

Notes from the Meeting of the 2013 NYS Conference Committee

(February 8, 2013)

Conference Call Info

The teleconference is scheduled for 10:00 am - 11:00 am.

Conference Dial-in Number: [\(424\) 203-8400](tel:4242038400)

Participant Access Code: 217256#

Committee Members in Attendance: John Barge, Mickey Dietrich, Eric Herman, Bill Johnson, Susan Nixon, Bruce Oswald, Lindi Quackenbush, Tom Sears, Cindy Sherwood (DEM)

Conference Bullets:

The old, familiar *NYS GIS Conference* is being reinvented as *NYGeoCon*. Don't miss all of the new features!

- Workshops on state-of-the art topics will be provided at no extra cost for all registrants. Come and learn something new!
- Hear invited national experts speak in the Special Spatial Spotlight tracks.
- Network with your peers from across the state where you'll find out what they're working on and learn from their experiences.
- Interact with companies and organizations with cutting edge technologies and innovations.
- Earn points towards your GISP, continuing education credits.
- Experience Saratoga Springs, one of upstate New York's most vibrant and thriving small cities.

Conference ideas:

- Pre-register attendee interests on-line
- Have attendees' names role across website
- Use tag line for NYGeoCon

Conclusions from the February 8th meeting:

1. Update on Conference Site Selection
 - Cindy is still waiting for layouts by the hotel.
 - One layout will feature having the exhibitors in the Gallery area
 - Carol Zollweg is working on delivering a template for the website to DEM. This will be by next week.
 - The committee prefers not to have any of the conference in the Civic Center.
2. Presentations
 - Few new ideas were received since the last time. Bruce will check on the close out date and forward the ideas to the committee subsequent to that.
3. Budget
 - Cindy sent out a draft budget. The numbers for sponsors/exhibitors will be put in for next week.

- The price for attendees can go up. \$175 for early registration was suggested.
- 4. Strategy for increasing attendance
 - Need to build excitement. Bruce will initiate a contest for a new NYGeoCon logo. The contest will run 2 weeks. We will ask folks to vote on the logo – 1 week. Consider including a free registration for the winner!
 - Bill will initiate putting together bullets for why folks should come to the conference. Others can add/edit the document.
 - The group will consider providing a benefit (admission to a contest to win an iPad, etc.) for attendees bringing in first time attendees
 - A package will be put together to encourage teachers to bring in students. Bruce will ask Ann Deakin for ideas.
 - The committee will concentrate on local colleges like Skidmore, SUNY Albany, RPI, Union, etc. Consideration will be made for a ½ day attendance package for students (no lunches or receptions).
 - Post card reminders will not be used. The committee will stick with electronic communications.
- 5. Strategy for increasing sponsors
 - Exhibitor/Sponsors Pricing - Cindy will review the cost packages for exhibitors/sponsors. She will reduce the number of sponsor comps.
 - A matrix will be developed to make it clear what sponsors/exhibitors will get for each level.
 - DEM will make their other conference mailing lists available to NYGeoCon.
 - We will target going out to sponsors in mid March.
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- 6. Changes to or refreshing the conference concept
 - The committee is open to changing things for sponsorship, regular attendees, etc. and welcomes input from DEM.

Conclusions from the February 1st meeting:

1. Update on Conference Site Selection
 - Location of the vendors
 - Booths need to be 10' in width (The diagrams provided to date seem to show the use of tabletop exhibits. These are not big enough.)
 - Layouts provided do not provide enough seating capacity for meals (Need seating for 300+)
 - Would like to see layout for vendors in Ballroom 1 with full seating in 2 & 3; vendors in Foyer & Pavilion; or vendors in Gallery
 - Cindy needs to also ask if we could use the restaurant for a vendor space
 - App garden should be in the exhibit space
 - All food needs to be in the vendors if they are not near sessions (any information on the conference sent to vendors needs to highlight every event on the agenda that will be in their area.
 - Update on Conference Web Site
 - Association folks and DEM staff are in contact and working out on access issues

