GIS Distance Learning Course

A collaboration of the Governor’s Office of Information Technology, ESRI, the Colorado Geographic Alliance, University of Denver, and Colorado 4-H is developing a GIS (Geographic Information System) distance learning program that can serve as an enhancement and introduction to GIS across a variety of classroom subjects.

The course offering will be a multiple class session enhancement in the form of prepared written and video material and media. It may be used in class one week and followed (in the second week or at the end of the first week) by an interactive online videoconference session with expert presenters who deliver additional material and respond to questions from students. The program will potentially also involve local government GIS professionals and other local GIS users as classroom presenters or incorporate a model 4-H program for a community service project element as a hands-on classroom activity with possible additional activity outside school hours.

The GIS DL Education Project will introduce GIS within a variety of classroom disciplines, including computer, geography, social studies, technology, and science classes. It will include participant training (teachers, local experts, community service facilitators, etc.), a flexible lesson plan with multiple examples which can be selected by teachers to adapt to audience levels and to fit to a specific discipline, interactive videoconferences with GIS experts, and an applied project. In the near term, this is to be viewed as step one of a multi-step development process that will increase GIS content in Colorado schools and result in the development of full course offerings at multiple levels, including concurrent enrollment courses and CTE courses.

The project is currently seeking interested teachers and 4-H volunteers at interactive-video distance learning equipped sites. The target areas for these pilot courses are schools in districts on Colorado’s High Plains, in one of three established distance learning networks: NE BOCES, EC BOCES, and SE BOCES.

Interactive video elements of the course will originate from the DU Morgridge School of Education and may include involvement of staff or students there. Media and prepared class material for the courses, as well as participant training elements may be hosted at eNetColorado (http://www.enetcolorado.org/). GIS software and virtual campus courses are available to Colorado schools and youth organizations through eNetColorado.org at no charge.

For more information or to be considered as a teacher or volunteer at a participating site, contact: Jerry McCarthy, Distance Learning Project Manager, 303-764-7720; jerry.mccarthy@state.co.us