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NJSEA Takes Top Honors At 28th Annual NJDEP GIS Mapping Contest

LYNDHURST, N.J. – The New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority (NJSEA) is proud to announce that a staffer from the Authority’s Meadowlands Environmental Research Institute (MERI) took several top honors at the 28th Annual New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Mapping Contest. More than 100 people submitted detailed web-based, digital maps at the competition, which was held this month in Trenton. Participants represented state, county and local government agencies; and New Jersey public and private colleges, universities and high schools.

Michael Stepowyj of MERI’s GIS group was honored in several categories for his map, “Heavy Metal Gradients in the Hackensack River Estuary: A Baseline for Improving Ecosystem Health.” Stepowyj received the Gail P. Carter Award for “Best Application of Science and GIS,” took second place in “Data Integration,” and second in the “Best Newbie” group, for participants who are new to the mapping contest. The theme of this year’s competition was “Health of New Jersey.”

This marks the third consecutive year that GIS staff have won several top awards at the Mapping Contest, underscoring the talent level, creativity and commitment of NJSEA employees. The GIS group uses state-of-the-art technology to create, maintain and update comprehensive, web-based digital maps and mapping tools for every property in each Meadowlands District municipality.

The maps provide first responders in District towns with immediate access to critical information, including data on hazardous materials stored in warehouse facilities, fire hydrant locations, incident reports, floor plans, turn-around space for heavy firefighting equipment, and current and historical aerial imagery. This potentially life-saving information can easily be accessed from field computers, tablets and smart phones.

GIS applications also save time for municipal officials who use property data to manage town assets and plan for infrastructure and other improvements. Data stored on each facility or residential property include owner, block and lot, easements, address, zoning and land use, acreage, and building footprint. Building code and tax officials can generate precise property owner lists utilizing a buffer tool. The information helps officials easily notify affected residents to variance requests or other proposed changes to surrounding properties.

About the NJSEA

Effective Feb. 5, 2015, the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission was consolidated into the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority. All former NJMC departments and programs now operate under the NJSEA banner.

The NJMC (now NJSEA) is the regional planning and zoning agency for the 30.4-square-mile Meadowlands District, which includes parts of 14 municipalities in Bergen and Hudson counties. The Meadowlands District towns are: Carlstadt, East Rutherford, Little Ferry, Lyndhurst, Moonachie, North Arlington, Ridgefield, Rutherford, South Hackensack and Teterboro in Bergen County; and Jersey City, Kearny, North Bergen and Secaucus in Hudson County. For more information, visit www.njsea.com.

About MERI

The Meadowlands Environmental Research Institute (MERI) is the science and technology arm of the NJSEA. The Institute's scientists work includes ongoing monitoring and studies of the region's air, soils and water, and conducting new research to assess environmental conditions in the District. For more information on MERI, visit www.njsea.com.

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