2008 TECHNOLOGY DIVISION AWARDS

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About the APA Technology Division Awards

The APA Technology Division has recognized members and students for their innovative use of technology in planning for the last three years. Winners are awarded cash prizes or scholarships and are presented with their prize and certificate at the APA National Conference each year.

The jury for this year's competition was made up of professional planners and academics. This year's jury included **Amiy Varma**, North Dakota State University; **Harsh Prakash**, IT/GIS Consultant; and **Ken Snyder,** President and CEO of PlaceMatters.

If you are interested in nominating a project or paper for the 2009 awards, please contact Amiy Varma at amiy.varma@ndsu.edu.

In the spring of 2008, the Technology Division held its third annual project and paper competitions in four categories to recognize the outstanding use of technology in planning. The Division made a call for nominations in four categories. Thank you to all who applied. The winners in each category are described below.

Winners will receive a certificate and a $100 award a the 2008 National APA Conference in Las Vegas. All members of the division are invited to attend the awards ceremony, as part of the Division reception and business meeting.

Category 1: Best Use of Technology to Improve a Plan or Planning Process
This category recognized an organization for the creative use of technology in improving planning processes.

Ken Snyder, Chair, presenting Iris Patten, East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, with a 2007 Award at the Technology Division Reception at APA National in Philadelphia

Winner: Department of Planning and Community Environment, City of Palo Alto, California.
The City of Palo Alto has built a GIS that allows reports to be created on a property in just seconds that include information from over 20 different criteria. Parcel reports are generated using this technology at a rate of 10-20 reports a day. Creating a GIS that can produce a detailed and accurate report like this has required a visionary and sometimes painful commitment of resources. The parcel report functionality is an unprecedented solution to one of the Planning Department's most common needs—providing applicants with

information before they begin a project or even before they purchase a property. In addition, the improvement provided by this report generation has had a positive affect on how management views the applicability of technology to traditional planning processes and its success is being transferred to the way the department approaches other tasks.

Category 2 - Best Use of Technology for Public Participation
This category recognized an organization for the best use of technology to enhance public involvement and participation in planning and decision making processes.
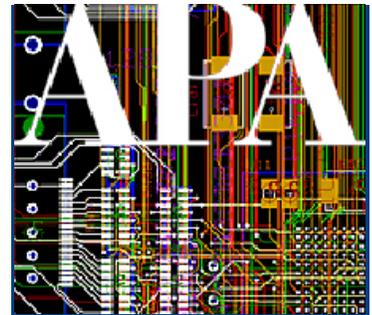
Winner: Project Region, Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
Project Region used a series of new techniques to establish a meaningful discussion with the region on sound planning and its future. SPC created GIS-based electronic surveys that were both web-based and on touch-screen kiosks that were taken out to dozens of community meetings where people could locate their community on a digital map and answer questions generated by the program's user interface. Wireless keypad voting technology allowed hundreds of stakeholder organizations and the public to learn planning concepts in meetings, build consensus on key issues, and see polling answers summarized and displayed immediately. Over-the-web conferencing was used to re-

duce costs and conduct simultaneous live meetings across the entire region.

SPC also produced a high quality video summary of the plan and the Project Region outreach process. This video takes the viewer on a "flyover" tour of the Southwestern Pennsylvania region that shows the breadth of the region's geography and communities to participants from across the region. Urban and rural residents can better understand not only the differences across the region, but similarities as well, reinforcing the regional identity and commonality. The video is available on the Project Region website, which uses a digital SitePal™ guide to introduce the concepts.

Category 3 - Best Use of Technology for a University Urban and Regional Planning Program

This category recognize an accredited university planning program for the most effective use of teaching with technology in preparing future planners for professional work.

Winner: Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.
Students at Ohio State University created plans for six communities in Harrison County, Mississippi that were affected by Hurricane Katrina. The planning process used public participation technology in novel combinations. Keypad polling, electronic newsletters, an online discussion forum, and a web-based 1-800 number were employed to

Ken Snyder, Chair, presenting Ahmed Abukhater with 2007 Student Paper Award at the Technology Division Reception at APA National

gather feedback. In addition, a web-based project management system was used by the planning teams in Ohio and Mississippi to remotely share files, post messages, jointly edit documents, and create to-do lists. The project also used the GIS Sector Mapping process and the Land Use Conflict Identification System to determine land development suitability.

Category 4 – Best Paper on Technology in Planning

This category recognized a student for an outstanding paper on the use of technology in planning.

Winner: Cody Evers, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

Cody Evers' paper, "Spotted Owls and Landscape-Guided Forest Management: Addressing Northern Spotted Owl Recovery Under the 2007 Western Oregon Plan Revision," analyzes the preferred alternative of the Western Oregon Plan Revision using GIS to determine whether the plan meets the requirements for protection of critical habitat of Northern Spotted Owls, as stated in the Endangered Species Act. This paper recommends changes to proposed management alternatives based on the supplied prioritization of high quality owl habitat. The author proposes that the requirements of the 1937 O&C Land Act and 1994 Northwest Forest Plan are better met by following 'landscape-informed' methods.