



ESF 15 Business / Nonprofit Update

Produced by Emergency Support Function 15 – External Affairs

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ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR ESF 15

Enhancing Rail Transportation Safety and Security for Hazardous Materials Shipments

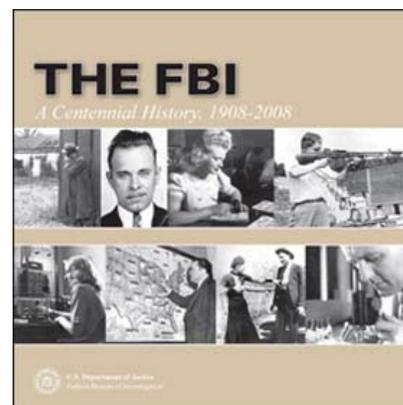
The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, in coordination with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), is improving safety by revising the current requirements in the Hazardous Materials Regulations applicable to the safe and secure transportation of hazardous materials by rail. According to the Nov. 26, 2008, Federal Register, “We are requiring rail carriers to compile annual data on certain shipments of explosive, toxic by inhalation and radioactive materials; use the data to analyze safety and security risks along rail routes where those materials are transported; assess alternative routing options; and make routing decisions based on those assessments. We are also clarifying rail carriers’ responsibility to address in their security plans issues related to en route storage and delays in transit. In addition, we are adopting a new requirement for rail carriers to inspect placarded hazardous materials rail cars for signs of tampering or the presence of suspicious items, including improvised explosive devices. We adopted these requirements in an interim final rule published April 16, 2008. This final rule fulfills requirements in Section 1551 of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007.” Also, in the Federal Register, both FRA and TSA are publishing final rules adopting requirements and procedures that promote rail transportation security. To view or download the complete document go to:

<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-27826.pdf>

FBI Celebrates 100 Years with History Book

The FBI has published this document about its history in celebration of its 100-year anniversary. This 130-page coffee-table book, “The FBI: A Centennial History, 1908-2008,” traces the FBI’s evolution over the past century from a makeshift band of 34 investigators to a full-fledged national security and intelligence agency with 30,000 special agents and specialized professionals working around the globe to protect the nation. You can purchase hardcover or paperback copies of the book from the Government Printing Office and from various online booksellers. It is also available online free of charge, either as a printable PDF or in a text-only format.

<http://www.fbi.gov/book.htm>



DHS Announces Revised National Incident Management System

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) this month released a revised National Incident Management System (NIMS)—the national standard for incident management. NIMS establishes standardized incident management processes, protocols, and procedures that all federal, state, tribal and local responders will use to coordinate and conduct response actions. NIMS expands on the original version released in March 2004 by clarifying existing NIMS concepts, better incorporating preparedness and planning and improving the overall readability of the document. The revised document also differentiates between the purposes of NIMS and the National Response Framework (NRF) by identifying how NIMS provides the action template for the management of incidents, while the NRF provides the policy structure and mechanisms for national-level policy for incident management. With the oversight of FEMA, the newly released NIMS followed an extensive revision involving over 100 partners from all levels of government, private sector, nongovernmental organizations (NGO), and subject matter experts representing a broad spectrum of emergency management and incident response disciplines. Throughout three official nationwide comment periods, FEMA reviewed nearly 6,000 comments from more than 280 individuals and organizations, including extensive review and recommendations made by the National Advisory Council (NAC). The basic tenets of NIMS remain the same. There have been several improvements to the revised NIMS document which will aid in readability and usefulness of preparing, preventing, and responding to

incidents. For example, the revised document places greater emphasis on the role of preparedness and has reorganized its components to mirror the progression of an incident. The new document is consistent with the NRF, and together they provide a single, comprehensive approach to incident management. Further information on preparedness programs is available at www.dhs.gov and www.fema.gov.

<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=47146>

<http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/>

Resolve to be Ready in 2009

With the new year approaching the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Ready Campaign is reminding Americans to Resolve to be Ready in 2009. Resolve to be Ready is a nationwide effort designed to encourage individuals, families, businesses and communities to take action and prepare for emergencies in the new year. Being Ready for emergencies can be an easy new year's resolution to keep by following the Ready Campaign's three simple steps:

- 1) Get an emergency supply kit.
- 2) Make a family emergency plan.
- 3) Be informed about the types of emergencies that can happen in your area and their appropriate responses.

By taking these three steps – in particular having an emergency supply kit both at home and in the car – Americans will be prepared for winter mainstays like power outages and icy roads. Each of these kits should include basic necessities such as water, food and first aid supplies to help you survive if you are without power or become stranded in your vehicle. Complete checklists for each kit are available at www.ready.gov.

