2021 Tech/GIS Survey Committee Report

COMMISSIONED BY: GAAO EXECUTIVE BOARD

CREATED BY: GAAO TECHNOLOGY/GIS COMMITTEE

PARTNERED WITH: SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION

VALDOSTA-LOWNDES REGIONAL GIS

Executive Board, Committees & Membership:

Welcome to the 2021 Tech/GIS survey committee report. The GAAO Technology/GIS committee presents this report to the GAAO Executive Board, our various GAAO committees and the GAAO membership. This project was hatched by this committee to study the technology and GIS challenges felt by our membership and to guide the Executive Board and Education committee in setting up training opportunities in Technology and GIS. As we found out relatively early on in the creation, this projects will have a long lasting impact on how this organization delivers training opportunities for all of its membership.

We couldn't do this alone and have several people to thank. First and foremost, we would like to thank the Executive Board, especially 2020-2021 GAAO President James Stokes, and the Executive staff, Executive Director Ashley O'Donald and Kathy Newton. Without your support and assistance, we would have never gotten this project up and running. We our indebted to our partners in this project, the Southern Georgia Regional Commission and Valdosta-Lowndes Regional GIS, who hosted our survey. The work Rachel Strom, who is also represents Lowndes County on our committee, and Ashley Spradley put into the technical side of this survey has made these findings possible. I would like to thank the committee. It has been my honor to serve as the committee chair of the Technology/GIS committee the past two years.

This project has evolved over the last 24 months and, like everything else, has been impacted by the pandemic. We've identified solutions, not just for our committee but the entire membership. If you have any questions about any of our findings, feel free to reach out to me at chrisjblessing@gmail.com or (706) 537-4602.
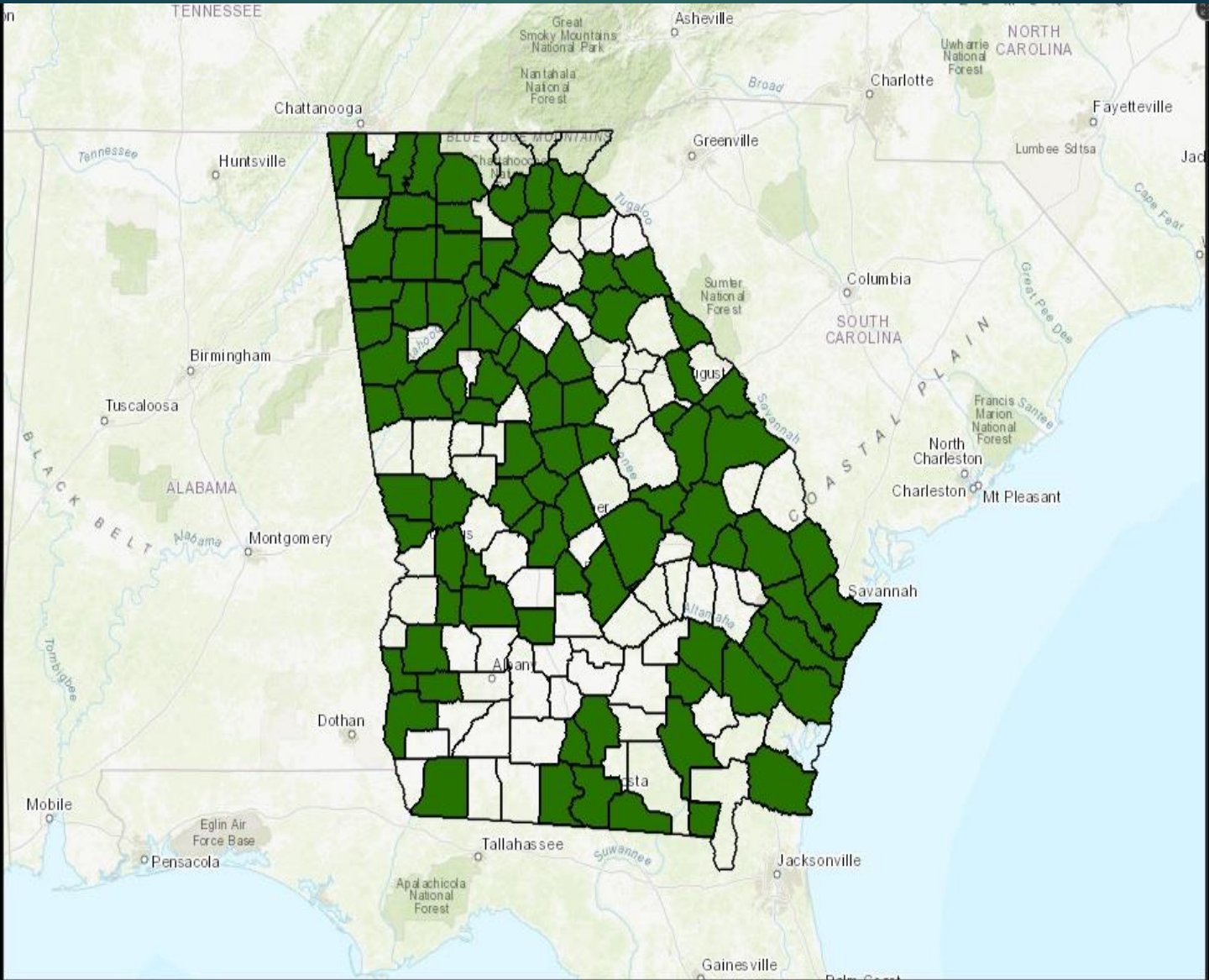
Thanks,

