



Highlights

- Leveraging existing investments
- Incorporating FREE software
- Data-driven decision making

Return on Investment (ROI)

- Saving staff time
- Fair and equitable distribution of the population

Contact Us

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In response to the 2010 decennial census and shifts in population, Lake County was required to redraw County Commissioner Districts to allow the elected commissioners to more equitably represent the citizens of Lake County. Using free software and in-house staff the GIS Division was able to assist the County Attorney in quickly and accurately determining the most equitable configuration of new Commissioner District boundaries, giving each commissioner a nearly equal number of citizens to represent.

Background:

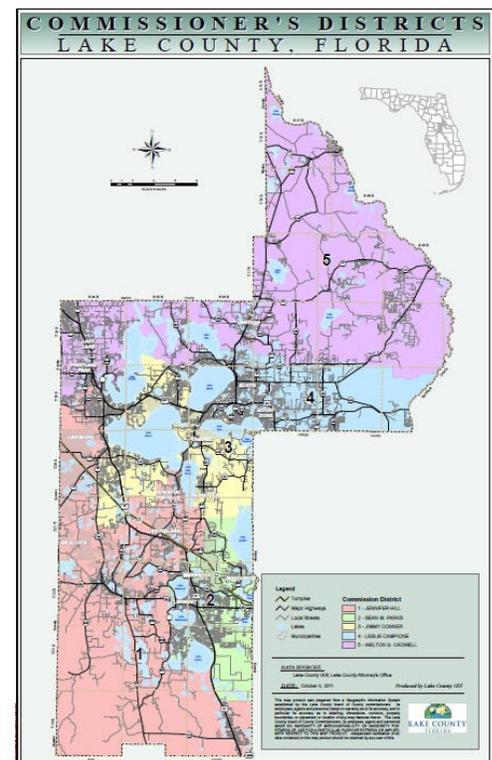
The “one person, one vote” requirement derived from the US Constitution requires that members of an elected body be drawn from districts of substantially equal population.¹ Following the 2010 decennial census the Lake County Attorney’s Office was tasked with reconfiguring the County Commissioner Districts to better reflect the distribution of population in Lake County. In the past this was done painstakingly by hand, drawing boundaries on paper maps and tallying populations manually to determine the most balanced configuration.

The Issue:

With elections on the near horizon, time was not a luxury, but accuracy could not be sacrificed for speed. Population counts based on census blocks, along with voter districts, municipal boundaries, and planning areas all had to be considered when creating new Commissioner Districts (not to mention that each current commissioner had to continue to reside in his or her district). And manually tallying and dividing population counts into five districts of equal proportions can be time consuming and potentially fraught with errors.

The Solution:

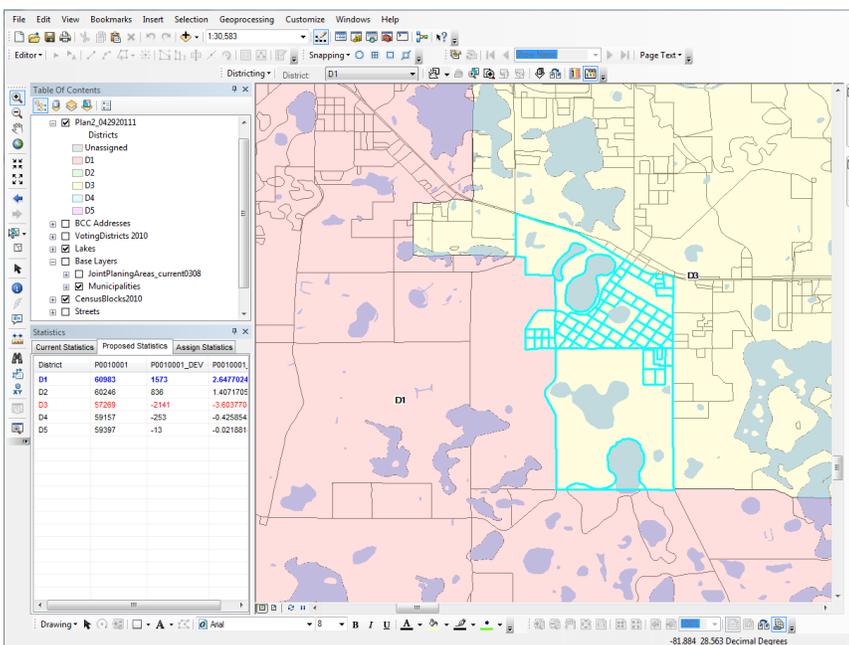
In keeping with the move toward data-driven decision making, Lake County GIS was recruited to assist with the redistricting project. While there are a number of GIS vendors who offer software designed to do this type of work, cost was a consideration. After identifying the



¹“Redistricting 2010: Legal Principles”, Alan J. Bojorques, www.redistrictingsolutions.com



needs of Lake County, ESRI's free **Districting for ArcGIS** software tool was chosen. It leverages the existing investment in GIS already made by the county, plus offers specific tools for redrawing political boundaries, analyzing statistics, creating charts and graphs of population distribution, and creating maps for distribution.



Lake County GIS staff met with the County Attorney, Growth Management and the Supervisor of Elections as well as several County Commissioners, and with a laptop and projector and armed with the 2010 census block data, was able to make changes to the Commissioner District map on the fly as questions were asked and decisions made. The software allowed staff to aggregate multiple census blocks into commission districts and to see the population count results immediately for each new district configuration. Multiple versions based on alternative scenarios allowed the staff to find the optimal configuration of the districts, thereby meeting the requirements of redistricting.

The Benefits:

Within four or five meetings (none lasting more than an hour) a new Commissioner District map was created and submitted to the Board of County Commissioners for approval. By automating the mapping work and number-crunching, time was reduced considerably and staff was able to return to other, pressing duties quickly. And the citizens of Lake County can be assured that the population distribution between commissioners' representation is substantially equal.

A copy of the new Commission District map in PDF format can be downloaded from the Lake County Maps web page at www.lakecountyfl.gov/maps/, or viewed in the Lake County GIS interactive web at <http://gis.lakecountyfl.gov/gisweb/>.