Fewer than half of Virginians have taken steps to get ready for emergencies. Ready Virginia reminds all Virginians to make a New Year's resolution to create a family disaster plan now, before disaster strikes. To make a plan, a family should discuss what they would do and where they would go in case of an emergency in the area. Decide on a meeting place and choose an out-of-town friend or relative as a point-of-contact for family members. Make sure that each member of the household carries this contact information with them at all times. In addition, families should choose a destination for themselves and their pets in case they ever needed to evacuate their homes for any period of time. Printable worksheets about making a family plan are available at <http://www.ReadyVirginia.gov>. The Web site also provides information about emergency supplies and how to respond to all types of emergencies, including natural and human-caused disasters. A companion Web site, <http://www.ListoVirginia.gov>, is available for Spanish-speaking Virginians.

http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr_1229107288142.shtm

http://www.vaemergency.com/emupdate/08_emupdate/120308.htm



American Red Cross Among Most Trusted Inside the Beltway

Among all adults who are familiar with them, Consumer Reports, The American Red Cross, AARP, the Nature Conservancy and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce are the most trusted among 16 large organizations that influence politics and business in Washington. The AFL-CIO, the ACLU, the NRA and PhRMA are the least trusted. However, even these organizations are trusted "a great deal" or "a fair amount" by 47 percent or more of all adults. These are some of the results of The Harris Poll, a new nationwide survey of 2,126 U.S. adults surveyed online between November 10 and 17, 2008 by Harris Interactive. This survey focused on 16 organizations that have considerable influence on public policy, business and are frequently covered by the media.

http://www.harrisinteractive.com/harris_poll/index.asp?PID=983

WMD Commission Warns of Possible Attack Within 5 Years

The congressionally mandated, bipartisan U.S. Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism released a report warning of a possible nuclear or biological attack somewhere in the world within five years, reports Voice of America. The report ["World at Risk"] singles out Pakistan as the top security priority for the United States.

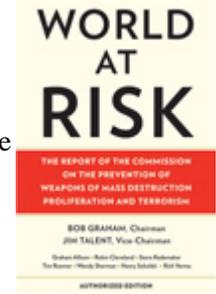
<http://www.voanews.com/english/2008-12-03-voa47.cfm>

Report Web site: <http://www.preventwmd.gov/report/>

2009 Mobile Command & Communications Vehicle Rally

Police, fire & EMS field commanders and supervisors, emergency managers, emergency communications center operators or supervisors, and anyone interested in mobile command/communications vehicles are invited to the 2009 Mobile Command & Communications Vehicle Rally, Wednesday, May 20, at the Chesterfield County Fair Grounds. The rally will feature local, state and federal mobile command and communications vehicles from central and eastern Virginia, including VDEM's new mobile command post. All vehicles will be open for tours and questions.

Register online at <http://www.chesterfield.gov/EmergencyManagement/Rally/>



Ready or Not? 2008

Trust for America's Health (TFAH) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) released the sixth annual "Ready or Not? Protecting the Public's Health from Diseases, Disasters, and Bioterrorism" report, which finds that progress made to better protect the country from disease outbreaks, natural disasters and bioterrorism is now at risk, due to budget cuts and the economic crisis. In addition, the report concludes that major gaps remain in many critical areas of preparedness, including surge capacity, rapid disease detection, and food safety. The report contains state-by-state health preparedness scores based on 10 key indicators to assess health emergency preparedness capabilities. More than half of states and D.C. achieved a score of seven or less out of 10 key indicators. Louisiana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Virginia and Wisconsin scored the highest with 10 out of 10. Maryland was one of six states tied for the lowest score with five out of 10. Over the past six years, the Ready or Not? report has documented steady progress toward improved public health preparedness. This year however, TFAH found that cuts in federal funding for state and local preparedness since 2005, coupled with the cuts states are making to their budgets in response to the economic crisis, put that progress at risk.

<http://healthyamericans.org/reports/bioterror08/>

Federal Coordinator Emphasizes the Importance of Businesses Developing Continuity of Operations Plans

General Douglas O'Dell, the federal coordinator for Gulf Coast rebuilding, strongly emphasized the importance of businesses developing continuity of operations plans, or COOP plans, before a disaster. In keynote remarks at the Louisiana Technology Council "Business Continuity: Planning Your Survival Kit" event, O'Dell noted the importance of technology specialists in developing and carrying out such plans. And O'Dell outlined critical elements of a COOP plan, which included:

- Ensuring the company has detailed contact information for every employee.
- Defining employee roles during an emergency.
- Making preparations for backup equipment, records, databases, programs; and ensuring their portability.
- Reaching across the lines of commerce to form partnerships and cooperative agreements with other organizations to share equipment or access services.

The federal coordinator, a retired military general, also emphasized the importance of conducting emergency tests, executing the plan, evaluating it, making necessary changes and keeping all employees informed. And the Times-Picayune reported, "Even the best-laid plans, however, must be tested regularly to identify areas for improvement and to accustom employees to operating in crisis mode, panelists said. O'Dell suggested that companies practice their emergency operations plans on May 1 - 'May Day,' he said - as it falls one month before the start of hurricane season.

http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr_1229007980113.shtm

http://www.nola.com/business/index.ssf/2008/12/major_gen_doug_odell_business.html

USAID and DHS Host Summit on Partnering with Faith-Based and Community Organizations

The Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) co-sponsored a summit on Dec. 15 to foster greater collaboration in disaster response. The Senior Leaders' Best Practices Summit: Partnering with Faith-Based and Community Organizations on Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery brought together faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs) and senior staff from USAID, DHS, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Department of Defense, and the White House. The goals of the Summit were to have practitioners working both

domestically and internationally to share their best practices and improve the understanding between government agencies and the FBCO community. A report compiling the challenges and best practices identified at the conference will be issued as a follow-up to the conference and made available for future policy discussions related to FBCOs and disaster assistance.

