

Sidwell Develops Legal Descriptions Course

At the request of the Illinois Property Assessment Institute, Mark Dupree and Randy Kobiella recently developed a two-and-a-half day tested course on legal descriptions. The course is accredited by both the Illinois and Iowa Departments of Revenue, and provides each attendee with a portion of the classroom hours necessary to maintain professional designation in the assessment field. This new course was offered for the first time at the IPAI's Spring Workshop in Springfield, Ill., this past March.

The course consists of two days of lecture combined with the opportunity to analyze and plot many different types of legal descriptions. Following a review session, the test is administered on the morning of the third day. Response to this new course was positive and complimentary. Currently, the course is scheduled to be held twice again in 1995: during the month of August for assessors in the northeast region of Iowa, and in October, for the IPAI's fall workshop in southern Illinois.

Tech Update:

Windows NT Means Changes Ahead!

Since the late 1980s, Sidwell has been using personal computers running the DOS operating system and MicroStation software as our primary digital map production tools. Our computers are hooked together into a local area network (LAN) through Novell Netware software. This environment has served us well. However, as our industry becomes increasingly dependent on new and more powerful mapping software, we are beginning to outgrow this computing environment.

Our potential clients are demanding new Geographic Information System (GIS) tools that have the potential to increase efficiency in map production and alter the way map data are used. These tools

offer among other things, the capabilities to:

- ◆ Warp maps into refined or corrected control networks.
- ◆ View aerial photographs on screen behind map data in MicroStation.
- ◆ Reference scanned images of existing plats behind a MicroStation map.
- ◆ Build topology (polygons) for parcels on the fly.

The GIS industry has long been the domain of high-end computers running the UNIX operating system. Personal computers running the DOS operating system have been viewed as inexpensive input stations incapable of "real" GIS operations. Over the past few years this equation has been altered by DOS software, such as the GWN-GIS software that we currently use, capable of performing GIS analysis operations. However, the performance of these products has not been comparable to the high-end UNIX based GIS products.

The reasons for this are simple. First, GIS analysis moves huge volumes of data through the processor ("brain") of the computer. DOS simply can't move data fast enough. Second, the two major components of GIS (graphics and database entities) need to multitask, or do work at the same time. DOS can't do this either.

So, why don't we just use UNIX? This operating system is very powerful, but it is also very complex and difficult to use. The hardware necessary to optimize a UNIX system is expensive to purchase and maintain. UNIX applications software is expensive, and is usually able to run only on one specific brand of UNIX, of which there are at least seven. However, our primary reason for not embracing UNIX is our evaluation of the GIS market. We believe that UNIX will lose the battle for GIS market share. Sidwell does oper-

Milestones

The following Sidwell employees are celebrating significant service anniversaries this summer (June - August):

5 Year

Matt Eggleston
Krista Koster

30 Year

Tom Collins

Congratulations to each of you as well as those employees celebrating anniversaries in other increments of time!

Just For Fun...

Test your employee knowledge — match the Sidwell employee with their place of birth: (answers on page 2)

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------|----------------------------|
| 1) Cindy Bohr | _____ | a) Lombard, Ill. |
| 2) Mark Dupree | _____ | b) Herrin, Ill. |
| 3) Sebastian Frcka | _____ | c) Detroit, Mich. |
| 4) Joni Fredricks | _____ | d) Colorado Springs, Colo. |
| 5) Donna Jenkins | _____ | e) Tokyo, Japan |
| 6) Marv Knopp | _____ | f) Berwyn, Ill. |
| 7) Alex Wernher | _____ | g) Paducah, Ky. |
| 8) Rosie McClurg | _____ | h) Alton, Ill. |
| 9) Dudley Sidwell | _____ | i) Pontiac, Mich. |
| 10) Bob Sifferd | _____ | j) Taunton, Minn. |

ate one UNIX station to support the Polk County project, which is a UNIX installation.

This has left the GIS industry with a problem: how to offer robust GIS analysis capabilities to a county government client base that has not embraced the UNIX computing environment. The answer: Windows NT.

This new operating system contains true 32-bit computing and multitasking. Simply stated, it can do everything that UNIX can. However, it looks and feels like Windows, a computing environment that has been heavily embraced by the computer user community. In addition, all traditional DOS/Windows-based software will run on Windows NT.

