How to Write a Mn GIS/LIS E-announcement

E-announcements are GIS-related "news flashes" periodically emailed to Consortium members. They are timely news items of significance to the Minnesota geospatial community. Each item is typically around 100 words and should contain a link or contact for more information. All submissions are reviewed and may be edited by the board secretary.

E-announcements must be concise. Readers scan quickly and are impatient.

- **Start with the main point** and then add only enough information to help the reader decide whether they want to find out more.

  For example, if you are publicizing an event, include the topic, date, general location and whether or not there is a cost. Link to an event webpage or flyer for details such as agendas, driving directions, menus and RSVP instructions.

  Example of a typical announcement:

  Spring and Fall Workshop Survey

  The MN GIS/LIS Consortium is planning the 2013 Spring and Fall Workshops. We would like your help determining the workshop topics. Please take a few minutes to fill out the workshop survey.

- **Write an informative headline**. Most readers decide which announcements to read based on the headline.

- **Provide contact info** (email, phone number or webpage), either in the announcement or a related webpage/flyer.

- **Use clear, everyday language** and avoid jargon unless it is well-understood by geospatial professionals.

- **Use formatting to make announcements more readable.** As appropriate, use bullet or numbered lists.

- **Avoid sales pitches.** The Consortium does not accept announcements that are solicitations (see our policy).

- **Ask a colleague to review your announcement** before you submit it. They will help catch errors and missing information.

- **Let the Consortium help you.** Ask if you have questions. The webmaster or secretary may make minor changes to your announcement. If major edits are needed, the announcement will be returned to you with suggestions.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Who is the audience?**
  Our announcements are aimed at our members: GIS professionals and others interested in geospatial activities in Minnesota. They include cartographers, geographic technicians, analysts, and specialists as well as managers and supervisors. They work for state, local, federal and tribal government, educational institutions, the private sector, and non-profits. The announcements are sent only to Consortium members and are not archived online.

- **What topics are appropriate?**
  Announcements should have a broad appeal to geospatial professionals or should address a niche topic of sufficient interest. Very technical, specialized topics are rarely appropriate. Topics can include, but are not limited to, new or improved sources of data, projects that others could learn from, and activities of geospatial organizations. They should either focus on Minnesota or have an impact on the Minnesota GIS/LIS community. The Consortium reserves the right to refuse any material deemed inappropriate (see our policy).

- **What is the expected announcement length and format?**
  Aim to be as concise as possible. Announcements are generally about 100 words, or 1-2 short paragraphs. Microsoft Word format is preferred.

- **Can graphics or meeting flyers be included?**
  No, the announcements are just text. The Consortium strongly prefers that flyers or other supplemental material be posted on another organization's webpage; on rare occasions the Consortium may post this material on its website.

- **What is the e-announcement schedule?**
  E-announcements are published every other Monday; occasionally, special announcements are sent as needed. For submission procedure information, see the e-announcements webpage.

Still have questions? *Contact the webmaster at: webmaster@mngislis.org*

By Mike Dolbow and Nancy Rader, March 20, 2013