<http://tinyurl.com/6ays8a>

NFIP Moving to Digital Maps

The FEMA Map Service Center will discontinue production and distribution of paper Flood Insurance Rate Maps, Flood Hazard Boundary Maps and Flood Insurance Study reports. After Oct. 1, 2009, all flood maps and reports will be in digital format, except for the single paper copy provided to communities when their maps are updated. The Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2004 mandated the changeover. A fact sheet is available on the FEMA Web site at <http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=3474>.

Reprinted from the Dec. 17 EM Update e-newsletter produced by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management.

Fact Sheet: DHS End-of-Year Accomplishments

The Department of Homeland Security looks back at 2008 with a list of accomplishments. According to the fact sheet, "DHS remained focused on strengthening the foundations for successful execution of our mission. The agency continued to listen, learn and grow as a department. And we continued to work in a spirit of collaboration with our federal, state, and local partners, and with the American people – all of whom are equal partners in helping us protect our country, as well as equal stakeholders in our progress to achieve our five major goals:

- Protect our Nation from Dangerous People
- Protect our Nation from Dangerous Goods
- Protect Critical Infrastructure
- Strengthen our Nation's Preparedness and Emergency Response Capabilities
- Strengthen and Unify DHS Operations and Management

http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr_1229609413187.shtm

FAA Makes Special Flight Rules Around Washington, D.C. Permanent

In order to keep Washington, D.C. safe from 9/11-like aerial attacks by terrorists while reducing the economic impact on the general aviation community, the FAA has reduced the protective air envelope around the U.S. capital by 1,800 square miles of airspace. Airspace restrictions and procedures implemented around Washington, D.C., after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in order to make the region safer and more secure are now permanent under a final rule issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The secure airspace comprises two concentric rings. The interior ring, called the Flight Restricted Zone (FRZ), describes a 15-nautical-mile radius around Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA). The outer ring, called the Special Flight Rules Area (SFRA), describes a 30-nautical-mile radius around DCA. Flight operations within the FRZ are restricted to flights authorized by the FAA and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). Within the SFRA, pilots must file a flight plan, establish two-way radio communications with air traffic control, and operate the aircraft transponder on the transponder code assigned by air traffic.

<http://hsdailywire.com/single.php?id=7191>

http://www.faa.gov/news/press_releases/news_story.cfm?newsId=10350

PLANNING / PREPAREDNESS

Current Threat Level –

- The United States government's national threat level is Elevated, or Yellow.
- The U.S. threat level is High, or Orange, for all domestic and international flights. Only small amounts of liquids, aerosols and gels are allowed in carry-on baggage. See the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Web site (<http://www.tsa.gov>) for up-to-date information on items permitted and prohibited on airlines.



The ESF 15 Business / Nonprofit Update is designed to provide information about Emergency Support Function 15 (External Affairs) along with news articles and informational updates relating to Homeland Security and emergency management to ESF 15 partners. Inclusion of any resource, information or Web link is not an endorsement of the product, service or organization. The ESF 15 Business / Nonprofit Update is produced by Fairfax County's Office of Public Affairs – the lead agency for ESF 15.

- Virginia Threat Level: 

Under an elevated threat level, businesses should:

- Continue all precautions from lower Threat Conditions.
- Announce Threat Condition ELEVATED to employees.
- Review vulnerability and threat assessments and revise as needed.
- Identify and monitor governmental information sharing sources for warnings and alerts.
- Update and test call down list for emergency response teams and key employees.
- Review and coordinate and update mutual aid agreements with other critical facilities and government agencies.
- Establish and monitor active and passive security measures.
- Review employee training on security precautions (bomb threat procedures, reporting suspicious packages, activities and people).
- Conduct communications checks to ensure radio contact can be established.

At this time there is no credible information warning of an imminent, specific threat to the homeland. All Americans should continue to be vigilant, take notice of their surroundings, and report suspicious items or activities to local authorities immediately. Everyone should establish an emergency preparedness kit and an emergency plan for themselves and their family, and stay informed about what to do during an emergency.

http://www.dhs.gov/xinfoshare/programs/Copy_of_press_release_0046.shtm

<http://vaemergency.com/>

Holiday Safety; Don't Be a Victim

In recent months there has been an increase in the number of GPS, iPods and other electronic devices being stolen from vehicles. Be extra vigilant during the holiday season and keep the following tips from the Fairfax County Police Department in mind.

