

The Ins and Outs of GIS/GPS Mapping

By Charles Bausch

Well, another spring conference has come and gone and now the weather is changing from possible snow to sunny skies. Now is the time to start thinking about locating those water and wastewater features for summer projects or for those other occasions we all don't want to think about. Just think how nice it would be not to have to go through all those files and maps that you have to find that one valve or that one curbstop that may or may not be there. This is where GIS/GPS mapping can be helpful.

GPS will give you the location of all your features in your water and wastewater system. To mark these features we do have to locate them first. If you have problems finding some of your features, Russ or Randy can assist you with locating these. Once these features are GPS'd we post process all our data to get sub-foot accuracy from our data collection.

Now that your data is on a map we connect the points by drawing in your main lines. However, if you know where your main lines run, we can take GPS data points along those lines and lay them into your map. If you don't know where your mains are at we can still draw them in.

Once we draw your map for you we print off a rough draft for you to review. After the review we correct any misinformation found on your maps because Nebraska Rural Water understands that an incorrect map is just as good as having no map at all.

Once the project is complete we produce wall maps, map books and interactive maps on the computer. This is where all that information you have collected comes in. All that data you have on customers, manholes, valve info, and meter info can be integrated right into your map. By using simple programs like Excel you can put as much info in about your features that you would find useful. Once you have all that info in Excel you can send that file to me and I can join that info to your map. Now you have all that info in one location just a few clicks away.

Whenever you need to update your information about your features just make the changes in the Excel file and send it again to me. Once the new data is uploaded to your map we'll send you your new map for your computer viewer software. Now the computer map has all the latest information about your system ready to be pulled back out when needed.

If you would like to hear more about GIS/GPS mapping feel free to contact me.