

Vernonia Geographic Provides Tools *continued from front page*

This project is part of a larger project at City Hall, which consolidated all property files in order by parcel number rather than street address, using medical style folders with color coding for zoning and flood zones. This new system integrates with COVIS to allow staff to be more efficient when looking for property information, and when making flood and other determinations needed for building permits and other land use actions.

Water Service Connections

The City of Vernonia has recently switched water billing software. The new software has many features that will improve reporting on usage, accounts, and more. "These are features that can be used to the City's benefit," says Fousek. One of the biggest issues for the City has been the availability of timely and accurate information when making decisions about rate increases, as well as long term planning for system upgrades. "The new system can generate accurate reports which can provide all kinds of useful information," explains Fousek.

The City is using GIS to locate all water service connections and record important information such as address and parcel identification. Water service connections are different from water meters in that they are the point of sale of water to the customer. Water meters are simply the metering device at a water service connection. Water meter information will be stored in a separate data set and active meters will associate with a water service connection through a relationship.

With a more robust billing system, which is integrated with the VGIS, the City will be able to make better decisions based on facts when adjusting water rates and long term water system planning. "This gives the City the ability to adjust rates and be more



This map features the water network in an area of downtown where water service connections and water meters are currently being verified. Along with accurate locations of water service connections related information is being collected, which will help the City make better decisions about utility rates and planning future system upgrades, as well as, provide better asset management.

dynamic," explains Fousek. Some of the other benefits include asset management, and institutional memory.

Fousek noted that George Tice and Dale Webb, both members of the Vernonia Public Works Committee have been volunteering to help upgrade the City's informational data base. Tice and Webb have been verifying each and every water connection/meter at every address in the City. "We couldn't have done all these upgrades without their help," said Fousek.

and bringing it with you to City Hall when getting a building/electrical permit or inquiring about land use development, starting a business, or any other business you have with the City," says Fousek. "This is a simple way to help make things easier."

Fousek has done much of the work on www.vernoniageographic.org as a labor of love, and has spent many of his own hours making the system better and more user friendly. He says he believes providing information to the public is one of the most important functions of the VGIS. "I'm trying to make data available and give people access to the information they might need," says Fousek.

Vernonia Geographic Website

The City of Vernonia has updated the www.vernoniageographic.org website to be more user friendly. A new parcel search and parcel map make it easy to get parcel information, including flood information, and links to Columbia County Assessor data and tax maps.

Fousek says citizens can use the website and will find it helpful in many instances. "You can help city staff help you by looking up a property, printing the parcel report,

Vernonia Geographic Meetup

On August 28, 2014 at 6:30 PM at the VCLC Fousek will host a Vernonia Geographic Meet-up for anyone who wants to learn more about GIS, and how to use the new Vernonia Geographic website. Bring your laptop or tablet for hands-on experience and training. At the Meet-up you will:

- Learn what is a Geographic Information System (GIS)
- Take a quick look at City GIS projects
- Learn how to use [vernoniageographic.org](http://www.vernoniageographic.org) to find property information
- Ask question and get answers

Ben Fousek and Vernonia Geographic Informations Systems have helped upgrade the City of Vernonia's information systems. These upgrades have made the City and staff better informed, more efficient, and given them some tools allowing them to help the public and answer questions quickly and accurately.

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