

Spotlight – San Diego Association of Governments (from the January 2011 CSDC Network News)

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) is a Metropolitan Planning Organization that serves as the Regional Census Data Center for San Diego County. As such, it is the regional planning agency on a number of quality-of-life issues. They also work with the Census Bureau to plan for census surveys, educate census data users, and help data users access data.

SANDAG was established in 1966 and has been an affiliate of the SDC network since the beginning. Staff have assisted with census planning activities for the last four decennial censuses (and maybe longer than that!). Recently, Karen Lamphere, the long time manager of SANDAG's census data center retired. Kristen Rohanna has managed the center since 2008. The SANDAG census data team currently consists of Kristen Rohanna (manager), Grace Mino (data analyst), and Andy Gordon (Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analyst).

Both SANDAG and the Census have changed with the times. Karen Lamphere told a story of how someone once asked to *listen* to the summary tape files from the 1990 Census! Since then the Census Bureau has dropped the word "tape" from their file names and simplified the decennial census to only the short form. SANDAG has been part of that evolution as well.



Andy, Kristen, and Grace

They have been at the forefront of the GIS "revolution," using GIS technology since the early 1970s and continuing to pioneer innovative approaches to GIS database development, maintenance, analysis, and display. Most notable for this audience, SANDAG used GIS over the last couple of decades to make sure the Census Bureau had the most up-to-date road and address information for San Diego County. They supported their city and county agencies over the years when they needed help with census planning activities and post-census data releases.

Today, SANDAG continues to look for opportunities to change with the census times. Much of the region's census data can be easily accessed from their Web site. They hold workshops to help users find the data they need from American FactFinder and learn about the latest Census products. With the new release of the American Community Survey 5 year data, SANDAG will search for ways to integrate the data into their own population estimates, population forecast, and transportation planning programs.