Monterey County Administrative Office
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County GIS Service Hits New Benchmark

When the County launched its Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Service in the fall of 2012, the idea was to provide a service and the data the public wanted while saving staff time in the process. The numbers show its working.

This month, the GIS service hit a new benchmark, it reached the number of visits for its first full year of operation (2013), 22,000, about 700 visits per week. That is equivalent to the work of seven front counter RMA staff.
“I expect by the end of the year the GIS service will be doing the work of 10 staff members,” says Darryl Tyler, GIS Analyst II in the Information Technology Department, who is tracking usage of the service. “There is a strong correlation between topics agendized for a Board of Supervisors meeting and data being downloaded; the most frequently downloaded data sets are parcels, followed by roads and address points. Land use and political boundaries come in a close third.”

Tyler says he is also seeing increased usage from professional groups such as Architects, Engineers, Surveyors and the Military.

Since the inception of the GIS service, two significant additions to the service have been added which may account for the strong increase in usage:

- Public Works “Land Management Record” (LMR) to the mapping site. This allows people to call up historic and legal records on properties. (This is very popular the Surveyors in our county.)
- Following the Board of Supervisor’s approval of the GIS data distribution policy, an Open Data site was implemented, allowing the public to download copies of the County’s GIS data.

GIS users have the option of using Mapping Application and Data Downloads.

It’s Open Enrollment Time

Its Open Enrollment time, time to review your benefits and make changes for the coming year. The 2015 Benefits Open Enrollment runs September 15th through October 10th.

You may have already received a general email about how to make changes to your 2015 plan year coverage, but here are a few reminders.

- To make changes, you must log into the Open Enrollment Wizard in ESS. Any changes made during this open enrollment will be effective January 1, 2015.
- If you are currently enrolled in FSA, ABO, or DCAP and would like to maintain coverage for 2015 you must re-enroll.
Even if you do not plan to make any changes, you should log in to verify that your coverage and dependent information is accurate.

Of course, if you do not wish to make changes to your benefits, you do not need to do anything at all.

Benefit Program Managers want to alert employees that some health plans may have an increase in annual maximum copays. Employees should compare the various health plans that are available to them to ensure they have the coverage they want and annual maximum copays they can afford. Once a plan has been selected, go into the ESS to see the monthly payroll deduction. Costs vary by plan and bargaining unit.

Here are a few helpful tips while working in the ESS Wizard:

- Be very careful that you have completed all of your selections and are absolutely sure you have made all the choices you want to take effect on January 1, 2015.
- If you are thinking about your choices, or waiting for additional information, you may select “Save and Exit.” Once you select “Finish,” the transaction will be finalized and will not be changeable until the next Open Enrollment or with a qualifying event.
- If you do not return to “Finish” the transaction by October 10<sup>th</sup>, the changes will not be made and your benefits will remain the same as they were in 2014; however, your monthly payroll deduction may be different due to premium changes.
- Some changes require additional documentation before they can be completed.

If you have additional questions, contact your Benefits Coordinator. Not sure who to call? Click here.

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**Emergency Preparedness – Practice Makes Perfect**

For anything worth doing, practice makes perfect. This adage certainly applies to emergency preparedness.

With September being National Preparedness Month, the Office of Emergency Services (OES) is leading by example and testing the county’s emergency notification system
AlertMontereyCounty on Tuesday, September 30\textsuperscript{th} at 12:45. If you are not already registered, there is plenty of time to do so before the test. OES has also been taking us all through the various aspects of being prepared: how to be ‘in the know and ready to go’ in the event of a disaster, why an emergency plan is critical and how to build a kit that really works.

So, do you feel prepared?

If you have a plan and a kit, you are doing better than the 90-93\% of American households who haven’t done either.

The final step in staying prepared is to practice and update your emergency procedures and supplies. You may be asking yourself, is like an emergency drill at home? Well, that would be great and probably fun for the neighbors to watch, but a simple review of your plan and kit will do.

Why check? Imagine being in a disaster situation and you make that call to your out-of-state contact and the number is outdated; what if you have to pick your child up from a school evacuation and you forgot to update information from the school about a change of location; or the most common situation of all - when you grab that emergency flashlight because the power is out and you find out the batteries are all dead and expired.

So make sure:

- That everyone knows what they are responsible for (who/what/where/when)
- Information is up-to-date and any changes are reflected
- Important supplies are refreshed: food, water, batteries

So pull the family or loved ones together for a quick emergency check and preparedness party. There are some good times to do this type of thing, such as twice a year- April 30\textsuperscript{th} and September 30\textsuperscript{th}, which are the spring and fall “PrepareAThon!” dates; or when we set our clocks forward and backwards, “set your clocks, check your stocks.”

If you are feeling totally unprepared, take a few minutes and check out the OES webpage and click on the link called “Totally Unprepared.” You may find you are better prepared than you think.