

# GIS Department

November, 2017

## IN THIS ISSUE

## Getting to know your GIS Department

Maybe you've seen our Tax Parcel website, gotten a new address, or maybe you've gotten a printed map, but do you really know your GIS Department?

The Person County GIS Department is co-located with Environmental Health, Planning & Zoning, and the Inspections departments at 325 S Morgan St in Roxboro. Although closely aligned to these departments and Information Technology, we are our own separate group reporting to the assistant County manager.

The GIS Department is unique: No other department in this County supports as many internal (staff) and external (citizen) customers. In support of County staff, we provide services such as locational analytics, large format map production, custom web applications, and solutions development for spatial, or location based, questions. We produce maps for septic permits, planning board of adjustment cases, Economic Development Commission meetings to name a few. This year, we

were also heavily involved in the County's broadband project.

One other department that we support is Emergency Communications/911. When someone calls 911, the call location is compared to over 25 layers of GIS data to help the dispatcher determine the correct EMS, Fire, and Law response.

Our Tax Parcel Viewer website is often the frontline for citizens, businesses, and industry looking to relocate to Person County. Information about zoning, watersheds, soils, flood zones, land values are synthesized on an interactive map. Citizens can freely access this information to find answers to common land development questions. The website also provides a portal to tax cards and photos, planning & zoning ordinances, soil surveys, and FEMA DFIRM panels.

The next time you ask yourself a "where" question, keep the GIS Department in mind.



### Tax Parcel Viewer

A lot of changes were made to our most popular web application. Learn more about the Tax Parcel Viewer

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### Project Marco Polo

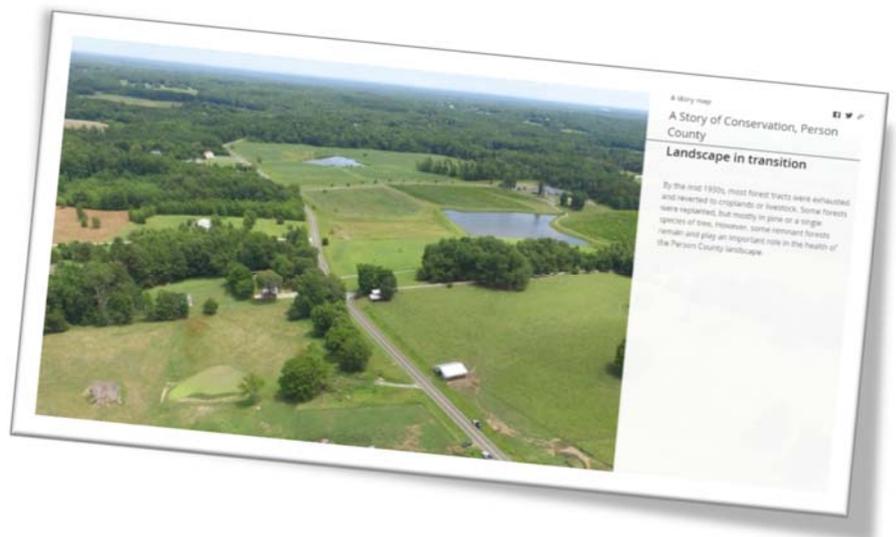
Nearing completion, project Marco Polo provides us with a snapshot of address visibility issues in the county.

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# 2017 in Review

It's been a busy year for the GIS Department! In a year we have:

- Added or verified over **580 addresses**
- Created a web application to help local historians permanently record the locations of **cemeteries**
- Replaced the **Tax Parcel Viewer** application with a modern, fee-free solution
- Assisted the EDC by identifying locations of possible **future development** in the County
- Created maps for uptown parades, quilt trails, **heritage trails**, and many other events
- Began a public education campaign to encourage citizens to comply with local addressing ordinances



- Documented the ongoing story of **land conservation** through an interactive web application
- Captured **drone imagery** to support Economic Development ventures.
- Assisted with broadband cost estimates and RFPs
- Printed over **200 linear feet** of maps for citizens and staff!

## ZACK WYNNE – GIS TECHNICIAN

Zack joined us in June of this year. He has a background in Emergency Management and an education in GIS and Public Administration and recently completed a cemetery web application for the historical society. With a love of small towns and local politics, Zack is a welcome addition to the Department!



*GIS Department staff worked with a local field guide to locate and record plant species on the County farm.*

## Partners for Green Growth

The Person County Planning Department was recently awarded a grant to promote conservation in Person County. The GIS Department helped on several levels. Along with a local guide, GIS Department staff photographed and recorded GPS points for important plant species.

These photos and locations were later turned into a web map which was debuted at the

October Chamber of Commerce Breakfast.

The GIS Department also identified large parcels of land with a water course or large tracts of forest land. Such locations may be significant areas for plant and animal species and suitable for conservation. Several landowners were identified and a series of outreach meetings were held to increase participation in voluntary conservation programs.

