

Community engagement manager has ties to Dare:

RENCI joins with CSI to assist coastal communities

CHAPEL HILL — The Renaissance Computing Institute (RENCI), a multi-institutional North Carolina research organization, now has a presence in Dare County through an agreement with the University of North Carolina Coastal Studies Institute (CSI) to locate a RENCI technology specialist at CSI.

Kevin Gamiel, a five-year RENCI employee who grew up in Manteo and graduated from Manteo High School, is now RENCI Community Engagement Manager. He will work at CSI's Nags Head laboratory and provide a link between the institute and its researchers and Chapel Hill-based RENCI.

RENCI was launched in 2004 as a multidisciplinary institute that brings together experts in many fields and advanced technological capabilities to address problems that affect North Carolina. RENCI is involved in a variety of research projects that impact coastal residents, including using technology to plan for, mitigate and respond to coastal storms and floods, floodplain mapping using advanced computing methods, and computer modeling of storm surge, ocean topography, and water runoff in coastal areas.

new uses of technology, such as coastal flood forecast modeling that could make the department more effective.

RENCI-developed tools designed to help emergency managers and field workers and CSI research expertise will be applied to helping Dare County's EM division.

"Having Kevin and RENCI on our campus will be a great plus for the Coastal Studies Institute as it prepares to develop a new state-of-the-art campus, and for Dare County," said CSI director Nancy White. "We look forward to working with Kevin and with local officials on initiatives that use RENCI and CSI expertise to increase the use of technology to address issues of local concern, diversify our culture, and prepare to become a more resilient community that can better withstand the hazards we face on the coast, from hurricanes to Nor'easters as well as develop strategies to move forward."

Future projects will address a range of coastal issues, such as improving methods for monitoring pathogens in estuaries, using remote sensing and computer modeling to understand beach erosion, and developing best practices for storm water management by using aggregated local engineering data.

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RENCI was launched as a collaboration of UNC Chapel Hill, Duke University and NC State University, but it carries out a statewide mission of using technology and university expertise to solve problems. RENCI operates engagement centers at the three Triangle area universities and at UNC Asheville, UNC Charlotte and East Carolina University.

"I'm pleased to have the opportunity to apply RENCI's technological expertise and resources in my hometown and look forward to working with colleagues at both CSI and RENCI to address issues of mutual concern," said Gamiel.

"Our institutions have great synergy in what we want to accomplish and by combining our strengths, we can do more to identify research problems, propose and implement solutions."

Gamiel relocated to his CSI office in October and his initial focus will be to consult with CSI staff on designing the technology infrastructure — including a data center and networking — for the new \$30 million CSI campus to be built in 2009 on Roanoke Island.

Gamiel will also work with the Dare County Emergency Management department to assess its use of technology and to pinpoint technology gaps and

Gamiel also will foster collaborations between the CSI and RENCI's education and outreach staff in Chapel Hill and at the ECU Engagement Center in Greenville.

RENCI education and outreach programs aim to disseminate its research and technological innovations to a broader audience through hands-on learning, curricula and other activities.

Gamiel was a senior research software developer at RENCI, creating software for many of RENCI's disaster/emergency management and bioinformatics projects. He also worked at MCNC's North Carolina Supercomputing Center, the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) and for a Cambridge, Mass., marine robotics company. He was a consultant for the University of North Carolina and the University of Michigan, NCSA, the U.S. Geological Survey and NASA.

For more on RENCI, visit www.renci.org

For more on CSI, visit <http://csi.northcarolina.edu/>

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