Sidwell currently operates three Windows NT stations in our product development area. We are running the full suite of Intergraph's MGE GIS software on two of these machines. They can communicate with each other, and with our Novell network, all from within the File Manager component of the graphics user interface (which looks very similar to the Windows File Manager that many of you have access to now.)

At Sidwell, we are planning to take advantage of this new operating system. Over time, we plan on replacing our Novell network with a Windows NT Server. Stations will be running Windows NT (or its expected sibling, Windows '95) to access data.

We will implement this powerful networking environment by installing a systemwide database that will comprise a true client/server system. This database will probably be Microsoft SQL Server. This will allow all database applications to access the same data tables. Virtually all duplication of data entry within the company should be eliminated. Our existing database applications can all be altered to access tables residing on the database server. This will ensure standardized data access, which should increase productivity.

So, what can this mean for you? It means that everything you do on the computer may ultimately be accomplished from a single station accessed through icons within a single user interface. MicroStation input, GIS manipulation, word processing, database access, and spreadsheet manipulation: run them one at a time or together. This concept of having one computer at your desk that answers all of your computing needs is called the "technical desktop". We believe this to be the future of computing.

This conversion will not happen overnight. It will require effort, participation and patience from everyone. Computer upgrades always include headaches. However, in our business we must stay ahead of our competition and lead our clients to success. Windows NT will be an important part of this effort. - Brent Mainzinger

Off-Site Sidwell: Offices in the Field

Although the majority of our company's employees do their work at our West Chicago headquarters, a few "Sidwellians" operate from offices strategically located in the field.

Many of us are familiar with the Des Moines office, from which sales activities are conducted. "The Sidwell Company has maintained an office in Des Moines since 1976," says Dave Squires, who manages his Iowa sales territory from this office. Commenting on the reason a facility was opened in that location, he adds, "It was decided early on that it was important to being deeply involved with our current and future [Iowa] clients on a day-to-day basis."

Recently, an additional remote office site was opened in Livonia, Mich., a Detroit suburb. This site was selected after Donna Hollis joined Sidwell last February as our sales representative in the states of Michigan and Ohio. Donna, who resides in a nearby suburb, centers her sales activities in the Livonia office.

Finally, since relocating to Arizona, Sam LaRocca has been working in an office at his home in Oro Valley. Although retired, Sam continues to pursue potential business projects in this new territory.

See Dick Run...

Dick Kennedy doesn't follow the crowd; he leads it. That is, at least on the track.

Dick began running 12 years ago, after graduating from Northern Illinois University. He had competed in nearly every other sport and decided it was time to head for the track. For the first six years, Dick simply ran for fun. But after beating a former NIU classmate, the race began.

Shortly thereafter, Dick joined the NIU track club and started running three-mile and six-mile races, which he found didn't suit him. He now competes in 800-meter races. "My first meets were at NIU because they're open to students, alumni and faculty," says Dick. "Track meets are pretty scarce once you get out of college. I run in any open collegiate meet were they will accept open-division or unattached-runners."

Dick now runs with the Fox River Trailrunners in St. Charles. The 30 to 40 members meet each Wednesday night and run more than six miles. He occasionally still trains with the NIU track club. "They invite me because I can still beat them," adds Dick. He has done a great deal of research over the years to find out how an 800-meter runner should train. During the April to August track season, Dick runs 50 to 60 miles a week but cuts back to as few as 20 miles in the off-season.

The research Dick has done suggested varying speeds and distances while training, which has paid off for him. This past February, Dick traveled to Reno, Nev., and came in third in his division at the USA Track & Field National Masters Indoor Championship. He is currently competing in local collegiate meets.

So if you want to keep up with Dick, you'd better be able to run the 800 in less than two minutes: Dick's best time is 1:58.8, which he comments, "is pretty decent for an old guy!"

"In-The-Bin" — Update:

New to the company recycling effort is the capacity to handle electrostatic plotter paper and blueprint paper. Both are being accepted by St. Charles Scrap, St. Charles.

5	H	10	F
4	J	9	A
3	I	8	B
2	E	7	C
1	G	6	D

Answers to Employee Birth Place Quiz