GISCORPS
http://www.giscorps.org

The Park Ridge, Ill.-based Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA) GISCorps launched its new Web site, which includes information about the history of GISCorps, strategic and operational plans, a volunteer application form and contribution opportunities.

GISCorps is a volunteer-based GIS professional entity to provide short-term GIS expertise to less-developed countries and communities worldwide. Although assistance may be offered in the United States and Canada, the focus will remain on communities in developing countries.

GISCorps volunteers will provide GIS expertise in areas such as humanitarian relief, environmental analysis, sustainable development, economic development, community planning and development, aboriginal issues, and health- and education-related applications.

In October 2003, the URISA Board of Directors unanimously endorsed GISCorps as an initiative under URISA's auspices. Following the endorsement, a Core Committee of six individuals was formed, and URISA's board endorsed a Strategic and Operational Plan in February 2004.

The committee currently is seeking donations and contributions, and it plans to conduct the first pilot project during summer 2004. The first unofficial project already was implemented. Martha Lombard, URISA past president and GISCorps committee member, assisted a World Bank mission in the Sacred Valley of the Incas in Peru to evaluate existing GIS capabilities.

As of July 2004, 83 GISCorps volunteers had signed up. Due to additions and revisions in information, GISCorps redesigned the application form at http://www.giscorps.org/info_for_volunteers/signup.php.

Applicants should note that membership confirmation doesn't guarantee that they will be recruited, which depends on a rigorous screening process. After screening and selection, the partner agency and volunteer will be in direct contact, and specific project information will be provided to the volunteer.