- Shop during daylight hours whenever possible.
- Always be aware of your surroundings.
- Know exactly where you park your car.
- If shopping at night, park in well-lit areas.
- Avoid shopping alone.
- Carry keys, cash and credit cards separate from each other.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. If possible, avoid carrying a purse. Use a fanny pack or deep pockets in clothing to carry what you need. Limit the number of credit cards that you carry.
- If you have to carry a purse, carry it close to your body and always zipped or snapped.
- Be aware of strangers “accidentally” bumping into you. Pick-pockets use this as a diversion.
- Avoid carrying large packages that block your vision and make you a target for thieves.
- Avoid shopping until you are exhausted. You are more alert when you are less tired.
- When hurried or in a crowded shop, make sure you get all forms of identification and credit cards returned to you before you leave.
- Leave the mall/store well before closing time. This way, there is a greater assurance you will walk out with other people. There is safety in numbers.
- Use an escort or mall security if you have too many packages or if you are leaving the store after closing.
- Be alert while walking to your car. Check under and around your car as you approach it. After checking your car, lock it immediately upon entering it.
- If you see a van parked next to your car, you can choose to enter your car through the passenger side.
- Avoid using automatic teller machines at night and remember to keep others from seeing when you type in your PIN.
- Remove GPS, iPods and any other electronic devices from your vehicle and store them out of sight. Remove any evidence (i.e. suction cup marks) from your windshield.

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/>

Elevation Saved Family Home From Hurricane Ike: Investment Paid Off

From FEMA's "Best Practices"... Paul Strizek's home on Galveston Bay (Texas) is much, much more than just a house. For more than 50 years, his bayside cottage here has been at the center of the most important of his family memories. It was his mother's house. So it was worth it to Strizek to pick up the home and elevate it on concrete piers several years ago. "It cost some money," he said, "but I didn't want to lose that house." His investment paid off Sept. 13 when Hurricane Ike stormed ashore over Galveston Island just 20 miles south of Strizek's house. The Category 2 hurricane carried winds up to 125 mph, driving storm surge up the bay. Many of his neighbors' houses were shattered. Two doors down from him, the surge swept an unelevated bay house out to sea. The surge took down Strizek's steps, a dock and the lower level's breakaway walls. All were carried out to sea. But the house survived, in excellent shape. He thinks the surge was 12 feet at his house. The piers hold the house up 14 feet.

<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=46961>

Personal Preparedness Can Help Weather a Disaster

When natural disasters strike, one of the furthest things from people's minds is the state of their bank account. Most focus on getting out and it is not until the storm moves on and they are faced with the aftermath and damage that thoughts turn to financial matters. It is difficult to bounce back from a tragic event, and this is worsened if your home is suddenly no longer there. Stressful times make managing money more difficult, and this can lead to bad decisions. It is best to work out a plan ahead of time, before disaster strikes, to ensure that you will be prepared no matter what may lie ahead. By taking the time to put together a game plan now, you'll be able to easily follow it in the event that your area is hit by a natural disaster. Here are some tips from the Credit Karma Blog (<http://blog.creditkarma.com/credit-karma/managing-money-after-natural-disasters/>).

1. Put together an emergency fund.
2. Get an insurance policy for storm damage.
3. Put together a list of trusted contractors.
4. Keep your papers safe.

<http://tinyurl.com/5wg72p>

Reprinted from the Disaster Safety Blog.

Winter Weather: FEMA Urges Residents and Businesses to be Prepared

With winter rapidly approaching, every family should be prepared to face another period of dangerous winter storms and flooding. The Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) urges all residents to be prepared. To stay safe, prepare a disaster supplies kit and a family communications plan; prepare your home against the cold; learn what winter storm watches and warnings mean; and if stranded in your car away from home, know what steps to take.

Assemble an emergency supply kit with:

- Non-perishable food.
- Water – enough for three days.
- A battery-powered or hand-cranked radio.
- Flashlights and batteries.
- Rock salt to melt ice on walkways.
- Sand to improve traction.
- Snow shovels and other snow removal equipment.
- Extra blankets, gloves and warm clothing.

Make a family plan to include:

- How to contact one another if not together when disaster strikes.
- How and where to reassemble.
- Prepare your home by:
 - Insulating with weather stripping around doors and windowsills.
 - Insulating pipes with plastic or newspapers and allow water from faucets to drip a little to avoid freezing.
 - Learning how to shut off water valves if a pipe bursts.
 - Keeping fire extinguishers on hand and knowing how to use them.

- Hiring an expert to check the structural stability of the roof to sustain the weight of extremely heavy snow accumulation.

Become familiar with winter weather terms:

- Winter Storm Advisory means cold, ice and snow are expected.
- Winter Storm Watch means severe weather such as heavy snow or ice is possible in the next day or two, so finalize preparations and listen to weather radio or forecasts.
- Winter Storm Warning means severe winter conditions have begun or will begin soon, so stay inside.

If traveling by car:

- Carry an emergency supply kit
- Keep the gas tank full.
- Let someone know your destination, route, and when you expect to arrive.
- If you do get stuck, stay with your car, keep the overhead light on when the engine is running (and windows cracked) so you can be seen, and tie a brightly colored cloth (preferably red) to the antenna for rescuers to see.

Winter storms can arrive before the official beginning of winter. Visit www.fema.gov and www.ready.gov for a thorough look into disaster preparedness and a more detailed list of emergency supplies. Also, www.Ready.gov/kids is an excellent resource for information on how to involve children in the process of assembling the family's Disaster Supply Kit.