2. Presentations

- Report on response to date
 - 5 suggestions for spotlights and 4 for workshops so far
 - We need to consider what to do about computers for hands on workshops. It was suggested that we consider making the event BYOD (Bring Your Own Device)

3. Strategy for increasing attendees

- Build excitement by working on the message! Ideas? Schedule for info releases?
- Provide info so the attendee can prove the value to him or herself and their boss. Link to the NSGIC ROI for attending conferences:
http://www.nsgic.org/public_resources/Conference_ROI_121812_Final.pdf
 - Committee agreed to develop bullets and not long (2 page) document
- Look into providing continuing education credits/GISP certification. What actions we need to take???
- Conference will provide certificate of daily attendance to be e-mailed out to attendees to use for documentation
- Verne will ask Obrien & Gere how the CEU's were handled by them last year

4. Strategy for increasing sponsors

- Exhibitor/Sponsors Pricing
 - Currently prices at other conferences are all over the place as they struggle to get folks to the events
 - Need to relate prices to budget needs
 - Prior complaints that sponsors were paying too much of the conference fees versus attendees
- Lists from other conferences added to our list – DEM to provide

5. Saratoga Social Activities

- Social events were the major things that attendees remembered past conferences by. They also prove to be great networking opportunities.
- Monday night event
 - We will not do anything formal like the National Racing Museum Event because of cost, effort and shrinking attendance
 - We will look at potential for going to a local establishment and see if they could provide us with space, discounts, etc to provide place to get together and network/have fun
 - Eric mentioned a new place called Druthers on Broadway
(<http://www.druthersbrewing.com/>)

Conclusions from the January 25th meeting:

- Update on Conference Site Selection
 - The conference will be held at the Hilton on November 12 & 13th.
 - Vendors will be located in the Saratoga Ballroom. (Cindy will ask the Hilton to provide diagrams of possible layouts.)
 - The hotel will provide one free continental breakfast.
 - The parking will be free (details are being worked by Cindy).
 - Upgraded Internet access will be available via a daily code for exhibitors (and others??).

- If the conference achieves 85% of the room block, there will not be a penalty.
- Audio equipment will be discounted 10%.
- There will be 5 complementary room upgrades.
- Update on Conference Web Site
 - Cattyann Campbell will create a sub domain for the conference site. Access will be provided to Marie (DEM) and she will design the site on it.
 - Verne will coordinate the domain name issues.
 - The Association will resolve any additional costs associated with the work.
- Presentations
 - Bruce will add the fact that there will be no Summit in 2013 to the announcement and send it out. He will also make sure that it is posted to the Association web site.
 - Bruce will set up the Survey Monkey site to obtain input on spatial spotlight ideas and workshops.
- Strategy for increasing attendees
 - Build excitement by working on the message!
 - Use mailing lists from other related conferences.
 - Provide info so the attendee can prove the value to him or herself and their boss. Bruce will provide a link to the NSGIC ROI for attending conferences:
http://www.nsgic.org/public_resources/Conference_ROI_121812_Final.pdf
 - Look into providing continuing education credits/GISP certification. Mickey will look into them for local government. Cindy will check on the value of including this on other conferences.
- Strategy for increasing sponsors/attendees
 - Lindi will provide the 3-fold program, the sponsor invitation letter, and the attendee list.
 - Cindy will utilize staff at DEM to obtain exhibitor mailing lists for other similar conferences.

Conclusions from the January 18th meeting:

- In light of all the factors presented to them, the Committee recommended contracting with the Saratoga Hilton for the conference on November 12th-13th.
- Bruce Oswald will make that recommendation to the Board. Once he receives approval from the Board. Cindy Sherwood will be given authority to complete negotiations on the contract.
- The Committee noted that they wished to pursue using the Sagamore Resort for the conference site at a later date.
- Cindy will review the deficiencies (i.e. Internet access, parking, break refreshments, seating and room comfort, etc.) noted in the last NYS GIS Conference held at the Hilton with their staff to determine what changes/improvements have or can be made to ameliorate them. It was noted that, in particular, vendors need solid Internet access.
- Presentations – Bruce will develop a write up for to be used to “advertise the conference” and crowd source topic areas for the first day’s presentations.

