Reaching Out to the Community

A GIS (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 wide variety of applications, as GIS provides the power to solve complicated problems, experiment with scenarios, and present ideas. Although geographic analysis and mapping are not new, a GIS performs these same tasks better and faster than manual methods.

GIS Day is November 19, the last day of Geography Awareness Week (November 15-19), and is sponsored by the National Geographic Society, the American Association of Geographers and ESRI. (Environmental Systems Research Institute). Since 1987, the National Geographic Society has sponsored Geography Awareness Week to promote geographic literacy in schools, communities, and organizations, with a focus on the education of children. The GIS Day celebration is a grassroots event that formalizes the practice of GIS users and vendors opening their doors to schools, businesses, and the general public to showcase real-world applications.

There are currently about half a million GIS users in the world, but most of the public is unaware of this growing technology. Used to solve problems in such areas as environmental protection, pollution, health care, land use, natural resources, conservation, business efficiency, education, and social inequities, GIS provides a unifying framework for analyzing and understanding the world around us.

A GIS Public Meeting was recently held in the Wilmington Public Library, with attendees from several prominent businesses throughout Clinton County as well as folks from the Auditors office, from the Engineers office, and from the Ohio State University. Clinton County is in the early stages of developing a GIS database. The GIS Department of Clinton County would like to make the community aware of this special day during

geography awareness week. If you have any questions or comments, please call the County Engineers office and ask for Joe Merritt, the GIS manager.