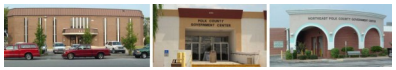
MARSHA M. FAUX CFA, ASA
POLK COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER



GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

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Winter Haven, FL 33881
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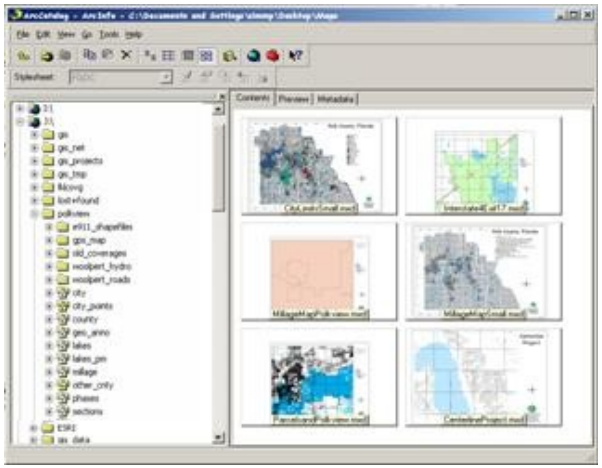
GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

A Geographic Information System (GIS) is a computer-based tool for mapping and analyzing features that exist and events that happen on earth. Mapmaking and geographic analysis are not new, but a GIS performs these tasks much more efficiently than do the older manual methods. A GIS can map any information stored in spreadsheets or databases that have a geographic component. The GIS allows the user to see patterns, relationships, and trends that can't be seen in a table or list format. It gives you an entirely new, dynamic perspective on your information and helps you make better decisions.



GIS technology integrates common database operations such as query and statistical analysis with the unique visualization and geographic analysis benefits offered by maps. Simply put, you are able to really "SEE" your data in a way that not only makes sense but also allows for creative methods to rearrange the data to reveal the patterns or trends that are inherent within it. You may have heard the age-old adage, "A picture is worth a thousand words…" if this is truly the case, a GIS makes "an INTELLIGENT picture that's worth ten thousand words". This ability to visualize data distinguishes GIS from other information systems and makes it valuable to a wide range of public and private enterprises for explaining events, predicting outcomes, and planning strategies.

THE POLK COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER'S GIS

The Polk County Property Appraiser's GIS Parcel Base Mapping project was started in 1992. The goal is and has always been to develop an accurate multipurpose parcel and planimetric GIS base map. Planimetric simply refers to a map showing the location of features, in a GIS, planimetrics are related to information about the features. In order to accomplish this goal the Property Appraiser's office (PAO), through Interlocal agreements with political bodies, became the project management agency for the development of a seamless, countywide GIS parcel base map. The PAO oversees the mapping development and maintenance of approximately 310,000 parcels, covering over 2,000 square miles and 17 cities. Development and maintenance includes survey control, aerial photography (digital rectified orthophotography), and planimetric features.

The Polk County Property Appraiser's Office GIS stands out as one of the most accurate Parcel Base Mapping / GIS projects in the state of Florida. This level of accuracy is accomplished and maintained by field mapping each land section or square mile before parcel mapping occurs. The accuracy level of the base map is estimated to be within two feet of real world coordinates. Digital ortho-rectified aerial photography is also an important part of the base map. The workflow or GIS conversion process allows the GIS to be updated and maintained as each section is developed. The planimetric data can be used immediately for several applications such as traffic engineering and pavement management. The GIS staff at the PAO uses ESRI ArcInfo, ArcGIS and ArcIMS software.

The PAO has an in-house programming staff that works to integrate our Appraisal and Mapping data. The applications written and maintained by our programming staff include GIS development and maintenance routines, data request / retrieval programs, and data query / viewing applications. Our most used application is http://map.polkpa.org it allows the public to search and analyze our GIS and Appraisal data. In addition, much of our data is available for free download from our ftp site please see the following http://www.polkpa.org/Downloads/DataFiles.aspx for additional information.