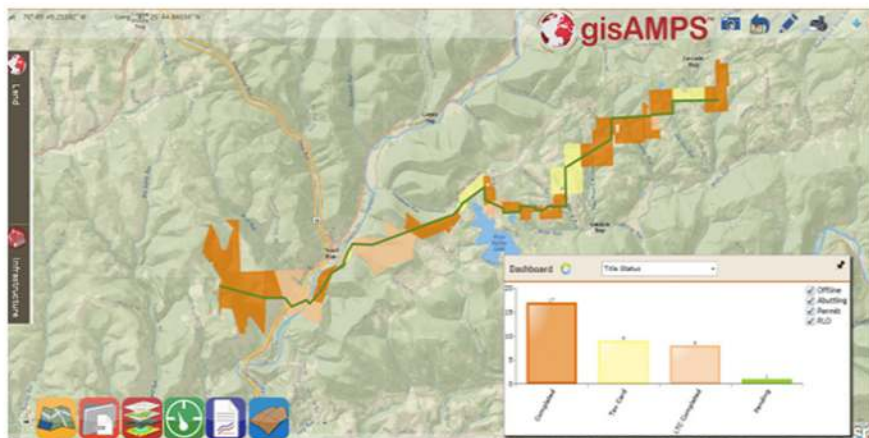


TECHNOLOGY IS RIGHT OF WAY GAME-CHANGER

Posted on June 5th, 2013 by Dan Liggett

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Right of way – it's not your parents' industry anymore.

Not so long ago, the right of way industry was dependent upon paper. From parcel maps, photocopied deeds and title documents, to notes on negotiations with landowners, paper ruled this industry that is so essential to public and private infrastructure and project development.

Acquisition of right of way is necessary before energy, transportation, construction and similar ambitious projects can proceed. Plans to develop electricity transmission lines, wind farms, oil and gas pipelines and solar panel fields go nowhere until right of way agreements are reached with property owners.

Many in the industry remember when a right of way project of size required what seemed like a mountain of paper. File cabinets and boxes of it filled offices. Oftentimes, it took days of critical staff time to locate specific documents. Such paper chases were once an inefficient, albeit necessary use of organizational resources.

Reliance on paper is giving way to advancements in technology. Through Web-based software and easy-to-navigate dashboards, organizations can manage right of way projects and land assets in a real-time, paperless environment that enables collaboration and error reduction. This technology produces efficiencies that help individual right of way agents work smarter and boost the bottom line of land service companies.

geoAMPS, a technology company located in the Columbus, Ohio, area, introduced mobile technology to the right of way industry. The land services companies geoAMPS serves are also utilizing geographic information system (GIS) mapping, which can prove critical to right of way project staff in the office and in the field.

The right of way industry will be coming together again for the International Right of Way Association's 59th annual International Education Conference scheduled June 23-26 in Charleston, W.Va. This well-attended event will reaffirm the dramatic impact technological advancements is making on the industry.

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As a Platinum Sponsor of this event, geoAMPS, appropriately, has developed a mobile application that attendees, like right of way agents working in the field, can use to obtain a wealth of information while on the go at the conference. This marks the second consecutive year that geoAMPS has developed the mobile app for the conference. In addition, geoAMPS is planning a booth activity at the event that will showcase GIS technology.

As attendees to the conference are aware, efficiency in obtaining right way and tracking property and infrastructure information is critical to keeping projects – such as a new wind farm, road, pipeline or solar panel field – on schedule and within cost parameters. Utilization of technology is key to maximizing project efficiency.

Web-based software is creating opportunities for efficiency that were unavailable to professionals in the industry only a few years ago. Technological advancements are happening that quickly.

Mobile technology is a game-changer for right of way agents in the field. At the push of a button, they have access to the most up-to-date information on individual tracts within the project area even though they are not at their office computer. They can retrieve this information on their mobile phone or laptop in the field. They can quickly upload new information, notes and photographs into the database without having to wait to do so at the office.

Prior to the availability of mobile technology, right of way agents faced a variety of hurdles that complicated the process of obtaining land-use agreements and prolonged the completion of right of way projects. Special landowner requests and ingress-egress permissions were hand-written in a notebook or stored in a bulky tract file box. Title searches were done at the county courthouse. Agents had to rely on multiple spreadsheets prone to error. An agent received a new assignment on a paper record and called or emailed his supervisor to report on the progress of negotiations.

New industry-specific software provides access to all project information through a central database. It features timesaving tools, such as lease management, bulk document generation, bulk update, auto reminders, scheduled reports and managing workflow.

Attendees to the International Right of Way Association Education Conference will have the opportunity to not only see, but also experience how technology is advancing the right of way industry.

Dan Liggett is Communications and Public Relations Manager of geoAMPS, a technology company in the Columbus, Ohio, area that specializes in software solutions to manage land rights and infrastructure assets. For more information, call 614-389-4871 or visit www.geoamps.com.

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