Chris Blessing
Whitfield County
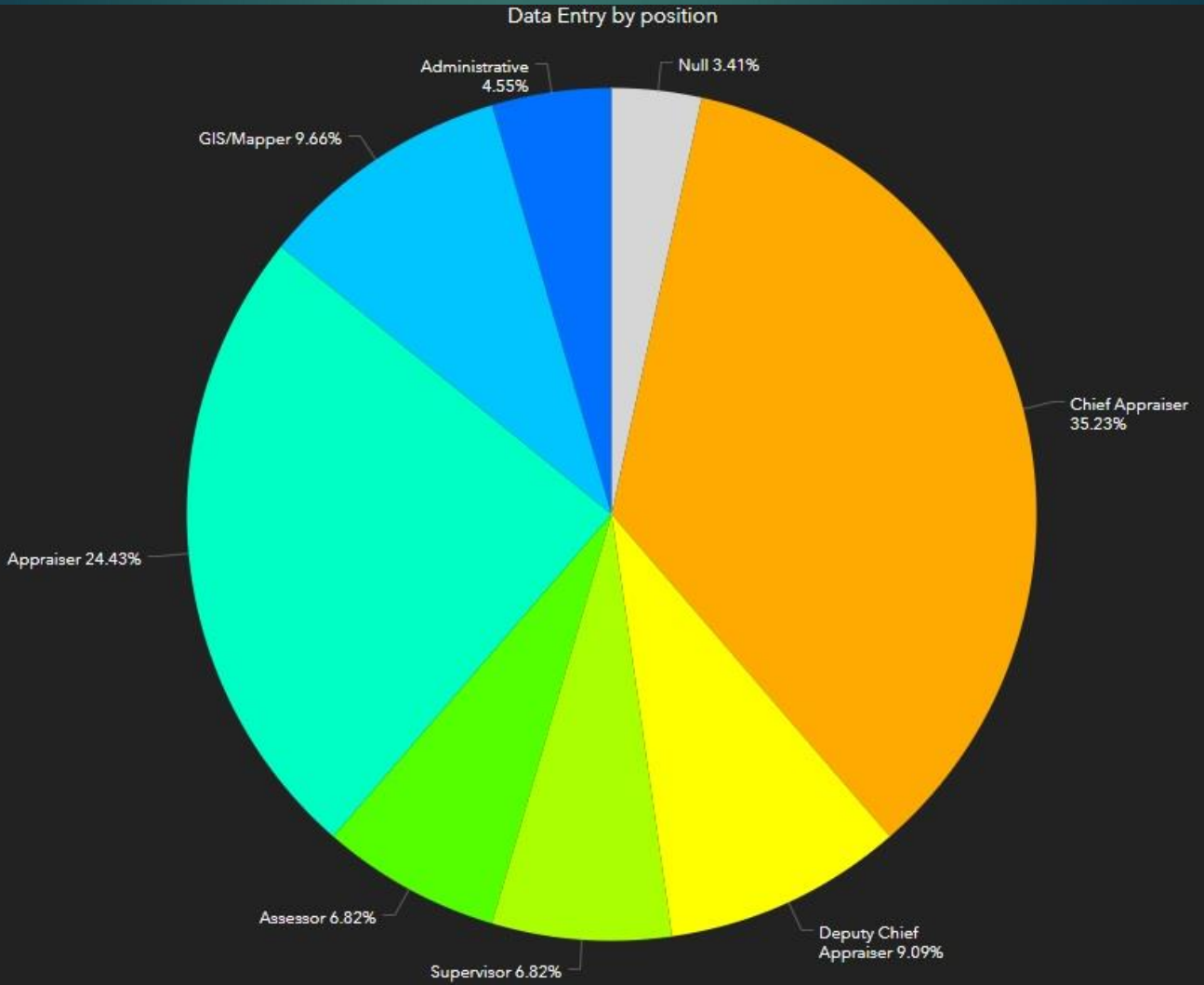Technology/GIS Committee Chair (2020-2021)

