Winter - Great Time to Plan Your Mapping Needs

By Charles Bausch, GIS Specialist

Well, the weather outside is frightful, but the GIS/GPS planning is delightful, so let it snow, let it snow, let it snow. Yes, winter is definitely here to stay for awhile, but after you get all that snow moved you can switch your attention to gathering all that information you want to put in your new GIS/GPS map. Once we get all the features of your utility system GPSed, it's just the beginning of making this the best map you ever had. The key is to take all those old maps with tons of information that has been acquired over the years and put that into your GIS/GPS map. Winter is a great time to look at all that information that you have collected over the years. Now try to think of how can we categorize this information and add it to the features of your GIS/GPS map when we start the process. The goal is to get you the best map ever. All the information has to be inputted into your map and that will take some time but once you get that done all that information can be easily backed up, safely stored and easily updated. If you have any questions about how to categorize this information just give me a call. I'll be happy to help you out.

Now let's talk about some other features your GIS/GPS map has. We all know GPS is going to give you the location of your features but GIS is going to give you the critical information you need when utilizing this map. For example, you have a main break and the ground is completely covered with snow and you need to find specific valves to shut that main down for repairs. With a GIS/GPS map this can be done very simply. We all know that heat for the most part will uncover sewer manholes in your system. I know you're saying what does sewer manholes have to do with my main break. Well, when you have your sewer and water on the same map you can use those manholes to pull measurements to the valve that shuts that main down. Same with fire hydrants if there is one close to that water valve you're looking for just pull a measurement right off the computer. I guess what I'm getting at is the more you have on your GIS/GPS map the more points you will have to pull measurements from to find your features. All that snow that made finding those valves in the past nearly impossible now is just another minor barrier that can be moved with a few shovel scoops instead of the many hours of looking and saying, "I thought it was right here." A GIS/GPS map will give you actual measurements that you can use in the real world. That's just one feature a GIS/GPS map gives you over other maps. Remember not only do you get a paper map from NeRWA when they produce your GIS/GPS map but you also get a map on the computer that can be zoomed in, queried for information and printed out to send along with locates and service calls. If you have any other questions on any of this just give me a call. I'll be happy to help in any way.