

MEDIA RELEASE



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Advanced Technology Training For Historically Black College and University Faculty

Washington, DC – The National Capital Planning Commission and the Washington Geographic Information System Consortium will host the Historically Black College and University Summer Faculty Geographic Information System (GIS) Workshop August 4-10, 2002 in Washington, D.C. Howard University's Continuing Education Program coordinates this annual workshop with the support of federal agencies. Faculty members from Historically Black Colleges and Universities will participate in this year's program. GIS is a computer mapping technology that allows users to link aerial photographs, images, and data to digital street networks, buildings, sidewalks and other elements of the built environment. The technology is currently being applied to numerous homeland security initiatives.

The opening session on Monday, August 5, 2002 to which the public is invited, features as a keynote speaker Ambassador Leonard Spearman, Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Former President of Texas Southern University and a former envoy to two African countries, Ambassador Spearman will discuss ways to close the achievement gap between minority students and their peers. Glenda H. Owens Deputy Director of the Office of Surface Mining at the U.S. Department of Interior will also speak at the program's opening session that begins at 9:00 AM and will be held at the National Capital Planning Commission, 401 9th Street NW, Suite 500, Washington, D.C.

In discussing the GIS workshop, Ambassador Spearman said, "We need to find innovative ways to close the achievement gap that exists among minorities and non-minorities and ensure that African American professionals have the opportunities they need in order to succeed. This effort in which Historically Black Colleges and Universities, the federal government, and the private sector are working together to achieve that goal is an excellent move in the right direction."

The workshop promotes GIS technology through training sessions conducted by research faculty and federal agency representatives for novice and advanced users. Trainers will demonstrate how the application of this tool can be applied in university settings and incorporated into the curriculums of higher education programs.

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In addition to the National Capital Planning Commission and Howard University, this year's sponsors include the Department of the Interior's Office of Surface Mining and Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and ESRI, a leading GIS software developer.

Patricia Gallagher, Executive Director of the National Capital Planning Commission said of the Commission's sponsorship, "We are delighted to be part of a program that ensures that this generation of minority students will be able to enter careers in advanced technology fully prepared. This is precisely the kind of effort that we as government executives need to support."

Further information on the GIS workshop program is available online at www.con-ed.howard.edu or www.wgis.org.

The National Capital Planning Commission is the federal government's central planning agency in the District of Columbia and surrounding counties in Maryland and Virginia. The Commission oversees planning for all federal land and buildings in the region. It also reviews the design of federal projects and memorials, undertakes long-range planning for future development, and monitors capital investment by federal agencies.

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