

URISA's 4th Caribbean GIS Conference: Evolution and Next Steps

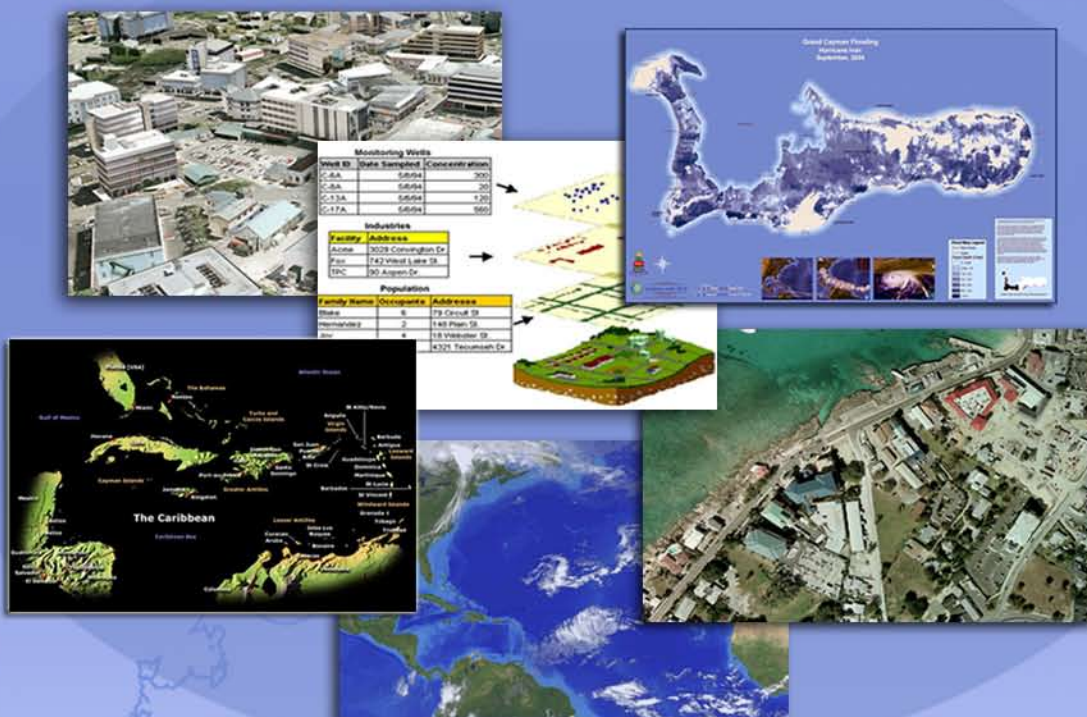


AUGUST 25-29, 2008
RITZ-CARLTON GRAND CAYMAN
CAYMAN ISLANDS



The Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA) along with the Cayman Islands' Ministry of District Administration, Planning, Agriculture and Housing through the Lands & Survey Department invite you to join us at this year's Caribbean GIS Conference being held at the Ritz-Carlton Grand Cayman set in the heart of beautiful Seven-Mile Beach.

Grand Cayman, Little Cayman and Cayman Brac total 260 sq. km (100.4 sq.mi.)



Latitude/Longitude - 19° 30N, 80° 30W - approximately 180 miles Northwest of Jamaica

The Ministry of District Administration, Planning, Agriculture and Housing, acting through the Lands & Survey Department, are pleased to announce that the Cayman Islands have been selected to host the 4th URISA Caribbean GIS Conference. This prestigious event will be held at the Ritz-Carlton from the 25th-29th August 2008 and is fully supported by the Hon. Leader of Government Business, Mr. Kurt Tibbetts JP. Government is committed to ensuring that this event is the most comprehensive regional GIS conference ever.

URISA (Urban and Regional Information Systems Association) is a nonprofit association of professionals using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and other information technologies to solve challenges in state / provincial and local government agencies and departments. Operating throughout North and South America, Latin America and the Caribbean, URISA is considered to be the premier organization promoting the use and integration of spatial information technology to improve the quality of life in urban and regional environments. Strong emphasis is placed upon the effective and ethical use of spatial information and related technologies for the understanding and management of urban and regional systems.

What is GIS? A GIS is a system for storing, managing, integrating, analyzing, and displaying data (for example, in map form) that is spatially referenced to the earth with the aid of advanced application software and related systems. It provides the framework for understanding the world around us and helps to apply geographic knowledge to solve problems, show geographic relationships, organize business information and guide human behaviour.

GIS is used widely throughout government and the private sector across the globe. It has become a fundamental tool for many organizations and central to their business processes, much like mainstream IT did in the 1990's. It is used in such diverse fields as Disaster Preparation and Response, Real Estate, Environmental Management, Development and Planning Control, Insurance and Banking. It is also central to Land Records Management as can be seen in the Cayman Islands' Land Registry.

The URISA Caribbean GIS Conference occurs bi-annually and focuses on the effective application of GIS and other information technologies across a wide range of users in the region. The conference promotes the sharing of technology experiences between users and provides workshops and themed sessions that are application driven and relevant to the Caribbean community of GIS users. Additionally, it provides the region with a focal opportunity for users and vendors of GIS technology to come together and provides an excellent platform for training opportunities.

It is anticipated that the conference will attract delegates not only from the Caribbean, but also from Latin America, the USA and Canada, Europe and South America. Delegates typically represent a cross section of professionals from government, private sector and academic institutions allowing unique opportunities for networking, regional partnerships and collaborative ventures. With attendance expected to be around 500, the conference provides a considerable sponsorship opportunity for companies wishing to gain exposure to a pan Caribbean and wider regional audience of influential delegates.

The conference is organized around a series of themed parallel sessions, with presentations from industry professionals covering a wide variety of topics. These themes are collated into Disaster Management, Law Enforcement, Public Health and Safety; Standards, Policy and Management; Land, Environment, Planning and Natural Resources; Utilities, Business and Organizational GIS. Other Hot Topics such as Web imagery (for example Google Earth, Virtual Earth), 3D visualization, GIS in education and emerging trends will also be covered in depth.

Providing a firm foundation for each set of daily themed sessions is a series of Keynote presentations. These will be given by industry leaders drawn from pre eminent organizations in GIS and IT, plus other regional personalities.

Prior to the main opening, and complementing the main conference theme, it is planned to host special events encompassing vendor training and pre conference seminars/workshops. Additionally, it is anticipated to involve representation from CARICOM and other regionally influential organizations. The conference organizing committee believes it is essential to use the opportunity to involve decision makers of this calibre and increase their awareness of the importance of GIS in assisting economic development and social well-being. Sustained, steady and reliable funding is a pre requisite for successful implementation and operation of a National GIS. However, policy and decision makers should also be cognizant of the substantial revenue generating opportunities arising from a successful GIS operation.

The Cayman Islands Lands & Survey Department (marketed through its *Cayman Land Info* identity) is firmly of the belief that components of the GIS development “model” adopted in the country can be applied and have some relevance in other jurisdictions. *Cayman Land Info* is a regional leader in the GIS field and is committed to assisting in regional development via collaborative ventures and skills transfer.

The conference theme of “Evolution and Next Steps” is intended to promote extensive open dialog and discussion on the current status of GIS development within the region and worldwide. Delegates will be encouraged to focus particularly on the establishment of an agreed conceptual framework for ongoing regional collaboration.

The organizers are committed to encouraging attendance from all parts of the region. To this end, the conference venue provides delegates the opportunity to avail themselves of the many food and beverage options available through generous local and vendor sponsorship.

For full details of the conference agenda, registration and other information, please visit the URISA website at www.urisa.org/conferences/caribbean/info.