Membership Data

▶ Georgia Counties: 159

▶ Member Counties: 144

▶ Non-Member Counties represented by 3rd party firms: 3

▶ Counties Reporting: 89

Participation By County

(Green = Participating Counties)

Participation by Position

Data Entry by position

Membership Information Collected

- Name
- County
- Position Title
- State Appraisal Level of person filling out survey
- Number of total employees in an office
- Number of Licensed appraisal Staff in the office
- Number of Real Estate Parcels in the county
- Number of Prebill MH Accounts in the county
- Number of Personal Property Business Accounts in the county
- Number of Personal property boat accounts in the county
- Number of personal property airplane accounts in the county
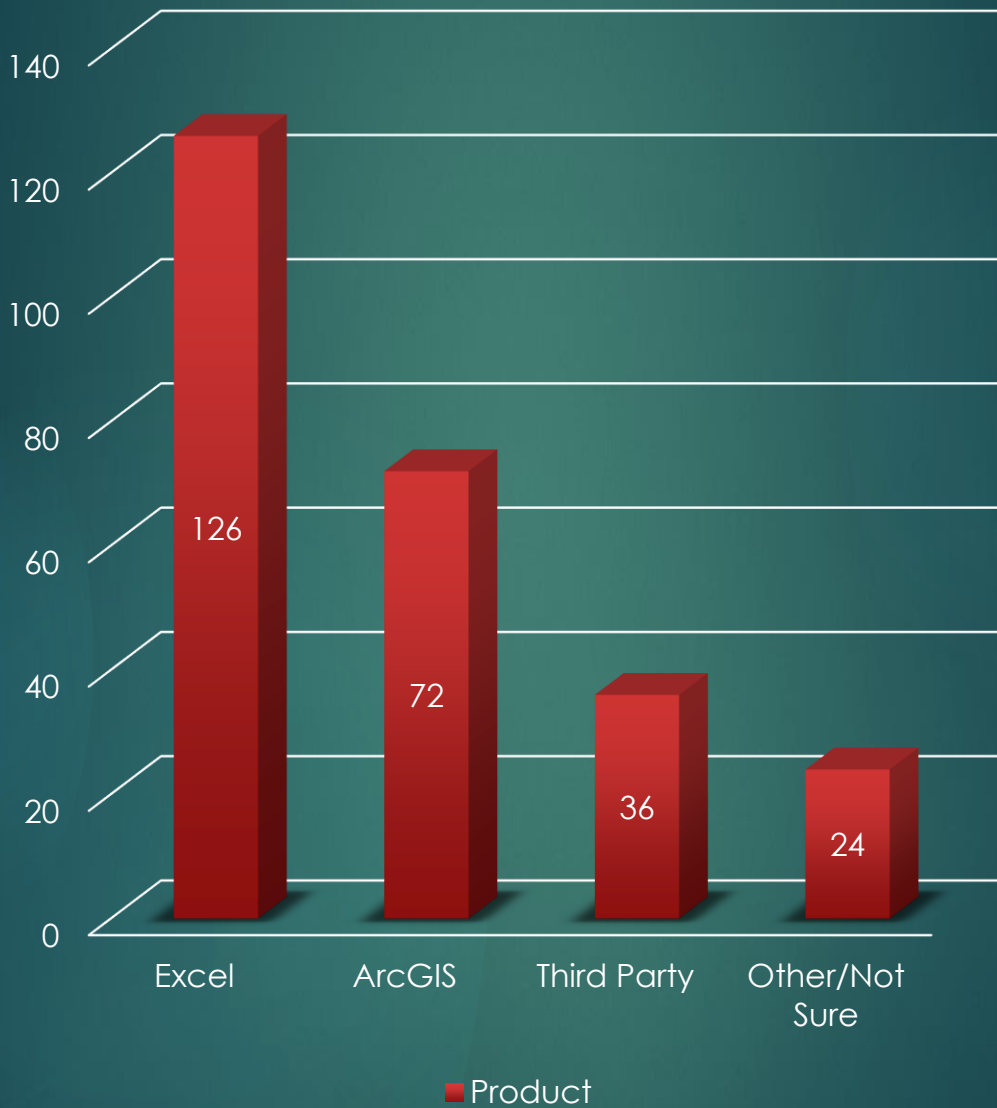
How Can the GAAO use this Membership data?

