

Hot Summer, Cool Utility Maps

By Charles Bausch, GIS/GPS Specialist

With the heat wave rolling through Nebraska I hope everyone is finding a way to beat the heat when they can. Summer for me is the time to get all that data I collected this spring into a format that will be useful for the Utility Superintendents. This is when I sit down and take all those old and new maps you have and put them together for a complete utility map. There usually is a lot of good information on those old maps. For example, manhole depth or distance from a valve to tee. I try to add all this information to your map which takes time but in the end makes a more accurate map.

The biggest question I get is how long it will take to get my maps. This can vary from system to system. What I tell you is it will take what it takes. Our goal is to get the most accurate map we can with the most detail. A lot of times we have to GPS features that were missed or not found the first time we GPSed a system. Other times if a system has improvements coming in the near future we try to get those improvements added before we do the finished product. This will save the system money and me the time it would take to redo and print another set of maps for the system.

The key to every map is trying to get all the old maps (that are still relevant) and putting all that information into a GIS map. This way you don't lose data that has been useful in the past, but now that data is not only on paper but in your computer system and can be easily stored and retrieved when needed. This makes GIS/GPS maps so cool! The amount of data you can store about each and every one of your map features makes your maps more useful. Of course, this slows your mapping process down a little, but will be worth it when you are working on that next big utility project.

During these hot summer days the way I stay cool is working on putting all the data into your GIS/GPS maps (inside where it is air-conditioned helps to!). If you are thinking about going digital with your maps give us a call and we can assist you with some cool GIS/GPS mapping that will keep your temperature down by having all that data in one place.