

EXAMPLE OF A PHONE CALL TO A TARGETED DECISION-MAKER

S = Student, R=Receptionist, P = Prospective Employer

S: Hello, is Jim there by chance?

R: Jim Parson?

S: Yes.

R: Just one moment.

P: Jim Parsons here.

S: Good afternoon Mr. Parsons. My name is Gil Harris. I am completing a degree in Regional and Urban Planning at East Carolina University and I wanted to ask you a couple of questions about the work you do in Community Development for Pitt County. Do you have a minute?

P: How can I help you?

S: Well, first let me tell you about myself. I will be graduating this May with a Bachelor of Science degree in Urban and Regional Planning where I have studied courses very relevant to your work like, urban development, regional planning, housing and neighborhoods, and community planning, to name a few. Last summer I completed an Internship for the New Bern Planning office where I was involved in GIS planning, a transportation study, and some work in environmental planning. I find that I really enjoy the interaction with community members in the field as well as quantitative analysis and mapping.

Let me ask you, what do you think is the greatest challenge facing the field of county development?

P: Well, you mentioned the GIS work you did in New Bern. I'd have to say that technology is still changing so quickly that it's always challenging to stay current with the advanced in GIS systems, especially since technology is so expensive.

S: I certainly understand that. One of the advantages we have at ECU is that the university has a clear mandate to stay current on technology and all of our GIS systems are upgraded every three year. When I was in New Bern that turned out to be important since they were implementing the new ArcView version 9 software with the new spatial analysis capabilities which I had been using at school since last spring semester.

What GIS systems do you use in Pitt County?

P: Gosh, you are making me envious. So New Bern has upgraded to version 9, huh. I'll have to call the manager Mike Avery and ask him about that. I'm afraid we are still on version 8 and probably will be for another year.

S: Besides the technology issue, what other challenges are you facing this year?

P: Well, I'm sure you have heard of the discussions on where we should put the new jail. Citizens passed a \$20 million bond to allow us to build a new 900 bed jail and the County Commissioners have asked for input from us on our ideas there. The problem is that we are so busy, we really haven't had time to put together a cost comparison for them. I think we could do a good job if we just had the manpower.

S: I remember reading about that. Do I remember correctly that your current jail is 404 beds and that there are some strong voices suggested that the jail should be built downtown?

P: Yes, that's right. I really don't like that idea since we would have to tear down buildings we just bought for over a million dollars.

S: Would you be interested in having someone on your staff who could take over some of that burden, while at the same time help you with the ArcView upgrade to version 9 in the future?

P: Well yes, it certainly would be valuable.

S: It seems to me Mr. Parsons that there are a number of areas where I could be helpful to you. I really think it would be worth our while to meet face to face to toss around some ideas. Would Thursday or Friday be better for you?

P: Yes, I'd like that. Probably Thursday would be better. I've got a number of meetings on Friday.

S: Morning or afternoon?

P: What about 3:30 in the afternoon. We could talk and then I could give you a tour of our facility.

S: That would be great. So I will see you at 3:30 this Thursday. It's been nice talking to you. Thank you for your time! Good bye.