



Central HAZUS-MH User Group Meeting

January 19, 2009

1:30 am to 2:30 pm EST

I. Attendees

Kevin Mickey, The Polis Center
Jamie Caplan, Jamie Caplan Consulting
Adam Campbell, The Polis Center
Robbie Stoikes, Wisconsin Emergency Management Agency
Tom McLintock, University of Wisconsin
Terry Siemsen, USACE
Drew Whitehaire, Michael Baker Jr.
Jared Owen, Illinois EMA
Kingsley Allan, Illinois Water Survey
Lisa Verhelst, Illinois Water Survey
John Remo, Southern Illinois University

II. State Updates

Michigan

No one from Michigan attended the call, but Kevin reported that he recently taught a class at EMI which was attended by a person from Michigan that expressed interest in becoming a CHUG participant. He will follow-up with her prior to the next scheduling meeting.

Indiana

The Polis Center is continuing to work with the Indiana Department of Homeland Security toward the development of mitigation plans for 35 counties. Completion of this project will bring Indiana to the point of having a nearly comprehensive HAZUS-MH Level II study of flood and earthquake risk. Only 3 of 92 Indiana counties will not have a Level II analysis and grants are being pursued in those counties so that they can also be completed. Adam Campbell reported that the current group of counties includes Lake County in the northwest part of the state. This county, located just to the east of Chicago, has a large population base and was also one of the first counties to sponsor a HAZUS class. The current project counties are being funded under the Central Prairie Grant and Northern Farming Grant.

The Polis Center, in collaboration with the Silver Jackets, is working on a web enabled version of a flood loss estimation tool. Kevin suggested that there might be an opportunity to do a presentation at the upcoming HAZUS conference on how this type of tool can be part of the future of HAZUS. Kevin is also working on the development of a write-up on this project.

Kevin reported that he will be delivering a workshop on using geospatial technologies for community planning at the Indiana GIS conference on February 22nd. He plans to have a component of that workshop devoted to demonstrating how HAZUS can be used to support hazard mitigation planning.

Illinois

Jared reported that he is working on reviewing county mitigation plans and he indicated that the state plan is due for update at the end of the year. He reported recently coming across a statistic that shows a 216% increase in Illinois counties covered by mitigation plans – many of these done with the support of HAZUS. Jared predicted that in the future Illinois will have very good HAZUS data.

Jared stated that based on information that he has received about the National Average Annualized Loss study being conducted by FEMA, Illinois has decided to see what FEMA plans to release from that study and how that information will support the needs of the state. At that point they will decide how/if to proceed with the development of Level 2 data. Kevin indicated that Polis is supporting FEMA in the development of the national study and that he anticipated that information about the study and how the information generated from it will be disseminated will be forthcoming in the near future.

Jared reported that he has been asked to do a presentation about how GIS can fit into planning at the Illinois GIS Conference. Kevin offered to provide presentation materials to Jared or anyone else in the CHUG that is able to do presentations. Those materials can then be modified to fit the audience.

Lisa reported that the Water Survey has finished a draft plan for Henderson County and submitted it to IEMA. They anticipate finishing several additional plans this year.

John Remo reported that he is busy doing 7-8 counties under PDM grants. These counties are mostly in central Illinois. He is also wrapping up previously submitted plans from the original 17 counties worked on by SIU.

Wisconsin

Robbie indicated that Wisconsin Emergency Management has submitted a planning grant that may have HAZUS involved.

Minnesota

The Minnesota CHUG members were unable to join the call due to a last minute commitment. However, Adam Campbell provided a brief report on the status of the State HAZUS efforts being supported by Polis. The project team is in the middle of prototyping the flood study for the state plan update. The University of Minnesota Duluth is developing metrics for methods to be applied for every county. It is anticipated that the prototype will be done in February, the processing will be finished in 2010, and the plan will be finalized in 2011.

Ohio

Ohio was not represented on this call. However, Kevin reported that in discussions with Dean Ervin at EMI he learned that one of the goals of the state is to empower local government with the knowledge of how to use HAZUS. Kevin suggested that with the commitment of people like Dean, Ohio should see considerable growth in the application of HAZUS in productive and credible ways.

III. HAZUS Analysis Levels - The Importance of Documentation

There was a discussion about the challenges associated with defining the level of HAZUS usage for HAZUS studies. Studies are typically defined as Level 1, Level 2, or Level 3 but these descriptions represent a wide range of possible work done to improve HAZUS outputs. The group concluded that detailed documentation about what enhancements have been done as part of a study is vital. This documentation should include any improvements to hazard data, inventory, loss estimation assumptions, and so forth. The CHUG developed a documentation template shortly after it was created that can be used as a starting point for this purpose. That document template is posted on the CHUG website at www.usehazus.com.

IV. HAZUS Training in Region V

It was reported that some of the CHUG members have signed up for EMI HAZUS courses because haven't seen regional opportunities being offered in FEMA Region V. Kevin reported that he is still waiting for word from the Indiana Department of Homeland Security regarding when and where they want to schedule additional classes. Scheduling of these classes has been anticipated for several months, but delayed due to a variety of higher priorities that arose within IDHS. It is hoped that classes will be scheduled in Indiana in the next few months. Kevin promised to contact IDHS to get an update on their intentions with regard to scheduling training and then report to the CHUG members the response that he receives from them.

V. August 23-25 HAZUS Conference in Indianapolis

Approximately half of the meeting was devoted to the following questions:

- What can we, as user group leaders, do to get people to attend the 2010 National HAZUS Conference in Indianapolis?
- How do we expand the conference audience from being composed of primarily HAZUS power users to including decision makers and HAZUS beneficiaries such as state GIS coordinators, economic developers, public health professionals, etc.?
- Do we want to have an agenda for what we as a user group want to see at the conference? Answers may help decide what major goals should be as a user group for 2010.
- What does the CHUG need from Jamie and FEMA to support their goals related to promoting the conference?

Ideas and Comments:

- A session for public officials at the conference might be a good idea. The theme could be 'How can HAZUS help your constituents and what can you do to use HAZUS and similar technologies to meet your objectives?'
- CHUG leaders need to approach these questions while considering the audiences that they serve. We need to think about what needs to be at the offered to bring these constituencies to the conference? For example, the ability of HAZUS to do flood analysis is dependent in part on the quality of elevation data. How can we promote more counties making the investment to improve their elevation data?

- One of the target audiences needs to be DNR, USGS, and state GIS committees because that's where data gets developed.
- CHUG leaders need to think about doing workshops and presentations between now and August to increase interest in HAZUS so people will want to attend the HAZUS Conference. If you find an opportunity to present HAZUS at a conference then let us know as a group and let Jamie know – we can provide support, handouts and presentations
- Kevin would like to have a CHUG session or meeting at the conference and show – similar to the North Carolina User Group meeting held in Raleigh at the 2009 conference – to show what is happening in all states in the region. Presenters need to be the POCs for each state.
- Offering training at the conference would likely be a great incentive for encouraging people to come.
- Target for finalizing conference agenda? Jamie will check with OPP

Action items

- CHUG leaders will develop a list of conference presentations and other venues occurring between now and August in which it would be helpful to have promotional materials related to the upcoming National conference. Kevin offered to compile a master list of these presentations. These can also be posted to the CHUG website.
- Jamie will let us know if there is a specific theme for the conference and any other major information that can be shared

Look for good things to happen this year with HAZUS

Next Meeting

March 19, 2010

3:00 p.m. to 4:00 pm ET

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