



MEMORANDUM

Date: June 29, 2007

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator 

Re: Award-Winning Geographic Information System

Pima County's Geographic Information System (GIS) was honored with a Special Achievement in GIS Award, presented by the Environmental Systems Research Institute's president and founder, Jack Dangermond, in a ceremony on June 20, 2007 in San Diego, California. Selected from over 100,000 GIS sites worldwide, this award acknowledges Pima County's success in the development of a full-service geographic-based decision-support system which provides information to a wide range of users in local government and the community. Pima County's GIS library currently contains more than one thousand data layers, many of which are viewed daily over our web-based mapping systems. In the first quarter of 2007, more than 3 million requests were processed over the Internet, putting a friendly face on local government.

Pima County ranks among the top GIS sites in the world. Providing a vital component to decision-making, our approach mirrors the best practices developed in Europe and other parts of the world. In many places it is becoming apparent there is not enough bio-capacity to allow everyone to continue unfettered use of resources and land. Pima County's Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan recognizes this and has set the standard in conservation planning, being used as a model throughout the world.

GIS can be used to apply the science of geography to help solve real problems, communicate better, understand a situation and work effectively towards a solution. It is proving to be a powerful tool to illustrate what is happening at the landscape level. Questions can be posed and GIS can help provide answers. Decisions can then be made proactively and risk managed in location-based decisions.

Two decades of investment in GIS hardware, software and professional staffing to develop and refine this database and its analytical capability is certainly worthwhile and has now been recognized by the international GIS community. Our GIS staff deserves a great deal of credit and gratitude for their diligent pursuit of an invaluable tool that benefits the entire Pima County community and the global world of knowledge.

CHH/jj

c: John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator - Public Works
John Regan, Geographic Information Systems Manager