

## North Carolina Townships—Why do we have them in our map?

Townships were put in place way back in 1868 to mimic what some of our northern states like Pennsylvania had, but they were only used for about 11 years before their purpose was abolished. People from states where they do use townships are often confused by ours since the townships no longer serve the same purpose. They are mainly used now to draw voting precincts or to sort property tax records; none of which we need at NC811.

So, why are they in our NC811 mapping? Because they are used to give a general area of where an address is found when it is not inside of a city. Let's see if we can get an idea of how that works.

Polygons are used in the map for many things. City limit boundaries and townships are two polygon layers. How the map determines where an address is found is by what polygon it is inside of or touches. The black polygons shown below are townships, the smaller green polygons are cities. If a street, address point or parcel is inside of or touches one or more of the green city polygons it will show as being in that city. However, if it is outside of a green polygon the only other way to determine where it is would be to use another polygon layer, and the only one that exists is townships.

Therefore, in looking at the map below: Since Street 1 touches City A, it would show up there. And since Street 2 does not touch a city, but is inside Township B, it would show up there.

Why don't we use townships in our place lists then? Because townships are not places and are not used for addressing purposes and most people don't know the names of townships anyway.

Why not take them out then? If we did that then every street not inside of or touching a city polygon would not have anything to associate it with; it could be anywhere in the county. Townships help to narrow down the area a street is in; even if it's a very large area, it's still smaller than the entire county.