<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=47129>

MEDIA ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Homeland Security Reality TV Show

ABC has announced a mid-season replacement show called "Homeland Security USA." From Arnold Shapiro, the Emmy-winning producer of such documentaries as "Scared Straight," the network said the series will give viewers an unprecedented look at the work of the men and women at the DHS "while they use the newest technology to safeguard our country and enforce our law." The 13 hour-long episodes were shot entirely on location throughout the United States. ABC says the producers were given access to the agencies of the Department of Homeland Security and has the full cooperation of Customs & Border Protection (including its Border Patrol); Immigration & Customs Enforcement; the Transportation Security Administration; the United States Coast Guard; and United States Citizenship & Immigration Services. The first episode, "This is Your Car on Drugs," is set to premier on Tuesday, January 6, 2009, at 8:00 p.m.

http://news.cnet.com/8301-1009_3-10113802-83.html

http://www.abcmmedianet.com/web/dnr/dispDNR.aspx?id=120408_01

Group Finds Terror Risks In Bay Area

The scenario goes something like this: Under the cover of darkness, a terrorist slips into Tampa's Howard F. Curren Wastewater Treatment Plant undetected. He places a bomb under one of the plant's chlorine gas tanks and sets the timer. The tank explodes, sending a deadly plume of toxic gas out over the Tampa Bay area. It could happen, at least according to a report released last month by the Center for American Progress, a Washington, D.C.-based nonpartisan think tank.

<http://www2.tbo.com/content/2008/nov/25/na-group-finds-terror-risks-in-bay-area/>

U.S. Report Foresees Deadlier Terror Attacks

Terrorists could acquire more dangerous conventional arms and even biological-weapon agents by 2025, creating the potential for more lethal attacks, U.S. Deputy National Intelligence Director Thomas Fingar said, basing his comments on a new National Intelligence Council report, Global Trends 2025. Fingar said the report suggests that the Middle East's burgeoning youth population would give al-Qaeda more prospective operatives while the terrorist organization's attacks on Islamic populations would hurt its ability to find new members, the Associated Press reported. Fingar added that future tensions in the Middle East would likely involve nuclear weapons.

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20081119_7128.php

Baltimore County Says it's Ready Whatever the Weather

What will it be? A little snow, a lot or the seasonal average? This year's winter weather and snow forecasts are all over the map. County officials, however, say they are prepared no matter how it turns out. "We're ready," said Tim Burgess, chief of the [Baltimore] county's Bureau of Highways. His agency has 300 trucks, including about 100 private contractors, and 400 people ready to battle winter weather. The county's 14 storage facilities are stocked with 50,000 tons of salt – about 2,000 tons under capacity. County emergency management officials lead a winter-weather preparedness drill Dec. 2. The drill brought together the staffs of the county police and fire agencies; the school system, and the departments of public works, health, aging and social services to practice handling a severe winter weather event.

<http://www.explorebaltimorecounty.com/news/5483/county-says-its-ready-whatever-weather/>

North Carolina EMS Uses Virtual Reality to Train for Disasters

Emergency managers in Brunswick County, North Carolina, have turned to a new virtual reality video game system to train first responders to deal with disaster. In an article in the Wilmington, "Star News," Shannan Bowen says the simulator equipment, formally called an Advanced Disaster Management Simulator, will be a training tool for Brunswick County Emergency Management Services and others in the region. The software works by allowing trainees to only see part of the 3-D scenario, as if they were actually there, forcing them to use a joystick to navigate through the scene and communicate with others who are seeing the other side of the scenario on another projected screen. Brunswick County's EMS department is the only agency in that area of the country with this piece of equipment. Only two other agencies – one in New York and one in Florida – have it.

<http://tinyurl.com/5fhp36>

Storm Planners Reflect On Busy Hurricane Season

The 2008 hurricane season has officially come to an end, and despite some major storms, storm planners say this year's season managed to avoid some of the disastrous evacuations that cost lives in 2005. The Associated Press is reporting that storm planners have reflected on the season that saw Hurricane Gustav hit New Orleans and Hurricane Ike strike Texas. Both used different strategies – New Orleans evacuated and Houston "hunkered down" – but both strategies worked. Still, in part because of the direct hit on Galveston and Houston, Ike was blamed for at least 72 deaths, including 37 in Texas, and caused \$8.1 billion in insured losses, eclipsing the \$5.6 billion in damage attributed to Rita. The 2008 hurricane season was one of the most active on record, with 16 named storms, including eight hurricanes, forming in the Atlantic. Five of the eight hurricanes were at least Category 3 strength.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/11/29/ap/national/main4637909.shtml>

Security for Motorcoach Passengers

Worldwide, buses are a key [terrorism] target, by default, as other targets become harder to strike.... that according to Metro Magazine. "Being prepared means understanding that theft, abuse and attack are the minor league equivalents to the big league of hijackings, murder and potential terrorist incidents. Each needs a plan to address risk and a plan for response.... Open transportation systems"—"where any and all riders may approach the coach and step on board"—"seem to demand more extensive security" but "closed systems"—such as charter operations—"are certainly not trouble free." Many bus operators have responded "with dedicated police forces, intercom systems,... security communication systems, GPS locators and the installation of 'panic' alert buttons on vehicles" as well as information sharing and employee training.

