

## UNH Receives National Award for Work in Geographic Information System Technology

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DURHAM, N.H. -- Selected from more than 200,000 organizations worldwide, the University of New Hampshire is being honored for its work in geographic information system (GIS) technology. The Special Achievement in GIS Award was recently presented to the university by the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) at its international conference.

ESRI is the world leader in GIS software, mapping components and spatial database management tools. A geographic information system is a computer-based tool for mapping and analyzing objects and events. It combines the power of a database with the visualization capabilities offered by maps. Businesses, schools, governments and organizations use GIS for a variety of applications, as it provides the power to solve complicated problems, experiment with scenarios and present ideas.

"Each year the Special Achievement award commemorates a select few organizations using GIS technology," says Jack Dangermond, ESRI president. "I believe their work will be inspirational in leading the world into the next millennium."

UNH's Complex Systems Research Center at the Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space is being recognized as the architect, builder and core center for GIS in the state. Its project, the New Hampshire GIS (NH GRANIT), is a cooperative effort to create, maintain, and make available a statewide digital geographic database serving information to state, federal, regional and local decision-makers. The system includes a geographic database, hardware and software to build, manage and access the database, and a staff of experts knowledgeable in GIS, remotely sensed imagery and computer analysis.

"The GRANIT System has allowed us to respond to the needs of decision-makers at all governmental levels quickly and effectively," says Fay Rubin, system manager. "Over the past decade we have worked with towns, regional planning agencies and state agencies on

a broad range of planning and environmental issues that require the analysis of geographic data."

Two other units at the university -- the Thompson School of Applied Sciences and the Department of Natural Resources -- have also been recognized for their contributions to GIS in the state and the region. Both provide training and coursework in GIS and related technologies. According to Regina Smick-Attisano, Thompson School director, the award is a tribute to faculty members who have created a top-notch facility for both the state and the university's students.

"We are proud to have received such a recognition for the efforts put forth by our faculty," says Smick-Attisano. "The computer labs we have to offer the Thompson School students are a definite plus to their education earned here, affording them the cutting edge of this dynamic technology."

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