



# County of Rockland

## Office of County Executive C. Scott Vanderhoef

### NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Contact:** Ron Levine  
(845) 638-5645

### **County Receives Digital Government Achievement Award**

**(NEW CITY, NY)** County Executive C. Scott Vanderhoef announced that the Rockland County Planning Department's Geographic Information System (GIS) team has received a National 2013 Digital Government Achievement Award in the Government-to-Government Category from the Center for Digital Government. The award was an Honorable Mention for the County's GIS Emergency Application. The Digital Government Achievement Awards, which highlight outstanding agency and department websites and applications, presented 57 awards in 10 categories to governments throughout the country this year.

The County's GIS Emergency Application, an online interactive mapping tool, was first used last October to expedite emergency response during Superstorm Sandy and its aftermath. Designed to be efficient to use and easy to learn, the application was tested prior to the storm and used with success throughout and after the storm. The application, which provides a map-based common operating picture, enabled County, local and State highway, fire, police, utility, the Red Cross and other emergency personnel to record and share information on road obstructions and closures as events unfolded. The County, hardest hit by tidal surges and winds that downed trees and power lines, used this information during the storm to organize, prioritize and direct crews in clearing major highways and roads and to route emergency vehicles and evacuations. After the storm, updated information on changing road conditions was critical to restoring power, managing cleanup and re-opening schools and businesses.

"Rockland County has made a commitment to provide an effective, user-friendly way for citizens, businesses and local governments to access valuable GIS-related resources," said County Executive C. Scott Vanderhoef. "The GIS Emergency Application is just one more way we are providing a "gateway" to these resources, while making emergency response and operations more efficient. I congratulate the Planning Department's GIS team for being recognized for this prestigious national award."

"We are honored and excited to receive this award," said GIS Director Doug Schuetz. "We appreciate the partnership we shared on this project with the Rockland County Office of Fire & Emergency Services, the Rockland County Highway Department and the other stakeholders and emergency responders who were instrumental in launching the project. We look forward to further assisting with the County's emergency response activities through the use of the GIS Emergency Application during future events."

“In the past we focused our efforts on collecting, compiling and verifying information from the field, said Schuetz. “During Superstorm Sandy, field staff and/or supervisors and office personnel familiar with the situation were able to enter precise data directly on the Internet map, Emergency Operations Center staff received accurate information immediately after the data was entered, and dispatch staff could view it at other locations. As a result, we were able to provide reports to local and state-level stakeholders several times a day, to monitor fast changing conditions, and to direct emergency crews more efficiently and effectively.”

“The interactive website was a tremendous tool that assisted emergency response agencies, including utility companies, in responding to incidents throughout Superstorm Sandy,” said Christopher Jensen, Program Coordinator for the Rockland County Office of Fire & Emergency Services. “The information collected also played a significant role in implementing recovery efforts by local, county, state and federal agencies.”

According to Andrew M. Connors, PE, Deputy Superintendent of Highways, “‘Real time’ mapping proved invaluable as the County Highway Department worked to clear the downed trees after the storm. We were able to locate all work sites quickly, allowing for the immediate dispatch of labor and equipment to open our roads to traffic. With situational awareness of the County’s road network, we were able to direct our efforts to restore our infrastructure in a safe, timely and cost-effective way.”

The Center for Digital Government is a national research and advisory institute on information technology policies and best practices in state and local government. The Center is a division of e.Republic, the nation’s only media and research company focused exclusively on state and local government and education.

Winners joining Rockland County in the Government-to-Government award category included Allegheny County, Penn., for its Jail Collaborative IT Application; the Arkansas Centralized Electronic Network of Sex Offender Registries (CENSOR); Martin County, Fla. For its Broadband Network; NYC DOT’s Superstorm Sandy Damages Map Web App; the NYS Digital Signage Network Broadcasts Critical Law Enforcement Information; and the Oklahoma Office of Management and Enterprise Services’ Legislative Analysis. [View the complete list of awardees.](#)

GIS is a powerful resource used in many diverse areas, including environmental management, planning, economic development and site selection, real property information & records, transportation and infrastructure, homeland security and public safety, health and human services and business assistance. The Rockland County GIS Portal provides the public with “one-stop shopping” for GIS resources via a convenient, accessible Internet location without having to make a trip to County offices or requesting information by phone. For more information on the Rockland County GIS program, call GIS Director Doug Schuetz at (845) 364-3421 or email him at [schuetzd@co.rockland.ny.us](mailto:schuetzd@co.rockland.ny.us).