<http://tinyurl.com/59r6au>

Chertoff Advises Against DHS Reorganization

Michael Chertoff might be leaving his post as Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, but that's not stopping him from giving his successor, Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano, a little advice. The Associated Press says Chertoff made the remarks during a speech at Johns Hopkins University. He warned Napolitano not to try to reorganize the department — and not to try to please everyone. "Emergencies don't come neatly packaged in stovepipes," he said, as a way to address the argument by some groups — including the International Association of Emergency Managers — that the Federal Emergency Management Agency should be removed from the department because FEMA's mission is to respond to natural disasters and the department's main mission is to prevent terrorist

attacks. Chertoff argued that when different agencies plan and train together they are better suited to respond to disasters of all varieties.

<http://www.saukvalley.com/articles/2008/12/03/news/national/0f240cda470ad0450cb9dd4c37b47d1e.txt>

American Red Cross Announces Top Five Disaster Responses of 2008

The American Red Cross today announced the top five disasters of 2008, based on the number of people needing shelter, food, and comfort. They are Hurricane Dolly, Hurricane Gustav, Hurricane Ike, the flooding in the Midwest and the tornadoes which devastated Indiana. The Red Cross set up almost 900 shelters; served more than 16.5 million meals and snacks; distributed close to 275,000 comfort and clean-up kits, and deployed more than 27,000 Red Cross workers to respond to these five disasters. These numbers do not include the many other disasters which struck across the country, large and small.

http://www.redcross.org/pressrelease/0,1077,0_314_8512,00.html

Health, Emergency Staff Get Drugs First in Pandemic

Health care and emergency services workers who might help sick people during an influenza pandemic should take antiviral drugs throughout the epidemic, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services said in new guidance. Employers such as hospitals should be responsible for stockpiling the drugs and designating who gets them, HHS said in its latest guidance. People with weakened immune systems, such as cancer patients, should also get so-called prophylactic antivirals, which means taking them before they ever get sick, HHS said.

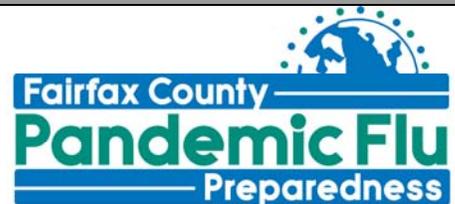
<http://uk.reuters.com/article/americasRegulatoryNes/idUKN1628965220081216>

PANDEMIC FLU

Fairfax County Pandemic Flu Preparedness

Be sure to visit the county's pandemic flu Web page for information on upcoming events and other preparedness news.

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/pandemicflu/>



Bird Flu Makes Mallards Thin, Study Finds

Avian flu viruses make mallard ducks thinner than other ducks, a finding that implies they do not spread the germs over long distances. Researchers tests of thousands of ducks migrating through Sweden showed the viruses do affect the birds, contrary to conventional wisdom that the pathogens have no effect on them. And, to their surprise, they found the birds only "shed," or release, virus for a few days, the researchers reported in the "Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences." Highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza is currently affecting flocks in Asia, parts of Europe and Africa and experts fear it may mutate into a form that humans can catch and transmit easily. If it does, it could kill millions. Even in its current hard-to-catch form, H5N1 has infected 387 people and killed 245 since 2003. Researchers do not know precisely how it spreads, although migrating birds are prime suspects, as is the poultry trade. The researchers found that infection did not affect how fast or far the birds migrated.

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/N02295458.htm>

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/131606.php>

New Vaccines Protect Against Asian H5N1 Influenza A Viruses in Domestic Ducks

Scientists are looking at a novel strategy to prevent the spread of pandemic avian influenza. They have developed a vaccine that protects ducks, a known natural reservoir for the virus. They report their findings in the November 2008 issue of the Journal of Virology. Waterfowl are considered to be the natural reservoir of influenza A viruses due to the isolation of all subtypes from these hosts. Current research indicates that influenza A viruses are continuously evolving within their natural environment and can be transmitted to a variety of animals, including humans. H5N1 avian influenza A viruses are now endemic in domestic poultry in many Asian countries and ducks are believed to be the primary source of infection. Reducing the spread of H5N1 in ducks could play a key role in minimizing the risk of a pandemic outbreak.

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/130922.php>

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HHS Releases Guidance for Use and Stockpiling of Antiviral Drugs for Pandemic Influenza

Health care workers and emergency services personnel who could have direct contact with individuals who are ill during an influenza pandemic should be protected with antiviral drugs throughout the pandemic, even before these workers are exposed or become ill themselves, according to guidance released this month by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Stockpiling these antiviral drugs and planning for their use is the responsibility of employers as part of comprehensive pandemic preparedness, the guidance said. The guidance also recommends preventive antiviral drug use for certain individuals following exposure to someone who is sick with pandemic influenza. These individuals include people with weakened immune systems, as well as for health care and emergency services workers such as law enforcement, firefighters, and emergency services personnel who do not routinely come in contact with ill people, and for residents in nursing homes, prisons, and other group residential settings if an outbreak of pandemic illness occurs in the facility. HHS continues to recommend using antiviral drugs to treat people with pandemic influenza illness as a way to slow the spread of pandemic disease.