Membership data and county demographics was collected to aid the Executive Board, the Executive Director, the Education committee and the Membership and Promotions committee in determining membership needs. This data can be used by these parties for organization purposes. It can also be used to determine seminar/event location and helps identifying counties/regions where the membership numbers are low or where participation is lacking.

The Technology/GIS Committee attempted to gather responses from all 159 counties. Unfortunately, after several attempts, over 40% of the counties did not respond. County response was greatest in the North and Metro districts, where a majority of the Executive Board, including the Executive Director, reside. The Southeast district also had a strong response rate. The Central and Southwest district were lacking in response. Most of the non-member counties are located in these districts. While there have been plenty of seminars held in the central district, it's been a long while since a seminar or event has been held in the Southwest district.

Through our survey, we were able to determine several memberships needs of the organization. First and foremost, the pandemic and job turnover, mostly from retirement of senior staff members, has caused membership and participation to waver. The Membership and Promotions committee, along with the Executive Director, needs to take an active role in attracting new members, engaging new office leadership, encouraging participation, and communicating with members throughout the state.

Following up on a few responses, members expressed concern about a lack of leadership development and a lack of diversity in the organization. We recommend that the Executive Board should consider addressing these issues in the next few terms.

How are we analyzing data?

140	
120	
100	
80	
60	126
40	72
20	36
0	24

Excel   ArcGIS   Third Party   Other/Not Sure

■ Product

What are the data needs of the organization

Needs	All Employees	Managers	Supervisors	Staff	Assessors
SQL Skill Building	76	45	5	26	3
Mobile Data Collection	55	28	5	17	5
Improving remote capabilities	51	23	6	21	3
CAMA Reporting	39	21	4	10	4
Database Management	37	18	7	11	2
Other	5	0	0	5	0