## GIS INTERN



### Katherine Gates

We were fortunate this year to have Katherine, a student intern from NCCU. In addition to creating addresses and maps, she assisted us with our Green Growth environmental inventory and web map. She also updated the GPS "how-to" documentation for the Environmental Health Department and flew some drone imagery for both the Person County Business and Industrial Center as well as our Soil and Water Department. Katherine was a great asset to our team and we wish her much success in her GIS Career!

### Address Statistics...

Read Project Marco Polo for more information

#### ADDRESS FAST FACTS

15%

Homes without displayed addresses.

12%

Displayed addresses which aren't visible at night.

## Coming Soon!

Have you ever wondered why you have to pay a 911 fee on your home phone or cell phone? The State of North Carolina collects those fees to pay for important projects relating to 911 Communications.

Every 4 years, these funds are used to capture up-to-date aerial photography for each County. In late January and early February of 2017, those photos were captured for Person County.

We anticipate that the State 911 board will turn the imagery over to Person County on December 11<sup>th</sup> and we will make it available on all our web applications as soon as possible once it is received.

## The New Tax Parcel Viewer

In January of this year, GIS Department staff replaced the old Connect GIS application with the Tax Parcel Viewer. The old system required a lot of valuable staff time to maintain, despite being a contracted service. For example, when GIS staff split or merged parcels, updated addresses, or changed zoning information, the work had to be completed twice; once on the principle GIS system and a second time on the Connect system. Switching to the Tax Parcel Viewer removes that second step and ensures that staff and the public have access to the most up to date information.

Although the new and old systems ran simultaneously for 3 months, the transition was not without its setbacks. Based on feedback, we updated line and area colors and transparency options for layers such as water features, floodplains, and parcel outlines. Also, we completely rewrote the printing portion of the Tax Parcel Viewer to accommodate printing to specific scales.

The Tax Parcel Viewer has several new features including aerial imagery dating back to 2004; imagery dating back as far as 1993 is forthcoming. Information layers now have pop-up boxes to provide detailed information, which is a completely new feature for Person County. For many layers, this pop-up box can direct you to ordinances, soil surveys, and DFIRM panels.

The Tax Parcel Viewer can also be used to sketch construction site plans which fit the requirements for portions of the new construction permitting process. Parcel information can be viewed for multiple parcels simultaneously, whereas the old system allowed only one at a time. This information can now be exported to an Excel spreadsheet for easy use.

We also revamped the Help documentation and welcome anyone to e-mail, call, or visit our office for assistance.

# Project Marco Polo

First responders have a tough job and often see people at their worst. During an emergency, people reach out to 911 with the expectation that high-quality help will come quickly. Once dispatched, first responders have the challenge of finding the caller who may be distressed, disoriented, having a medical episode, or not communicating well.

Our 911 communicators, law enforcement officers, paramedics, firefighters, EMTs, and other first responders rely on a complex system of phone equipment, computer software, road names, and address numbers to pinpoint citizens during an emergency. First responders need for this system to be logical, consistent, and reliable. This system is so important, that local government wrote and passed an ordinance dictating the regulation of road names and address numbers.

While local government has influence over parts of this system, **the responsibility of displaying address numbers falls to the individual citizen.** Take a look along any road in Person County and you will see a mailbox missing an address number, or a house with no number visible at all. The photos to the right are examples found right here in Person County.

The GIS Department, charged with administering the address ordinance, contracted with Geographic Technologies Group out of Goldsboro, NC to create a snapshot of addresses throughout the County and City of Roxboro. Once complete, we will have a full inventory of how addresses are displayed.

Preliminary results indicate that 12-15% of homes do not have an address displayed on their mailbox or on their home. **That's one out of every 7 residents of Person County.** Equally alarming are the number of homes which have a number displayed that isn't reflective and cannot be seen at night or during bad weather, which is **estimated at an additional 10%-12%.**

To combat this issue, the GIS Department is trying several different approaches. We have partnered with local volunteer fire departments to knock on doors and increase awareness of the issue. We have also developed several postcards which will become part of a direct mail campaign to reach citizens who may not be aware of the risk. Through events such as Personality, National Night Out, the Senior Citizens Day Fair, the GIS Department is educating citizens on this problem one citizen at a time.

Missing and improperly displayed address numbers put our first responders at a disadvantage during an emergency. Citizens are unknowingly putting themselves in unnecessary danger. **Playing "Marco Polo" to flag down a first responder is not in your best interests.** Take a moment to inspect your mailbox and/or house numbers from the first responders' perspective and made adjustments if needed.

Call the GIS Department for more information about upgrading your address display.

## IMPROPER ADDRESS DISPLAY EXAMPLES



### What number is this?

Improperly displayed address numbers may hinder first responders in locating citizens during times of crisis.



### An unnotable note

This small and handwritten address number placed on the door of the mailbox would be very difficult to see at night while driving down the road.



### Wait, which house? Marco! Polo!

These numbers are large and somewhat visible, but a first responder may have difficulty figuring out which house goes with which number.

**GIS Department**

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[www.personcounty.net/gis](http://www.personcounty.net/gis)

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