<http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2008pres/12/20081216a.html>

Armed Forces Institute Of Pathology to Conduct Animal Studies Against Bird Flu

NanoViricides Inc. has announced that they have executed a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement with the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP). This joint R&D effort will enable AFIP scientists to test the effectiveness of several NanoViricides Inc. anti-viral nanomedicines against deadly bird flu viruses (H5N1) at their facilities. The Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP) is a tri-service agency of the Department of Defense specializing in pathology consultation, education and research.

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/131496.php>

FSIS Seeks Comments On Draft Risk Assessment

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is seeking public comments on a draft quantitative food safety risk assessment for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus from consumption of poultry products, shell eggs and egg products. The risk assessment was done in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services' Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). The risk assessment was designed to evaluate the relative effectiveness of strategies to reduce or prevent exposure to HPAI virus from consumption of poultry meat, shell eggs and egg products. It may also be used to target risk communication messages, identify and prioritize research needs, and provide a framework for coordinating efforts with stakeholders. The risk assessment is available on FSIS' Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Risk_Assessments/index.asp. Comments on the risk assessment must be received by Jan. 31, 2009. Comments can be sent to Docket Clerk, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Room 2534 South Agriculture Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, D.C. 20250; e-mailed to fsis.regulationscomments@fsis.usda.gov or submitted through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at www.regulations.gov. All submissions received by mail or electronic mail must reference the Food Safety and Inspection Service and include the docket number FSIS-2007-0001.

Half of Canadian Businesses With More Than 500 Employees Have No Pandemic Plan

Even though more than 80 per cent of Canadian companies with 500-plus employees are concerned about the impact of a flu pandemic on their business, half of them have no pandemic plan. According to the results of a national survey, roughly 40 per cent of companies without a plan do intend to create one. However, one third (33 percent) of all companies are not even thinking about pandemic planning. Of those companies with a plan, only 1 percent of them have accounted for the 15 key components authorities and experts generally recommend for a complete pandemic plan. These components – recommended by agencies such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, and the B.C. Ministry of Health – include minimization of direct interaction between employees; identification of key employees and critical functions; extra stock of critical supplies; a diversified stockpile of antiviral medications for employees; and factoring in school/daycare closure and transportation disruptions into absenteeism projections. Of the companies included in the survey, on average only eight of the 15 key components were addressed in their plans.

<http://www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/December2008/09/c8083.html>

Gene That Made 1918 Flu Lethal Isolated

As we brace for a potential H5N1 epidemic, it is good to read that scientists isolated the genes that made 1918 flu lethal. Researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison mixed and matched a contemporary flu virus with the “Spanish flu” – a virus which killed between 20 and 50 million people 90 years ago in history’s most devastating outbreak of infectious disease – and have identified a set of three genes that helped underpin the extraordinary virulence of the 1918 virus. Writing in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, a team led by University of Wisconsin-Madison virologists Yoshihiro Kawaoka and Tokiko Watanabe identifies genes that gave the 1918 virus the capacity to reproduce in lung tissue, a hallmark of the pathogen that claimed more lives than all the battles of the First World War combined.

<http://hsdailywire.com/single.php?id=7229>

Official: Vietnam Faces High Risk of Human Infection of Bird Flu

A Vietnamese medical official said on Dec. 3 that bird flu has reappeared in Vietnam, bringing high risk of humans becoming infected with the disease, the Vietnam News Agency reported. The new cases were reported in poultry in southern Ca Mau province and central Nghe An province. No new cases of human contraction have been detected so far. So far this year, Vietnam has reported five human avian influenza fatalities. The most recent case of human infection was in March.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-12/03/content_10452588.htm

Egypt Confirms 23rd Bird Flu Human Death

An Egyptian girl died of bird flu on Dec. 15, bringing the death toll of the human cases of bird flu in the populous country to 23, the Egyptian MENA news agency reported. The 16-year-old girl, who contracted the fatal disease after exposure to infected household poultry in her house, was the 51st case of human bird flu in the country.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-12/16/content_10509902.htm

Pandemic Planning Slips Down the UK Business Agenda

New research, collated by the Continuity Forum and funded by Roche Products Ltd, has found that three quarters of UK bosses (73 percent) are not supportive of pandemic planning activities. This is despite the National Risk Register highlighting influenza pandemic as being the greatest single current threat to Britain. With experts also agreeing that there is a high probability of an influenza pandemic occurring, the research underlines the vulnerability that businesses are leaving themselves open to, with over a third (36 percent) of companies having no plans to address staff absence, and just 11 percent of businesses establishing stockpiles of antiviral medication to protect their employees. The research, based on the responses of over 1,500 business leaders, also found that UK businesses are ignoring the likely financial implications of a pandemic, with 91 percent of respondents reporting that they have not assessed the financial impact that a pandemic would have on their business. Furthermore, 88 percent of respondents with a pandemic plan state that their plan takes no account of finances or cash flow.