Meeting the data Needs of the Organization

Strong, up-to-date GIS mapping is a vital component to an Assessors office's operation. Unfortunately, many members need our help to get and utilize the tools at their disposal. The greatest GIS needs of our membership is skill building and upgrading existing mapping software. Obviously, the organization cannot help members by providing funding for better mapping software. However, the Executive Board and the Education committee can help in other ways, such as providing a seminar/presentation on how to justify and get money for upgrading mapping software to county decision makers. With so many new Chief and Deputy Chief Appraisers in this industry, providing training and assistance on how to convince county decision makers to fund projects, including lobbying for new equipment and better software, should be a regular presentation given at a GAAO seminar and/or conference.
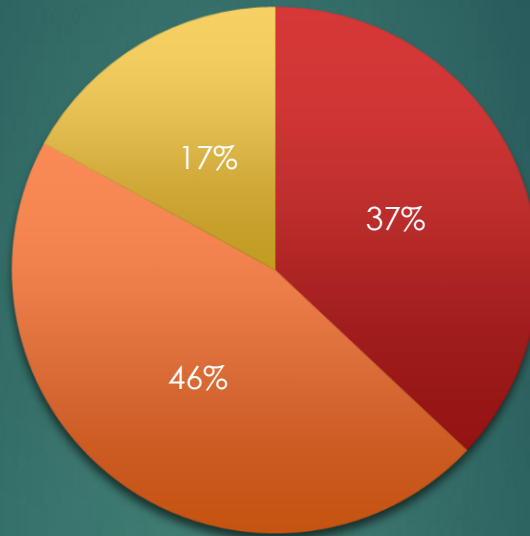
There are many ways the Executive Board, the Education committee and the Technology/GIS committee can give members opportunities to build and improve their mapping skills. Bringing back an annual or semi-annual one-day seminar on technology could be the perfect opportunity to provide skill training. Since many office leaders don't always take the right people to technology seminars. We recommend recording skill building sessions for the benefit of those who cannot attend. Obviously, there is a balance here, since the GAAO funds training sessions through paid attendance. We feel there are means available to make this work, either by packaging video access with seminar registration or charging a small fee for access to the recordings to those who do not attend. Power point presentation, unless copyrighted material, is already posted on the members page of the GAAO website.

Further, utilizing multimedia training opportunities through the GAAO website is vital to assisting the membership build skills. The Technology committee has advocated successfully for a training video series to be produced in a variety of different areas, to begin in December. The tutorial videos for database and SQL skill building would be short, specific, and easily accessible. These videos could be stand alone videos or part of a video series, using case scenarios. and/or practical application. These videos would be taught by a database or SQL expert. We'd also link to videos, with permission videos, from other assessment experts. The committee has also kicked around the idea of producing a podcast. While podcast subject matter would encompass a large scope of the industry, we can have episodes dedicated to data management subject matter with experts in the field as guests.

Map Maintenance
By Respondent

100 Responses

Pie chart legend: ■ By Vendor ■ In House ■ Different Dept.

Pie chart values: 37%, 46%, 17%

- 69 out of 100 respondents indicate they have capability to perform spatial analysis (Integrating GIS data with CAMA)
- Of the 46 respondents who handle map maintenance in-house
  - ERSI is the primary mapping software used
  - 38 of the 46 respondents have an individual with ability to build reports with SQL
    - 27 of those 38 respondents are the report builders themselves

Meeting the GIS needs of the membership

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Additional Recommendation
Creation of an SME Taskforce

Based on our findings and analysis, the Technology/GIS Committee recommends the formation of a Subject Matter Expert (SME) taskforce made up of professionals within the organization vetted as experts by the organization who can assist other members with questions in specific, specialized subject matter. The subject matters and the SME names would be posted in the Members Portal of the website. The vetting would be done by the Executive Director, the President and committee chairs to determine whether the SME is an expert in their field or in the specific subject matter. It would be a yearly appointment for the SME, which could be renewed by agreement between the incoming president and the SME. Ideally, the SME would be a member of the committee that they are an expert in. For instance, a GIS SME would be on the Technology/GIS committee.

An Email address would need to be set up like Asktheexpert@gaao.org. The email account would be managed by the website administrators and distributed to the SME. When questions are answered and tickets are completed, the website administrator and the SME would work together to archive responses and post a PDF to "Answered SME" webpage (would need to be created) for other members to peruse who could have similar questions or issues. At years end, the current SME in the subject matter would review archived content, making sure archived material is still relevant.

The SME Webpage would replace the seldom used "Members Forum."