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GeoSpatial Experts Introduces Ricoh Camera with Compass-GPS Module

THORNTON, Colorado, USA, 17 June 2008 – GeoSpatial Experts today introduced an integrated magnetic compass/GPS receiver module for the Ricoh 500SE digital camera. The new Ricoh Compass-GPS Module is fully compatible with the existing version of GPS-Photo Link software and is available for purchase now on the GeoSpatial Experts website at www.geospatialexperts.com.

“The best geospatial-mapping camera just got better,” said GeoSpatial Experts President Rick Bobbitt. “No other digital camera in the world matches the GIS mapping features offered by the Ricoh 500SE.”

The module attachment was originally introduced by Ricoh solely with a built-in GPS receiver, which enables the camera to acquire the location coordinates of each photo and embed them with the photo as an attribute without an external GPS device. The GPS-Photo Link digital mapping software developed by GeoSpatial Experts uses the location coordinates to automatically link each digital photographic image with its location and then accurately map it on a GIS layer.

The addition of the magnetic compass allows the Ricoh 500SE to also record the direction the camera was pointing when each photo was taken. The current version of GPS-Photo Link accesses this direction data and can place an arrow on the photo location on the GIS map to show the correct direction. The photo-mapping software can also use camera metadata to determine the zoom setting of the lens and portray the field of view of each photo as a triangle on the map layer.

“The ability to tell which direction each photo was taken has been the number-one request from our photo-mapping customers,” said Bobbitt. “If a photo is snapped from the middle of the street, the GIS user can now see by the arrow which side of the street the photo represents when they look at the map layer. This wasn’t possible before the Ricoh Compass-GPS Module was introduced.”

GeoSpatial Experts sells the Ricoh 500SE with or without the optional Compass-GPS Module in a bundle with the GPS-Photo Link software. And the module itself is available either with both the GPS and compass or with the GPS only. GeoSpatial Experts and its distributors have already begun shipping cameras with the new module.

“As the pioneer in the field of geo-imaging, Ricoh understands that image direction is a key part of many GIS workflows” said Jeff Lengyel, National Manager for Ricoh America’s Digital Camera Division. “Prior to the availability of the SE-3 module, images from the 500SE were simply points on a map with no indication of the direction the

camera was facing. Now we can provide an accurate visual reference of an image's azimuth as well as the field-of-view the camera could see from that position.”

Built for GIS mapping, the Ricoh 500SE boasts an all-weather body, 8-megapixel resolution, and add-on lenses. The detachable Compass-GPS module attaches to the top of the camera and provides superior GPS signal reception compared with slide-in GPS cards. The new camera also offers a “GPS lock” function which records the location of the object being photographed instead of where the photographer is standing.

The Ricoh 500SE is an all-in-one GIS data collection device that enables users to directly enter up to five data attributes which will be seamlessly attached to the digital photograph along with the location coordinates. The camera can even snap a picture of a barcode and store it as a photo attribute. These attribute fields remain with the photos as GIS layers when the files are downloaded into the GPS-Photo Link software for georeferenced display in a GIS.

Another function found in the Ricoh 500SE that has proved popular with photo-mapping users is the built-in Bluetooth and optional WiFi wireless capability. This allows users to instantly transfer images and attributes acquired in the camera to other handheld mobile devices, such as PDAs or GIS data collectors. Data can also be transmitted wirelessly from these external devices to the camera. GIS users can also utilize the Bluetooth connection to communicate with an external GPS receiver if they choose not to use the Ricoh GPS module attachment.

For more information or to place an online order, visit www.geospatialexperts.com.

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