



Sports and Recreation Mapping System Receives Facelift

Glendale, Ariz. (Nov. 27, 2007) – Setting a new precedent for on-line mapping, a new Geographic Information System (GIS) site geared to kids and adults alike will launch in early 2008 thanks to the support of over \$60,000 in funding from the Arizona Sports and Tourism Authority (AZSTA). The interactive website identifies all public sports and recreation facilities throughout Maricopa County. Users interested in finding the nearest baseball field for example, with just a few clicks, will find an aerial map, which will display the facility while another window showcases respective amenities and contact information.

“This innovative use of modern technology makes finding a space to play fun for people of all ages. Equally important, this web-site helps promote services offered by our local parks and recreation and other community providers”, said Shawna Bradlich, Executive Director of the Maricopa Council on Youth Sports and Physical Activity.

The original launch of the GIS in 2005 was tailored to the needs of researchers, grant-makers and policy-makers. The data was presented with census information which provided an objective view of our physical activity outlets as they relate to demographics. With advancements in mapping technology and the desire to make this information suitable for everyone, a new version of the GIS was created.

In 2003, AZSTA, as owner, placed the sport facility mapping project in the hands of MCYSPA to manage the project. “AZSTA strives to improve the recreational opportunities for Maricopa County residents by providing great access to opportunities for youth and amateur sports, particularly in underserved areas. Identifying community gaps in facilities helps direct available resources to maximize community benefit,” said Ted Ferris, AZSTA President and CEO.

Formed as a result of voter approval of Proposition 302 in November 2000, AZSTA is dedicated to enhancing Maricopa County's economy and the community's quality of life through the development of professional and amateur sports facilities, the attraction of entertainment, sporting, and business events, and through tourism promotion.

An advisory committee was formed in 2003 to assist AZSTA in making recommendations on grants to support youth and amateur sports. Since then, the group has evolved to become what is known today as MCYSPA, a completely separate entity currently housed at the Arizona Community Foundation. The relationship with AZSTA is now that of partner and grantee, with a mission to address childhood obesity, physical inactivity and poor nutrition. MCYSPA, in turn, has partnered with a variety of not-for-profit agencies, educational institutions, foundations, and health care organizations to assist in this mission.

"MCYSPA is viewed nationally as a best practice model of community coalition building," said Bradlich. "It is hoped that every project of MCYSPA can be replicated and expanded to serve other communities. With obesity prevention as a goal of MCYSPA, it is important to first identify environmental factors. The GIS is a great tool to streamline existing resources and identify the populations served."

For more information on AZSTA visit, www.az-sta.com or contact AZSTA Communications Coordinator Jennifer Copeland at (623) 433-7508 and for more information on MCYSPA visit, www.mcyspa.org and contact MCYSPA Executive Director Shawna Bradlich at 480-947-0369.

###