

Amy Salamon

From: R1 Planning Council <info@r1planning.org>
Sent: Monday, April 7, 2025 12:16 PM
To: Amy Salamon
Subject: [Test] R1 April 2025 Newsletter - 🎂 WinGIS 25th Birthday

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April 2025

WinGIS Turns 25!
Happy Birthday to the Region's Premier GIS



Welcome to WinGIS

What exactly is a GIS? A GIS (Geographic Information System) is a collection of computer software and hardware, data and analytic methods used to view and manage information about geographic places. A GIS links location to information allowing you to layer information so you will have a better understanding of how it all interrelates.

WinGIS provides a wide range of services to governmental agencies, non-profit and commercial organizations, and the public.

[PROPERTY SEARCH](#)

Users are able to locate property information such as legal description, property use, zoning, taxing and assessment information by using keyword searches or by simply typing in a name or address. Our on-line mapping application provides an aerial view with property boundary lines and parcel dimensions.

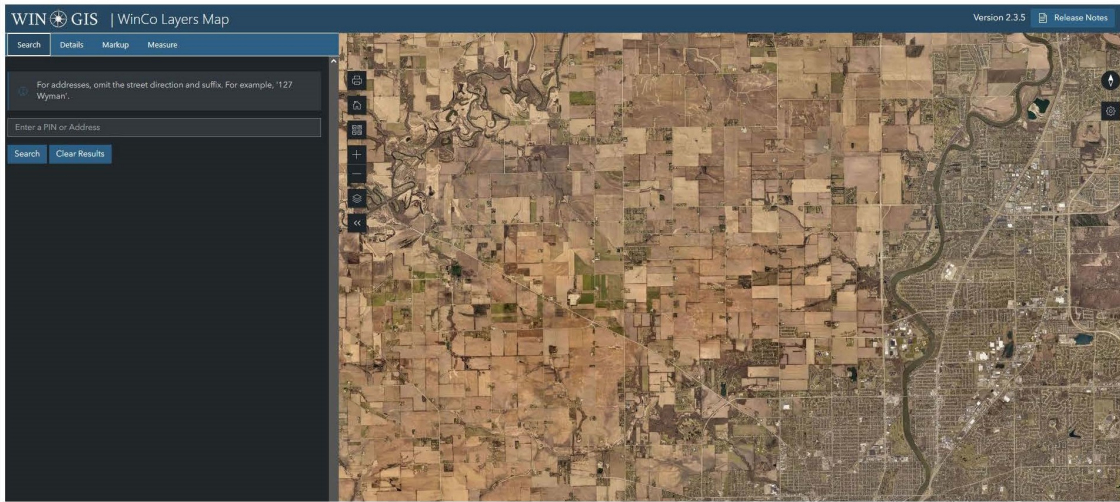


One of the first versions of the WinGIS site, circa 2009.

Twenty-five years ago, a handful of agencies needed a geographic information system (GIS) that was comprehensive, cooperative, and cost-effective. At the time, GIS and the internet itself was a fairly new phenomenon, making this endeavor complex, niche, and ground-breaking. These agencies (see sidebar below for names) put together an agreement and on February 10, 2000, Winnebago County GIS (WinGIS) was born.

Today, who *doesn't* use WinGIS? People need it for a wide variety of reasons; it's hard to anticipate where it's useful. People like city public works, who use a custom map to track in real time which hydrants have been flushed or roads that have been plowed. Or engineers, who use its data on utility lines in construction blueprints. Or the people who perform thousands of daily searches seeking a whole host of county property information. Above all, there are the 911 dispatchers, who rely on the accuracy of property addresses and street network to send the appropriate fire and EMS response unit along the fastest route.

WinGIS's team – Steven Gregg (director), Sarah Stromberg, Max Schonberg, and Gracey Garner – are responsible for keeping it reliable and innovative, allowing access to the information their users need to make better decisions, faster.



WinGIS today

“Early on, what GIS could do – mainly digitizing county maps and visualizing parcel data – was cool, but still a bonus. Now, it’s a need. So many people use it every day to do their jobs,” said Steve.

It is a consolidated, cost-effective way to store and use data across a shared geography. Collaboration is what makes it unique. Each municipality stores their property, tax, utility, and other information in the shared database maintained by WinGIS, so what is displayed on map searches reflects the entire region of Stephenson, Winnebago, and Boone counties.

“We’ve made a name for ourselves and now everyone relies on us for data,” says Sarah Stromberg, GIS Database Administrator. “The future of WinGIS is simply to build on that by adding new functionalities that make people’s jobs faster and easier.”

ELITE EIGHT

The original eight WinGIS agencies has expanded to over 50 members today.

Founding members were:

- Winnebago County
- City of Rockford
- City of Loves Park
- Village of Machesney Park
- Village of Cherry Valley
- Rockford Park District
- North Park Public Water District

- Four Rivers Sanitation Authority



CLEAN ENERGY INDUSTRY CAREER FAIR

Thursday, April 17th
1 pm - 4pm

UW Health Sports Factory
305 S Madison St.
Rockford, IL

There are 5,500 clean energy jobs available in Northern Illinois in construction, solar, and wind sectors, recently estimated by the US Department of Energy. Yet the region lacks skilled workers to fill them, a demand that can be met through more training programs. That's where the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) comes in.

