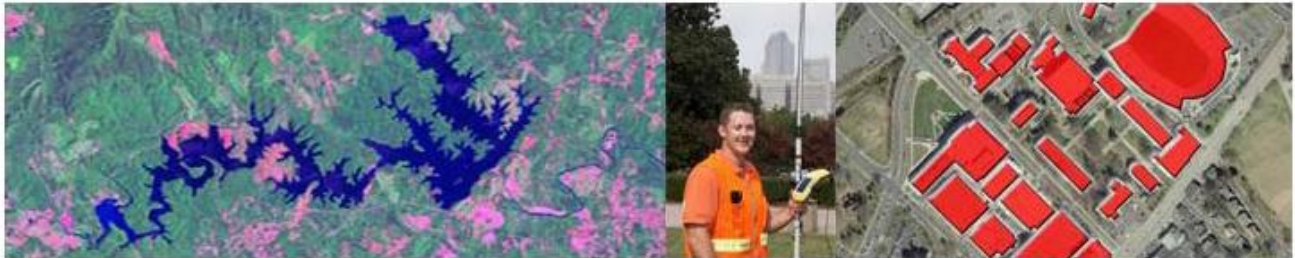


**821 New Certified GIS Professionals (GISPs) Announced on April 25, 2009.**

**4,386 Total Number of GISPs World-wide. 285 in North Carolina & 78 in South Carolina for a total of 363. Congratulations to CURISA members who have recently gotten their GISP!**

### Geospatial Technology Center

#### Central Piedmont Community College



The Geospatial Technology Center at CPCC is offering the following courses through their Corporate and Continuing Education division this fall, 2009. For more information please visit us on the web at [www.cpcc.edu/gis](http://www.cpcc.edu/gis) or contact Matt Miller at [matt.miller@cpcc.edu](mailto:matt.miller@cpcc.edu) or (704) 330 - 6836

- "Creating GIS Web-Mapping Applications" August 12th-14th at CPCC's Levine campus  
**\$300.00**
- "Introduction to ArcPad and GPS Analyst" October 12th-13th at CPCC's Levine campus  
**\$400.00**
- "Building and Managing a Geodatabase in ArcGIS" November 19th-20th at CPCC's Levine Campus  
**\$350.00** (Books provided)
- "Introduction to ArcGIS 9.3" December 17th-18th at CPCC's Levine campus  
**\$300.00**

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## Officer's Meeting Minutes (condensed)

Highlights from the most recent Carolina URISA meeting April 22, 2009 in Burlington, NC:

- Most of the time spent was discussing the new workshop program. Officers created a plan for developing new workshops including potential subjects, speakers and locations.
- CURISA decided that funds would be appropriated for an accountant to finalize all tax filings and details.
- New election proceedings were discussed at length. The application process, how it will be administered and any potential solicitations for future officers were discussed as well.
- All audio / visual equipment was transferred to Andrew Shore at the City of Burlington. This location was determined to be more central to our members.



# WANTED: ARTICLES

**Do you have an interesting project you are working on?**

**Do you want to 'toot your own horn'?**

**Need points for GISP certification or renewal?**

If you answered 'Yes!' to any of these questions, then get something written for the Compass Quarterly!

We need member-submitted articles for our (your) newsletter. Your fellow members want to hear what challenges you face and how you faced them. Anything goes, really. Short, one to two page articles on an interesting project, a unique experience, a networking success story or anything else that you think CURISA members would like to know about. You don't have to be Shakespeare!

CURISA's newsletter is an excellent outlet for members to 'get published' without writing a novel.



Your advertisement will reach over 200 members specifically targeted in the Carolinas. Members range from local and state government agencies to private companies who need your products and services.

We will accept 1/2, 1/4, and 1/8 page general business ads as well as submissions for any of our newsletter features, such as Featured Articles and the CURISA Toolbox.

Our rates are reasonable and we can accommodate most special requests. If interested please email <mailto:kristianforslin@ncrr.com> for a media kit.



## Contributors

### Officers

Kristian Forslin—Editor

Katie Brewer—Officer's Address

### Members

Lisa Harrington—Member Spotlight

Michael Erickson—Calendar of Events