

Background Information and Highlights for the GITA Phoenix Conference

In early March 2018 GITA will be offering its newest event – the [GITA Phoenix Conference](#). This conference is partnered with North America’s premier underground infrastructure damage prevention conference, the [CGA 811 Excavation Safety Conference & Expo](#). Both events will take place in the Phoenix Convention Center. The GITA Phoenix Conference will start things off on March 5-6, followed by CGA 811 Excavation Safety Conference & Expo on March 6-8.

To introduce the respective conference communities to one another, GITA Phoenix Conference events on the afternoon of March 6 will be open to CGA 811 Excavation Safety Conference & Expo attendees. Similarly, GITA attendees will be able to participate in CGA 811 Excavation Safety Conference & Expo’s Summits, and the vendor reception taking place in the [Exhibit Hall](#) later that day. Last year, nearly 2,000 individuals visited this exhibitor venue looking for answers to their underground sensing and infrastructure damage prevention issues. From the personal experience of manning the GITA outreach booth on this expo floor in 2017, I can attest many of these visitors were hungry for geospatial solutions. Consequently, if you are looking to expand your business, I would strongly encourage you to consider placing a marketing booth on the exhibit floor of this vital and growing infrastructure sector.

I also believe educational content available during the GITA Phoenix Conference will be nothing short of outstanding. Monday morning will begin with a series of workshops included in the price of the conference. They include:

- A rare appearance by Mark Korver, Amazon Web Services Geospatial Lead - Specialist Team, traveling in from Seattle, WA. He will be teaching a workshop on the emerging reality of data so big the only place it can live is in the cloud. You’ll learn how to prepare for that eventuality before you find yourself trapped in a bad spot when the future arrives. [More](#).
- Need to understand how to maximize the value of all that money spent on ESRI software? Jenny Harrison will be on hand from Houston, Texas to teach how to do exactly that with great product tips and tricks which result in maps second to none. Attend her workshop and there will be no doubt you are your organization’s “ace of the base” map maker. [More](#).
- Experts say up to 80% of commercial software include Open Source components. So, if you’ve ever wondered about the potential of what’s under the hood and available for free, Wisconsinite and Open Source guru Bob Basques is your man. In one hour he’ll review the range of possibilities and then provide you with over 50 Open Source programs which play directly on a USB thumb drive each workshop attendee will receive. This event could literally save you or your organization 10’s of thousands of dollars. For that reason, the [Open Source Geospatial Foundation](#) is making this event available to the public for free. [More](#).
- Awareness about [U.S. National Grid](#) (USNG) remains low across the nation despite an ever-increasing volume of federal and state regulations mandating its use as the “language of location” in the Emergency Services Sector. Consequently, USNG expert Randy Knippel is flying in from Lakeville, MN to provide GIS personnel and first responders with the knowledge and resources to take first steps toward implementing USNG in their organizations and communities. From Search and Rescue, to disaster response, this life saving workshop is so important it is

being sponsored by the [Bureau of Indian Affairs](#) so non-conference attendees can attend for free. [More](#).

- All the way in from Quebec, Canada is Consortech's Allison Hughes. Her workshop attendees will learn the answer to the headache that is data sharing. Through the process of Extract, Transform, and Load, and automation of work flows, data is empowered in ways which multiply its value many times over. Allison will show attendees how to make that possible. [More](#).

Coming out of this great morning of workshops, the tempo picks up when winner of multiple geospatial community awards, Geoff Zeiss, keynotes on disruptive geospatial technologies exploding across the community. Although Geoff's talk "[Geospatial - A Key Technology Transforming the Construction Industry](#)" has a specific focus, he is well known for his ability to deliver topics so the theme has application to many realms.

Not to be out done, one day later on Tuesday, March 6, drone/UAS evangelist Mike Tully of Aerial Services, Inc. in Cedar Falls, IA will zero in on one of the technologies at the forefront of community developments with his keynote "[Just How Accurate is Your Drone](#)". The answer will surprise many.

In between these two fabulous keynotes, attendees will be treated to sessions which range from what would be considered keynotes at other conferences, to insights from GIS professionals on the front line of the geospatial revolution. In total, the 23 presenters of the GITA Phoenix Conference hold four PhDs, nine Masters, and five other professional designations.

But if the above is not enough, organizers of the CGA 811 Excavation Safety Conference & Expo have graciously made available *six additional educational sessions* during that conference's program on Wednesday and Thursday March 7-8. Reminiscent of GITA's ITAG seminars, five Summits and one Forum will explore current issues by infrastructure type. And, if even more educational opportunities are desired, GITA Phoenix Conference attendees may participate in the full range CGA 811 Excavation Safety Conference & Expo educational sessions and events by buying [a combo ticket from GITA](#) which covers both conferences. When purchased through GITA, this combo ticket offers a savings of \$350 from conference tickets purchased separately.

Thus, for all the great opportunities to learn and network explained above, I truly hope you will join us in the warmth of Phoenix, Arizona, week of March 5th.

Thank you for your time.

Fraternally,
Steve Swazee
GITA Admin

P.S. If you are willing to help us promote the GITA Phoenix Conference on Twitter, please use the following hashtags: #gita, #gis, #geospatial, #GITAPhoenix, #CGAExpo18