He will also set up a Survey Monkey site to accept the conclusions that are received.

- App Garden & Petting Zoo - Eric and Mickey have again volunteered to take the lead on the App Garden & Petting Zoo. Eric indicated that “new blood” would be helpful.
- Improving Conference Attendance - Bill Johnson noted that Joe Beaulieu from his staff got the NYS GIS Association listed as an accredited organization for the Workshop Seminar Reimbursement (WSR) Program for PEF Represented Employees. Bill will circulate that information to the group.
- Increasing Sponsors – Lindi Quackenbush will see if she can find the list of past sponsors.

Conclusions from Jan 4th meeting:

- Conference Agenda (Below is the rough agenda discussed in the meeting. Items for the App Garden and Petting Zoo have been left in as place holders until a decision is made on their format)

Pre- Conference:

- Late afternoon arrival and vendor set up (25-30 spaces); special area for “App Garden” and Technology Petting Zoo (TBD); I
- Low key evening reception (or “get together” in the hotel bar (hosted by Tom Sears)

Day 1:

8:00 a.m. – 9 a.m. Registration Desk Open/Conference Check-in; vendor area open; Continental Breakfast (in vendor area) (Note – 8:00-7:00pm Exhibitor (25-30 spaces); plus special area for “App Garden” and Technology Petting Zoo; all breaks in this area)

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Welcome & review of agenda/description of various conference events; Association Overview; State of the State

10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Break in vendor area

10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Keynote Presentation (for 400 theatre style)

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Lunch

12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Dessert in the vendor area

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Special Spatial Spotlights (3 -4 rooms seating 100-150 each theatre style)

3:00 p.m. – 3:30 pm Break in vendor area

3:30-5:00pm: Concurrent workshops (3 rooms seating 100-150 each theatre style) (No pre-registration)

5:30 – 7:00 p.m. Networking Reception in Exhibit area

Day 2:

7:30 a.m. Registration Desk Open & Continental Breakfast

7:30 a.m. Exhibit Area Opens; “App Garden” (technology poster session) featuring web-based and mobile platforms

8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. (4) Concurrent technical sessions- each room seating 150 theatre (concurrent sessions will be 3 half hour sessions)

10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. – Break in vendor area

10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. – NYS GIS Association Annual Meeting

12:15 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. – Lunch (What about a box lunch in the vendor area?)

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. – 4) Concurrent technical sessions- each room seating 150 theatre (concurrent sessions will be 3 half hour sessions)

2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Break in vendor area

3:00 p.m. 4:30pm: – (4) Concurrent technical sessions- each room seating 150 theatre style (concurrent sessions will be 3 half hour sessions)

- Presentations
 - Crowd source Special Spatial Spotlight and Keynote topics via Google Docs or Survey Monkey
 - Who will take the lead on this?

Conclusions from the 2012 Conference Post Mortem:

- Consistent problem with people not knowing what events were going on where and when (technology petting zoo, app garden, demo theater, etc.)
 - Need an Emcee to alert people (on a regular basis) to events going on and their location
 - Possibly better and more signage
 - Possibly one or more rolling PPT’s showing each day’s agenda and room location for events
- Conference should be held on Tuesday/Wednesday or Wednesday/Thursday.
- 2013 conference should be a “hybrid” model of the 2012 conference – 2 full days with the first day starting at 8:30 and vendors setting up the night before. Also, possibly a less formal networking get together the night before.
 - Plenary session would include a welcome with directions on the conference highlights (also consider rolling PPT’s with those highlights for each day), high quality keynote, State of the State, etc.
 - Chosen presenters for the Special Spatial Spotlight track
 - Workshops (2 hours in length)

- Evening reception
- Volunteered presentations on the second day
- The Committee was asked what would entice you to go to the 2013 Conference?
 - Ability to learn new information/something that you see for the first time.
 - Listen to a “leading edge” keynote speaker
 - Hear the State of the State
 - Find out the latest in technology
 - Find out creative approaches to using existing technology
 - Learn about the latest mobile apps