



Harford County Public Schools

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Joppatowne High School Sponsors GIS Day Event Celebrate Your World with GIS

Joppatowne High School's Homeland Security students announce a demonstration of geospatial technologies on GIS Day, November 19, 2008. This event will take place at Joppatowne High School from 9:00 a.m. - 2:15 p.m. Tenth and 11th grade students participating in the Homeland Security Program will be on site to demonstrate the software they have been working on this year including Satellite Tool Kit and ArcGIS 9.1.

Held annually on the Wednesday of National Geographic Society's Geography Awareness Week (November 17 – 21 for 2008), GIS Day is a global event that celebrates geographic information system (GIS) technology, the innovative technology that uses geography to bring countless benefits to the world. Joppatowne High School provides an opportunity for those curious about GIS to see its applications in action. A GIS is a computer-based mapping tool that takes information from a database about a location, such as streets, buildings, water features, and terrain, and turns it into visual layers. The ability to see geographic features on a map gives users a better understanding of a particular location, enabling planners, analysts, and others to make informed decisions about their communities.

GIS is used throughout the world to solve problems related to the environment, health care, land use, business efficiency, education, and public safety. The power supply directed to homes, the patrol cars and fire trucks that keep neighborhoods safe, and the delivery trucks on the road all function more efficiently because of GIS. This technology can also help businesses place ATMs and restaurants at more convenient locations, allow people to pull maps off the Internet, and help farmers grow more crops with less chemicals.

Most recently we have seen how GIS technology can be used to aid Homeland Security initiatives, map the debris field following the Space Shuttle Columbia tragedy, and monitor the spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The applications of GIS technology are endless, limited only by the imagination of its users. From border patrol agents to doctors, and from federal agency employees to local city planners, people in nearly every profession all over the world are reaping the benefits of this extraordinary technology.

GIS Day serves to make people aware of GIS technology and the important contributions it is making in the fields of science, technology, information, and the humanities. It is a grassroots event and a reflection of the enthusiasm and commitment of individual GIS users everywhere.

The Joppatowne students are actively engaged in applying GIS as part of the school's Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness program. Students in the 10th grade "Foundations of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness" course receive an overview of GIS concepts and how this technology applies to tackling emergency preparedness issues. Eighteen juniors participated in this course last year and elected to continue pursuing GIS. They are now enrolled in a GIS certification program created by Digital Quest.

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Housed at NASA's John C. Stennis Space Center in Mississippi, Digital Quest has created the only GIS certification program of its type. After completing their four course sequence in GIS, they will receive a certification in GIS. This certification is currently the only GIS industry certification recognized by the Federal Department of Labor.

This year marks GIS Day's tenth year, so be sure to join the celebration and become a part of this annual tradition. For event registration, support, and ideas or to find a GIS Day 2008 event near you, log on to www.gisday.com.

Anyone interested in viewing the students in action should contact Eric Cromwell at 410-588-5354 or at eric.cromwell@hcps.org

GIS Day is principally sponsored by the National Geographic Society, the Association of American Geographers, the University Consortium for Geographic Information Science, the United States Geological Survey, the Library of Congress, Sun Microsystems, Hewlett-Packard, and ESRI.

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