



FLEIS & VANDENBRINK
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UPDATE YOUR GIS FOR BEST DECISION MAKING

Community leaders in Michigan who have invested in a Geographical Information System (GIS) are now faced with the challenge of keeping them up to date or watching them become obsolete.

GIS, one of the best tools for community leaders for today's challenges, is a technological system that leverages locational and tabular data, computer hardware, and software to gather, map, and analyze geographically referenced data. GIS allows users to organize, visualize, and analyze vast amounts of data together by creating maps and charts.

Community leaders are still learning the important role this technology plays in integrating different kinds of information. However, without proper maintenance, the information in the GIS will slowly become outdated and may lead to making incorrect conclusions.

"Maintenance of GIS data becomes more critical the more you rely on the use of GIS information for decision making purposes," said Keith Edwards, Pentwater Township's deputy supervisor. "But your decisions are only as good as the information you have, so keeping GIS data current becomes imperative."

Fleis & VandenBrink (F&V) assisted both Pentwater Township and the Village of Pentwater in updating its land use Master Plan. Each community had an ArcGIS Online account, which F&V maintains, so community leaders can view and interact with web maps.

Edwards, who also serves as Pentwater Township's zoning administrator and ordinance enforcement officer, said keeping GIS information current, such as land divisions, helps ensure that assessing and tax records are correct, and helps to determine where infrastructure improvements should be prioritized. Up-to-date information can also assist non-profit groups like conservancies plan for preservation and conservation activities to maintain the character and benefit of natural features such as wetlands for the benefit of flora, fauna, and stormwater detention.

"No matter the size of your community, taxpayers, developers, administrators, decision makers and even the curious visitor can all benefit from a well-maintained GIS," Edwards noted. "Having professionals like Fleis & VandenBrink's well trained and experienced personnel maintain your system allows municipal decision makers to concentrate on distribution of the maps and ensures the information necessary to help others is available when needed."

WHAT CAN GIS DO FOR YOU?

GIS, which is the data of just about anything linked to a geographic location, helps local government departments automate the process of updating property information, which reduces staff workloads. Real-time location data can also help dispatch resources more quickly.

The Charter Township of Emmett recently hired F&V to update its cemetery recordkeeping.

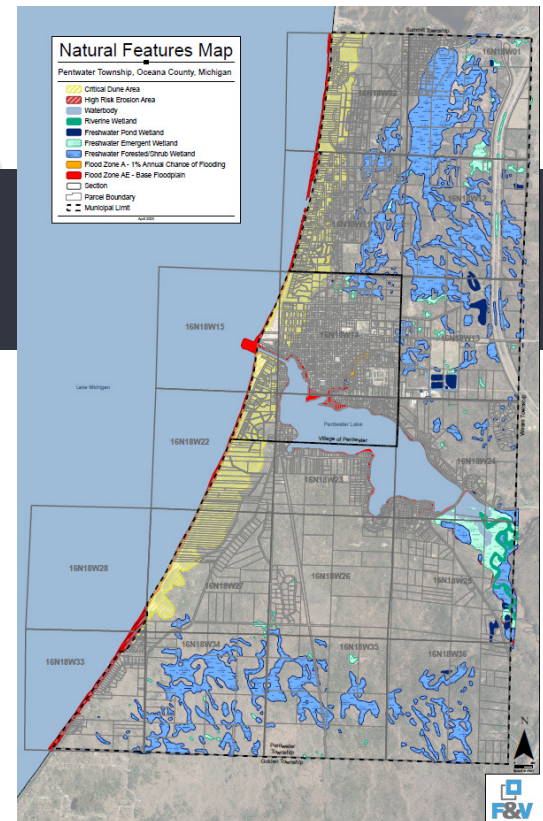
"It has been extremely difficult for the Township over the years to keep track of all the plots and locations with large paper maps and paper record books," said Tracy Myers, Emmett Charter Township's clerk. "Having our cemetery records organized and maintained in GIS creates an enriched experience for our customers."

"Customers can scan search for loved ones and use a 'walk-to-feature' that will take them right to their headstone."

Myers said having F&V's assistance on its GIS project included teaching staff how to use the program features. Her department is now utilizing the GIS to upload documents and pictures of gravestones.

"We are almost ready to go live on our website with the community and share this great new tool," Myers added. "Emmett Township will now have records in the twenty-first century."

Call F&V's GIS specialist Sam Lipscomb today at 616.965.8764 or email slipscomb@fveng.com and let us assist you with maintaining and further developing your GIS. We can also assist you with asset management, data collection, record management, analysis, maintenance, and ArcGIS Online implementation and provide GIS support on an as-needed basis for updates or training as requested.



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Keith Edwards, Pentwater Township's Deputy Supervisor

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