Northern Illinois's CEJA team is hosting the region's first clean energy-specific job fair on Thursday, April 17. This event will allow participants to explore these job opportunities, connect with employers, and experiment with hands-on exhibits in construction, CNC machining, and solar installation. It will also allow participants to sign up for job-specific training in these sectors

What makes CEJA different? It trains people, particularly those from underserved areas, for a good-paying career in clean energy. Training is free, participants receive stipends and supports throughout, and assistance with job placement upon completion. Northern Stateline Region CEJA partners are Awaken Foundation,

Goodwill Industries of Northern Illinois, Region 1 Planning Council, Rock Valley College, The Workforce Connection, and Zion West Enterprises.



Open for Public Comment

[Click on the survey title to participate](#)

[Resilience Improvement Plan](#)

Open now

The Resilience Improvement Plan (RIP) will identify impacts to regional transportation caused by natural hazards like flooding, extreme temperatures, and severe storms. This survey is asking for the kinds, locations, and impacts of weather events that you experience.

[Parking Reimagined](#)

Open through April 11

This plan lays out ways that regional parking can be safer, more versatile, and more sustainable. The completed draft is open for your feedback.

[Climate Action Plan](#)

Open through April 22

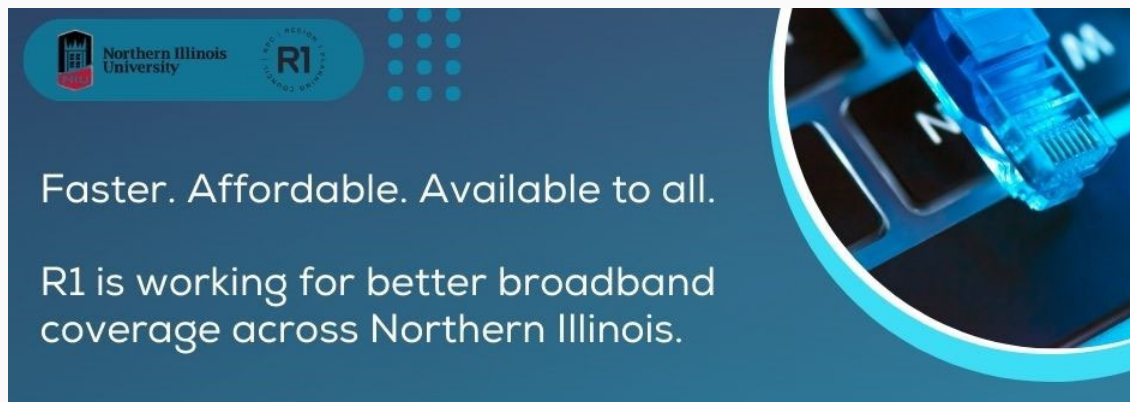
One of R1's core plans, the Climate Action Plan (CAP) is a roadmap for the region to prepare for and respond to climate change. The completed draft is open for your feedback.

[Broadband Accessibility](#)

Open now

R1 is leading an initiative to expand internet access, affordability, and equity. This survey is looking for users' feedback regarding their current service and satisfaction (or lack thereof), and how they use the internet.

Broadband Survey Looks for Coverage Gaps Across Region



Region 1 Planning Council (R1) is building a map to identify the location of broadband infrastructure in Winnebago, Boone, Ogle and Stephenson Counties. The goal is to help local governments in the four-county region understand how and where to prioritize broadband expansion to catalyze economic development and improve quality of life.

Creating this kind of map is as not simple as it sounds. Unlike public streets or sewers, nearly all of the broadband infrastructure in Northern Illinois is privately owned and operated, and there's never been a comprehensive mapping of these privately-owned broadband assets.

Ultimately, the map and related survey work overseen by R1 will arm local governments with intelligence that can be used to encourage Internet Service Providers to expand regional broadband infrastructure in ways that best meet the needs of Northern Illinois.

This mapping and survey work will answer the following questions for Winnebago, Boone, Ogle and Stephenson Counties:

- What types of broadband infrastructure exist in the four-county region? And where is this infrastructure located?

- Which areas of the region lack broadband access or suffer from poor broadband access?
- Which broadband gaps are most important to fill?
- What type of broadband infrastructure – fiber, wireless, etc. – will best serve individuals and businesses in a particular location.
- What internet speeds are required to meet the region's needs?
- What affordability options should service providers make available to our region?

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity has awarded R1 a Digital Equity Capacity Kickstarter grant that is funding this critical planning work. Additionally, R1 is helping Northern Illinois University, which received a state Broadband READY planning award, with complementary planning to eliminate the digital divide in Northern Illinois.

How can you help? Complete and share the survey at <https://engager1.mysocialpinpoint.com/broadband>.

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Apply now for a summer internship in charming downtown Rockford. R1 lets you customize your project to support your career goals.

Internships are
available in these areas:

- Transportation
- Government Administration

Submit your resume:

www.r1planning.org
Region 1 Planning Council



NorthCOG Event

Blueprints for Change:

Innovative Housing Strategies

DATE & TIME

Friday, April 11 12:00 - 1:00 PM

LOCATION

127 N Wyman St,
Rockford, IL 61101

MEET THE PANELISTS



Conor Brown
Chief Executive Officer
NorthWest Illinois Alliance of REALTORS®



Oliver Emerson Jr.
Chief Development Officer
Oliver Emerson Development



Ron Clewer
Illinois Market President
Gorman & Company

Join the Northern Illinois Council of Governments (NorthCOG) for a dynamic Lunch & Learn on how local governments and the private sector can expand housing options across Northern Illinois.

A panel of regional housing experts will discuss innovative strategies that bridge the gap to create inclusive, sustainable communities.

There's still time to sign up for this free event! Spend your lunch hour getting insights from three local housing experts on inventive housing strategies that will revamp your community.

Email pwitherow@r1planning.org to sign up.

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