

A PROPOSED GEOGRAPHIC SUPPORT SYSTEM INITIATIVE FOR THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

TRAINOR T.

U.S. Census Bureau, WASHINGTON, D.C, UNITED STATES

In the years between the 2000 and 2010 censuses, the Geography Division at the U.S. Census Bureau conducted a program to improve the positional accuracy of the Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Reference (TIGER) file. The MAF/TIGER Accuracy Improvement Project (MTAIP) was a huge success that the Census Bureau is committed to building upon.

Beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 the Geography Division of the U.S. Census Bureau has put forth an expanded Geographic Support System (GSS) Initiative. The GSS Initiative focuses on improving the Census Bureau's address coverage and quality while maintaining the significant spatial data in the MAF/TIGER database. This program includes the update and maintenance of addresses, features, and boundaries while imposing strict quality standards on the ingest and output of the data. In preparation for the 2010 Census, the Geography Division compiled a final address list of 133,341,676 addresses; included a total of 2,756,444 feature updates to TIGER; and conducted geographic programs to review and update nearly 604,000 legal, statistical and administrative areas nationwide. Census data will be tabulated and presented for over 11 million unique geographic areas, including nearly 74,000 census tracts, over 220,000 block groups, and over 11 million census blocks in 3,221 counties and equivalents in the US and Puerto Rico.

The primary goal of the GSS Initiative is to continuously maintain a highly accurate address list that includes every household in the nation to support efficient and effective statistical data collection for censuses and surveys. Partnering with governments across the nation to not only maintain this address list but also to update and verify its credibility year-to-year obviates the need for a costly full address canvassing operation later in the decade in preparation for the 2020 Census.

While, the goals of the Census Bureau's GSS initiative are challenging they are attainable. The initiative focuses on improvement to current approaches for maintaining geographic support. It explores new methodologies to efficiently work with partners by collecting and using information that supports a national framework of geographic data and builds on previous investments to conduct censuses and surveys.

The GSS Initiative calls for the following: in FY 2013 and beyond, expanded use of the Community Address Update System (CAUS) for rural addresses; partner and commercial address lists as source data; first-time use of the United States Postal Service (USPS) Delivery Sequence File in Puerto Rico; increased use of imagery; use of change detection techniques; continuous street and other feature improvements through maintenance programs and change detection techniques using Geographic Information System (GIS) files and imagery provided by partners; and quality measurement and validation of address and spatial data from field work and the use of imagery and Global Positioning System (GPS) control points.