



Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Azavea Receives SBIR Award from U.S. Department of Agriculture to Build Web-based OpenTreeMap to Support Collaborative Urban Forestry

Philadelphia, PA, October 14, 2010 - [Azavea](#) (formerly Avencia), an award-winning Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software design and development firm, announces that it was awarded a Phase I Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grant totaling \$90,000, by the [United States Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#) to develop prototype of a new data management software that will assist communities with the inventory and maintenance of urban forests.

Working with the [Pennsylvania Horticultural Society](#) (PHS), the City of Philadelphia and the [Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission \(DVRPC\)](#), Azavea will use the Phase I SBIR funds to test the feasibility of developing OpenTreeMap, an urban forestry tree inventory and management tool to support collaborative data collection and tree management by municipal government, non-profit organizations, students, and volunteers. The Phase I project will focus on development of a prototype in Philadelphia, but if the approach proves successful, Azavea will be eligible to apply for Phase II funding that will enable extension of the system to any location in the world.

Urban forests provide valuable ecosystem services with global implications, including carbon sequestration, stormwater management, urban heat island mitigation, air pollution reduction, and shade that reduces energy consumption. However, because of budget and staffing constraints, every urban and suburban municipal government faces major challenges in terms of managing their street trees and other public land. As a result, in many communities, citizens, students and non-profit organizations supplement the government activities by planting trees, performing inventories, pruning and other activities. But these activities are difficult to coordinate, tend to be focused in only a few areas and do not have the long-term continuity necessary to have substantial impact over time. Azavea hopes to mitigate some of these challenges by designing the OpenTreeMap web application as a wiki-style data editing software that will enable people of many ages and experience levels to participate collaboratively in the tree inventory process.

“Across the country there are hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions of citizens that are passionate about greening their communities by planting and caring for trees, but they lack the tools necessary to work together, measure progress and manage information over time. It is our hope that OpenTreeMap will help the public

participate in this process by collaborating with both local government and other members of their community”, says Robert Cheetham, Azavea President and CEO.

Azavea has previously received SBIR Phase I and II awards from the [National Science Foundation](#), the [U.S. Department of Education](#), and the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#).

OpenTreeMap is supported by the [National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture](#), under Agreement No 2010-33610-20937 of the [Small Business Innovation Research Grants Program](#).

About Azavea

[Azavea](#) is an award-winning geospatial analysis (GIS) software development firm specializing in the creation of location-based web and mobile solutions, as well as geospatial analysis services to enhance decision-making. Azavea is committed to working on projects with a strong social value component in order to promote the emergence of more [dynamic, vibrant, and sustainable communities](#). Each of Azavea’s projects, products and pro bono engagements showcases this commitment. Azavea is a certified [B Corporation](#). For more information, visit www.azavea.com

If you would like more information about Azavea or to schedule an interview with Robert Cheetham, Azavea’s CEO and President, please contact Abby Fretz at (215) 701 – 7503 or e-mail afretz@azavea.com

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