The University of Texas - Pan American

NEWS & VIEWS

Data & Information DISC Systems Center

COSERVE

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Member of the Texas Centers for Border Economic and Enterprise Development

Mapping the Colonias in Starr County

The Data & Information Systems Center is currently working on a project with Wilbur Smith Associates (a private consulting company in Houston) to map the colonias in Starr County. The layer being used as the base map is a series of aerial pictures of Starr County. The aerials are being overlaid with roads and colonia boundaries.

The purpose of the Comprehensive Colonia Study and Plan is to provide an extensive evaluation of all the physical needs of the colonias within Starr County.

Figure 1. Colonia Loma Linda East located on the east side of Garciasville.

Figure 2. Colonia Manuel Garcia located on the north side of La Casita.

Comprehensive, current, and reliable data on overall colonia conditions and needs is required in order to efficiently allocate available resources and to obtain additional Federal and State funding for colonia improvements. This study will provide data on all colonias in a single planning document, which will be designed to serve as a management tool for policy and funding considerations.

Examples of colonia maps are shown in Figures 1 and 2.

What are Digital Ortho Quarter Quads (DOQQs)?

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) produces DOQQs for use with GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and other computer software. DOQQs are digital images of aerial photographs. The digital image is produced by scanning an aerial photograph that meets National Aerial Photography Program Standards. The digital image is rectified by processing each image pixel (picture element) through photogrammetric equations using ground control points.

The displacements, caused by the lens of the camera and the elevation of the terrain, are removed in the DOQQs. It combines the image characteristics of a photograph with the geometric qualities of a map. The finished DOQQ is a spatially accurate image with planimetric features represented in their true geographic positions. They work as an excellent backdrop for different kinds of mapping.

Figure 3. Black dots represent various businesses along Highway 107 in Edcouch.

The Data and Information Systems Center at UT-Pan American has purchased DOQQs for the Rio Grande Valley and is using them in several projects. Figure 3 shows how one can highlight businesses in an area using a DOQQ as a base.

Figure 4 shows the road network on top of a DOQQ.

Figure 4. Road network in Rio Grande City.

CENSUS 2000

Census for the 21st Century

Continuing our series on the 2000 census, this quarter's topic is...

How will Census 2000 be Conducted?

When the first census was undertaken in 1790, U.S. Marshals were commissioned to go on horseback into the countryside. Riding along dusty winding roads and footpaths - from village to village and farm to farm - they tallied all the people they could find in our young, mostly rural nation.

With the growth in both our population and technology, the counting techniques of the federal government have become more sophisticated. The challenge for Census 2000 is today's diverse and rapidly changing society - high-speed, high-tech, and everyone constantly on the move.

In response to these obstacles, the U.S. Census Bureau has crafted an operational plan that draws on decades of information-gathering experience. The plan is highly technical, yet simple.

The first step is to create an accurate mailing list. This process began in January 1998 and will continue until the middle of this year.

The second step is to let people know the census is coming. A public awareness campaign is underway. This campaign includes stories and ads in newspapers and magazines, radio announcements, and television news reports. It also includes direct contact with the public through speeches and other presentations by census employees known as Partnership Specialists.

The third step is sending the census questionnaire. In March 2000, the census form will be delivered to the nearly 120 million households that make up America.

The fourth step is to send census-takers door to door. Near the end of April 2000, the Census Bureau will undertake the most labor-intensive and difficult task of Census 2000. All non-respondent households will be identified and then census-takers will go door to door to get people to fill out the census form right at their doorstep.

The next step is a quality check in which a survey of several hundred thousand households will be conducted to double-check the census figures. This serves as a quality check that helps the Census Bureau refine the completeness and accuracy of the census data.

The final step involves entering the questionnaire data into a computer, compiling all the information and then reporting the results to the President, the Congress, and every State Governor in the nation.

Data & Information Systems Center (DISC)

DISC, at The University of Texas - Pan American, is a State Data Center Affiliate and a Member of the Texas Centers for Border Economic and Enterprise Development

Service Area:

Southernmost 19 counties of Texas: Aransas, Bee, Brooks, Cameron, Duval, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Jim Wells, Kenedy, Kleberg, Live Oak, McMullen, Nueces, Refugio, San Patricio, Starr, Webb, Willacy, and Zapata.

Products & Services:

- Census of Population and Housing
- Census Maps & Data for Counties, Cities, Census Tracts, Block Groups, Blocks, and Zip Codes
- Population Estimates and Projections for Counties
- Economic Census (Agriculture, Construction, Government, Manufacturing, Retail Trade, Services, and Wholesale Trade)
- County Business Patterns
- Employment and Unemployment Data by County
- Census Tract Factbook for the Rio Grande Valley
- Street Index by Census Tract for Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy Counties
- Geographic Information System (GIS) Services
- U.S. Statistical Abstracts
- Customized Consultation Services

CoSERVE (Office of Center Operations and Community Services) is the community outreach component of UT-Pan American.

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