

Alaska Smart Communities Forum  
April 26, 2018, 8:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  
Matanuska-Susitna Borough Administration Building / Assembly Chambers, Palmer  
Meeting Notes

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Slide presentations and links from presenters at this Forum are posted on the [Alaska Smart Communities Forum](https://akscf.matsugov.us) (<https://akscf.matsugov.us>).

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Introductions & Updates (slides posted)

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Progress on State “Geoportal”

Jack Horner

- The Geoportal is a joint effort with members from the Alaska Smart Communities Forum and the Alaska Geospatial Council, led by Anne Johnson. The is a portal-of-portals that links viewers to many open data and GIS sites and data sets. Most of the work on the site has been done by Aaron Wood/Erin Palmer/Kenny Klewein. Easy access to the Geoportal through [www.matsugov.us/geoportal/data](http://www.matsugov.us/geoportal/data).
- Next 90 days: Build scripts to add data to this portal. Also adding non-geo-located information, i.e., State Finance, Elections.

Today’s Meeting Emphasis

Eric Wyatt

- Among the challenges in an organization is continuing to find talented and skilled people. New technology is great but requires training employees in the organization how to use it.

Overview of Forum Success Measures

Doug Miller

- Smart Communities website has been updated, contains all information from past Forums. <https://akscf.matsugov.us>

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UAA Learning Management System (slides posted)

Adam Paulick, CIO/UAA

- UAA implemented the Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS) several years ago.
- Most students are going into the workforce familiar with LMS and find them valuable.
- Videoconferencing allows off-site participation through either verbal or chat functions.
- Many vendors have plug-ins for Blackboard LMS.
- Professors are trained by UAA Instructional Designers who help the professor to brainstorm and build courses on the site. Mat-Su College has a staff person that assists professors.
- Cost: Not cheap, but value is there. Blackboard continues to evolve.
- UAA is open to partnerships to offer training/support/evaluation of training tools.

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Open Media Project (slides posted)

Mike Chmielewski, Radio Free Palmer

- The [Open Media Foundation \(OMF\)](#) is a media and technology nonprofit organization dedicated to putting the power of the media in the hands of the people.
- Among its services is providing access to state-of-the-art media tools and high-end technology resources at affordable rates.

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- Meetings can be streamed live and recorded for viewing later.
- Recordings for this Forum and many other events are both audio and audio/video on the Radio Free Palmer website.

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[Austin CityUP](#), Technology for Urban Progress (slides posted) Jay Boisseau, CEO/Vizias

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- Created consortium of companies, organizations, and individuals to advance Austin through smart city techniques, including digital technologies, data collection, analytics, and modeling.
- Vision: To create a comprehensive, integrated, inclusive, sustainable, advancing smart city infrastructure that continuously improves operations, services, and quality of life, while increasing efficiencies and reducing costs, for the city and its constituents.
- Cities rarely collect data like companies do, and most is periodic dumps of data. Difficult to collect data due to the funding source (taxes); budgets do not allow for growth of data, just resources (fire service, roads, etc.).
- Members of the consortium are not necessarily in Austin – they are all over the United States who are involved in Smart City projects in other states as well. They are members because of Austin’s Vision Statement.
- Conducted workshop recently to address affordable housing database; goal to create a model that can be used by other communities (besides addressing their own need for this database).
- Implementing smart kiosks to notify public of projects and give public another method for feedback.
- Reviewing how to use cameras/sensors to collect data in a manner that does not risk citizen personal information (i.e., measuring water depth). (SENTIA.AI is an example of a company selling optical data collection cameras.)
- Consortium understands value of sharing data with the public.
- Blog is used to communicate progress/plans with Consortium Members/public.
- Lunch & Learn via web monthly to share on projects or hear from those who have contributions to the Smart City effort.
- Local city and county participates in projects.
- Business Model? Use small membership fees today, but the model is evolving.
- Discussed how housing, for example, would be hosted. Undecided at this point. May be IBM to host, or Dell, Cisco or others. The City of Austin uses the Socrata platform.

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Being Smarter in Developing Local Talent (slides posted) Jim Bates,  
Business Improvement Group

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- When you place focus on efficiency (cutting costs) you impact an effectiveness.
- Investing in training employees helps the company be effective that increases efficiency.

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- Discussed the value and possibilities of sharing resources across organizations.
- Suggestion to set up a Collaboration site to list training needs so that classes can be set up that can address needs throughout the area.

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[UAA Geomatics](#) (slides posted)

Caixia Wang, Assistant Professor/UAA

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- “Geomatics” incorporates traditional disciplines of land surveying, mapping, geodesy, photogrammetry, and hydrography, together with the newer disciplines of remote sensing, digital photogrammetry, high density spatial data, LiDAR, and geospatial or geographic information systems (GIS).
- UAA Geomatics is an accredited program and is one of the few programs in the country that offers education in all 6 disciplines in the field of Geomatics.
- Presented student projects that involve geodata gathering that provides valuable information for the community.
- Contact Caixia to discuss project ideas and see if your project would qualify for a student project and how students will work with your organization to complete the project.

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Lunch Roundtable Discussion – Skills and Resources

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What local skills do you need?

- GIS Technicians/Specialists with web map/application development/experience for analysis
- Demographics understanding
- Instructors
- All technical curriculum is out of date right after it’s written. Need to teach students how to adapt/learn once they get their degree.
- Problem solving skills
- Lack training in the regulatory requirements (insurance/HIPAA/etc.) for drone and other technology
- Entrepreneurial drive

What training are you finding/using?

- Esri online training
- Python scripting at UAA

How can we help each other?

- Share costs for Instructor-led training / coordinate training opportunities.
- Collaborate on SharePoint training.
- Identify products/vendors and discuss shared training for employees.
- Mat-Su College needs Adjunct Instructors in all fields.

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- Mat-Su College would like to discuss projects any organization is working on that students can shadow to expand their industry knowledge/stretch them (real problem examples).
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Lunch Roundtable Discussion – Being Digital

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*Note: We ran out of time to discuss this topic, but some participants wrote and provided answers following lunch.*

How are you delivering more digital information to customers/employees?

- Webmaps and applications
  - MEA Outage Map
  - Internal web map viewers for planning, analysis and investigation into our data
- Working to develop database, maps & online map access/app.

What barriers do you have in being digital?

- Teaching employees to use technology, accessing and incorporating non-digitized data/records.
- Teaching ourselves and having time to implement new technologies.
- Poor prior data management
- Purchasing software
- Figuring out our needs & how we'll format new database.

How are you addressing these barriers?

- Staying active in Mapping/GIS Community.
- Creating training internally for employees.
- Excellent new hire, internal discussions, seeing how others do things, purchasing software.

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Mat-Su College Advisory Council

Harry Banks, Mat-Su College

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- Looking for new project and intern opportunities for students.
- Contact Harry Banks for an appointment to share your needs for future employees and training needs of future staff.
- Come with ideas/projects with which we can work on together.

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