<http://www.continuitycentral.com/news04333.html>

TRAININGS / EXERCISES / CONFERENCES



Railway Security Forum & Expo

Jan. 27-28; Arlington, Va.

With the Association of American Railroads, the American Public Transportation Association, the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association, and the Railway Supply Institute, Railway Age presents this forum to address topics such as state compacts, passenger and baggage screening, fusion centers, tunnel operations, tracking

and tracing technology, resilience, and NIMBY activism.

<http://www.railwayage.com/conference1.html>

Maritime & Port Security

Jan. 27-28; Arlington, Va.



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MarineLog's Maritime & Port Security 2009 Conference & Expo will examine the "scan every box" container security requirement, the terrorism threat to ports and shipping, piracy off the Horn of Africa, new technologies, and more. <http://www.marinelog.com/PDF/msecbroch2009.pdf>



CBRN Defense – Defending America's Interest at Home and Abroad

Feb. 9-11; Washington, D.C.

The conference brings together developers, users and decision makers to discuss chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear protection, detection and defense in the homeland, as well as information sharing and medical countermeasures.

<http://www.idga.org/ShowEvent.aspx?id=149966>

VEMC Opens Conference Registration

Registration is now available for the 2009 Virginia Emergency Management Conference, "It Happened...What Next?" The keynote speaker will be Bill Read, director of the National Hurricane Center, who will provide an overview of the 2008 hurricane season from a meteorologist's perspective. Online registration for the conference, March 31-April 3, is available at <http://www.vemaweb.org>.

24th Annual National Security Institute IMPACT 2009 Security Conference

April 6-8, 2009; McLean Hilton at Tysons Corner, Va.

Register online at <http://nsi.org/Impact09.html> or download, complete and fax/mail the registration application to the number/address provided on the application.

National Capital Region Homeland Security Events

http://www.mwcog.org/committee/committee/events_homeland.asp?COMMITTEE_ID=134

Virginia Emergency Management Courses

<http://www.vaemergency.com>

FEMA Independent Study Courses

<http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/>

American Red Cross Disaster Services Training

http://www.redcrossnca.org/Online/disaster_registration.php

LINKS

Fairfax County Blogs and Web Resources

- Fairfax County CERT - <http://fairfaxcountycert.blogspot.com/>
- Fairfax County Citizen Corps Web Page - <http://www.fairfaxcountycitizencorps.org/>
- Fairfax County Citizen Corps Blog - <http://citizencorps.blogspot.com/>
- Virginia Citizen Corps - <http://www.vaemergency.com/citcorps/index.cfm>

DHS Science & Technology Directorate Newsletter

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Science & Technology Directorate has a free newsletter, "S&T Snapshots," featuring stories about current research projects and opportunities with laboratories, universities, government agencies, and the private sector. The newsletter is produced monthly by the DHS Science and Technology Directorate in partnership with the Homeland Security Institute, a Studies and Analysis Federally Funded Research and Development Center.

<http://www.homelandsecurity.org/snapshots/>

DHS Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report (OSIR)

The Department of Homeland Security provides a Web-based “Daily OSIR,” which is posted on the DHS public Web site. Accessing the report via the Web enables readers to retrieve the current Daily Report as well as 10 days of archived DHS Daily Reports. Once you arrive at the Web page you will find the most recent Daily OSIR at the top of the page, under the title “Current Report.” This report is posted each morning, except for weekends and holidays. Simply click on the title “DHS Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report.” This will launch the current days report in PDF format. You can continue to submit content comments or make suggestions by contacting the DHS Daily Report Team by telephone at 202-312-5389 or by e-mail at NICCCReports@dhs.gov. You can access the Daily OSIR at: http://www.dhs.gov/xinfoshare/programs/editorial_0542.shtm.

Fairfax County Government Emergency Information Web Page

The county’s emergency information page features easy navigation and a clean look so that residents can easily find emergency information.

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/

Fairfax County Government Emergency Information Line

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/opa/infoline.htm



Emergency Management Magazine

<http://www.govtech.com/em/toc.php>

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To Unsubscribe:

E-mail publicaffairs@fairfaxcounty.gov with “Remove from ESF 15 Business/Nonprofit Update” in the subject line and you will be immediately removed from the distribution list.

In accordance with NIMS – the National Incident Management System – the Fairfax County Emergency Operations Plan states that Emergency Support Function 15 (External Affairs) is led by the Office of Public Affairs. This ESF 15 Business/Nonprofit Update is part of the county's outreach efforts for our business and nonprofit partners as a way to provide information about the county's ESF 15, Homeland Security and emergency management.

Please feel free to forward this ESF 15 Business/Nonprofit Update to other contacts you have inside or outside your organization. Should someone you know like to be added to our distribution list, have them send an e-mail to jim.person@fairfaxcounty.gov and ask to be subscribed to the ESF 15 Business/Nonprofit Update.

If you have any suggestions on how to improve this update or other communications between Fairfax County and the business/nonprofit community, please contact Merni Fitzgerald, Director of the Fairfax County Office of Public Affairs, at 703-324-3187, TTY 711, or by e-mail at merni.fitzgerald@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Thanks for your partnership with Fairfax County. We appreciate the opportunity to work with you.

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