

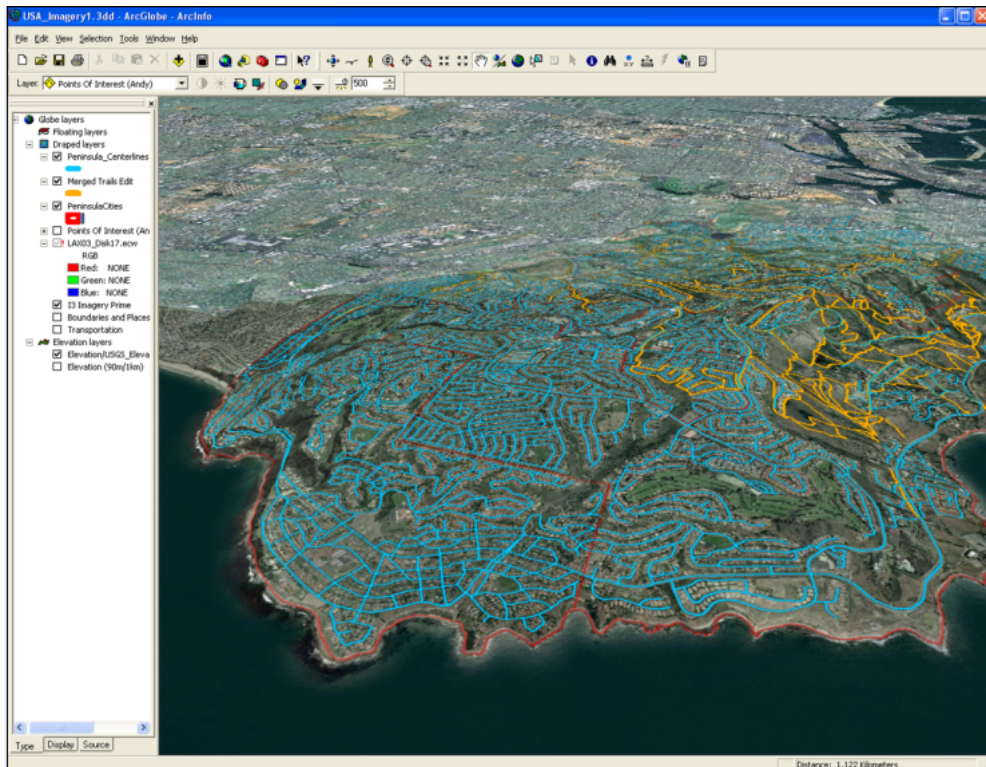
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PVE develops emergency plan map

By Megan Bagdonas, Staff Writer

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The Palos Verdes Estates Police Department has contracted with a local nonprofit to create a computerized map of the city to assist the agency in emergency planning.

Palos Verdes on the Net will plot evacuation routes, emergency provision locations and public utilities, as well as other critical infrastructure. The maps also will pinpoint the residences of doctors, medical experts and people who operate ham radios.

The maps can be as simple or complex as necessary to fit the user's needs.

Each category will be created on a separate layer of the database, so users can view just one element such as sewer lines or, alternately, maps with several layers that show fire hydrants, landslide areas and horse populations.

"These maps will give us all this information at a finger's touch," Police Chief Dan Dreiling said. "We're working with Neighborhood Watch to formulate committees to find out specific information for each zone," such as who is CERT trained.

Dreiling said he believes the maps will be posted on the Web. But information that is not public will only be available to city and emergency personnel.

"Parts will be accessible to everyone, but others might not, depending on their sensitivity," Dreiling said.

The database is expected to cost about \$6,000 to create and will be completed by early spring.

"We use volunteers and interns and we're a nonprofit," said Ted Vegvari, director of the Rancho Palos Verdes-based organization.

Vegvari said a private contractor could charge five times more than what the nonprofit is offering to develop geographic information system maps.

Most other cities in the South Bay use GIS programs to catalog information on everything from curb repairs to crime stats.

"We use (GIS) a lot to get planning and zoning information," said Bonnie Shrewsbury, GIS analyst for Manhattan Beach. "A lot of our public works are on there, like where our sewer lines and water lines and storm drains are.

Shrewsbury said she was pleased to see Palos Verdes Estates moving ahead with the project.

"Sometimes agencies talk about doing it but then don't move ahead," she said. "Hopefully, it will encourage others to use it and share the information."

Gardena's Web site includes maps of neighborhoods and crime stats. Residents can view where crimes have occurred in relation to their homes.

The Palos Verdes Estates maps will focus on disaster preparedness and emergency response, not zoning and crime information.

"We want to be able to see how things might interact with one another," said Mike Martinet, coordinator of the Redondo Beach-based Office of Disaster, which oversees emergency plans for 14 South Bay cities.

GIS maps can be beneficial to help plan evacuations, Martinet said.

For example, one school's disaster plan had students evacuated to an open field. However, a GIS map revealed the field was adjacent to a plating plant with hazardous chemicals.

"We would have been moving the children into potential danger and not away from it," Martinet said. "That's the benefit of a map like that."