The GISS Working Team held their annual spring GIS refresher March 25 at MIFC. The working team has recognized a shortage of willing and qualified GIS specialists (GISS) on the 2014 IMT roster. Efforts are underway to provide quality incident experience for GISS trainees in an attempt to provide a larger pool of candidates available for dispatch with MNICS IMT's. If the 2014 fire season limits GISS trainee dispatches, a simulation may be warranted to help with training efforts for next season. As last year, there is also remote assistance available for MNICS GIS needs within Minnesota.

Four primary assignments are underway in the 2014 GISS Working Team:

- **Increase number of qualified GISS available for assignments.** Provide GISS trainees quality training experience on incidents and/or through simulation.
- **Provide MNICS IMT's with functional, reliable plotters for GISS use.** A new T120 plotter was purchased, tested, and is ready for deployment from MIFC. A T1100 is available as a second or backup plotter. All plotters have a standard supply kit order and maintenance plan assigned.
- **Identify, implement, and share best practices for file sharing between federal and state laptops on incidents.** A Buffalo drive or network-attached storage device (NAS) will be available for dispatch with MNICS GISS, as will USB thumb drives. Responding GISS's also need to ensure they have administrator rights to their laptop prior to arriving at incident. This is also important for sharing the iSuite database.
- **Develop recommendations for mobile device application and products on MNICS IMT incidents.**
    - Mobile Applications: Georeferenced PDF's allow the mobile user to download a GIS product such as the ops briefing map to an iPad or smartphone and view the user's current location on the map using a mobile app such as Avenza PDF Maps.
    - Products: Georeferenced PDF products can be posted to an external server and downloaded via a link or Quick Reference (QR) code placed on the paper map.
    - Systems: Enterprise Geospatial Portal (EGP) is an NWCG beta version web portal for GISS to create quick maps during the initial setup phase of an incident and before other GIS data is consolidated into a daily product.
    - Productivity: Fire responders collecting data via GPS are encouraged to upgrade to GPS units utilizing USB cables and clear the GPS unit's data memory before

creating incident data for the IMT's Situation Unit. Getting your georeferenced data on a map is the priority, not sorting through data from your last five fires.

For details on joining the GISS Working Team or in becoming a GISS, visit the MNICS web page.

END

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