



ESF 15 Business / Nonprofit Update

Produced by Emergency Support Function 15 – External Affairs

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ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR ESF 15

VDOT Prepares for Winter With Bigger Budget

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is prepared for any snow that occurs this winter. VDOT began preparing for the winter weather during the summer and has an increased snow budget this year of \$126 million statewide, a \$20 million increase over last year's budget. The Commonwealth spent \$207.9 million on snow operations during the winter of 2010-2011, and \$266.8 million during the winter of 2009-2010. VDOT also offers this advice – do not travel during winter storms:

- Avoid unnecessary travel. If it is not a life safety issue, stay off the roads.
- The safest place during a winter storm is indoors. About 70 percent of deaths related to ice and snow occur in automobiles.
- Stay at the office an extra hour, or leave early, to avoid travel during a winter storm.
- If residents stay off the roads during a storm, transportation workers and public safety officials are better able to clear roadways and respond to emergency needs quicker.

http://www.virginiadot.org/newsroom/statewide/2011/virginia_prepared_for_severe55277.asp

Office of Personnel Management Announces New Closing Procedures for Federal Government

During a briefing on dismissal and closure procedures for the federal government at the beginning of the month, U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Director John Berry announced three new policies to promote the continuity of government, and to ensure the safety of federal employees and the general public. The new options are a direct result of lessons learned this past year and are expected to be used in only rare circumstances. Berry also emphasized the need for eligible employees to make sure their telework agreements are in place so they are prepared for any dismissal or closure. The three new options include:

- **Staggered Early Departure/with Final Departure Time** - Federal employees should depart XX hours earlier than their normal departure times and may request unscheduled leave to depart prior to their staggered departure times. All employees must depart **NO LATER** than XX:XX.
- **Shelter-in-Place** - Federal offices in the Washington, DC, area are under shelter-in-place procedures.
- **Immediate Departure** - Federal employees should depart immediately.

During the past year, the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area experienced a late-afternoon snowstorm, a tropical storm that caused flooding in localized areas and a highly-unusual and significant earthquake. In addition to OPM's own review of these events, Director Berry asked Chief Human Capital Officers and representatives from national labor organizations, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and FEMA to reflect on lessons learned and to recommend steps to better position the federal government to respond to future events. When emergencies arise, OPM keeps the public updated through TV, radio, print and social media. To the maximum extent possible, OPM will continue to make dismissal and closure announcements prior to the beginning of the workday. This will not only reduce morning traffic, but also lessen the commuting burden later in the day if weather conditions deteriorate and OPM announces a staggered early departure. For the 2011-2012 winter season, the National Weather Service projects a similar forecast to 2010-2011. They expect a drier than normal season, but a higher chance of mixed precipitation and icing events. More information on the dismissal and closure procedures is online at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/dismissal.pdf>.

Homeland Security Testimony

The Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the federal workforce and the District of Columbia held a joint hearing, —From Earthquakes to Terrorist Attacks: Is the National Capital Region Prepared for the Next Disaster?“, with the Subcommittee on Disaster Recovery and Intergovernmental Affairs on Wednesday, Dec. 7. The purpose of the hearing was to examine the National Capital Region's emergency preparedness and response. The

National Capital Region presents unique challenges to emergency management because of the large federal presence and the involvement of numerous jurisdictions. This hearing addressed strategic planning in the National Capital Region, opportunities to reduce duplication of efforts, decision-making authority in a crisis and communication capabilities. Among the witnesses was Terrie Suit, Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Suit told the committee about a new Virtual Joint Information Center (VJIC) the regional communicators will be using to distribute information to the residents of the NCR.

—The NCR Public Information Officer committee has recently established the NCR Virtual Joint Information Center (VJIC) at www.capitalregionupdates.gov. This site provides a single Web stop for the public to access all current NCR event information and messaging. Additionally PIOs push information to local radio, television, print and online media during an event. These messages are coordinated and unified while allowing flexibility for varying conditions within different jurisdictions of the NCR.”

Richard Muth, director of the Maryland Emergency Management Agency also testified about the VJIC and this winter’s upcoming preparedness message:

—In the months ahead, the NCR PIO group will be rolling out a Virtual JIC website ... [that] will allow all of the local, state, federal and District of Columbia PIOs to coordinate on public messages and to help ensure a consistent and effective message to the public. We have worked hard to facilitate better communications between the PIO professionals in the region and with the public. The public side of the site will allow the public to access the various websites and pages with safety information. In addition, the public information offices of the National Capital Region have developed a public awareness and education campaign ... —Get Where You Need to be Before the Weather Gets Bad.” The purpose of the campaign is to encourage people to be vigilant about the weather forecast and make plans to arrive at your ultimate destination before the roads become dangerous. The campaign will also encourage employees to release employees early enough to get home before the roads become dangerous or encourage workers to stay at work until after the roads have been cleared – very similar to the new Office of Personnel Management policy for federal employees.—

The Virtual Joint Information Center, and information about the winter preparedness campaign, can be found online at www.CapitalRegionUpdates.gov. Testimony from Suit, Muth and others can be found online at http://hsgac.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing_id=1034fa01-b43e-48bd-b837-dd2dd3793520.

New National Preparedness System Description Lays Groundwork for Achieving National Preparedness Goal

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) earlier this month announced the release of the National Preparedness System description, which will help lay the groundwork for strengthening the nation’s resilience against all threats and hazards. The system description is the second deliverable required under Presidential Policy Directive / PPD-8: National Preparedness, which was released March 30. The National Preparedness System description identifies six components to improve national preparedness for a wide range of threats and hazards, such as acts of terrorism, cyber attacks, pandemics and catastrophic natural disasters. The System description explains how as a nation we will build on current efforts, many of which are already established in the law and have been in use for many years. The six components of the National Preparedness System are:

- Identifying and assessing risks.
- Estimating capability requirements.
- Building or sustaining capabilities.
- Developing and implementing plans to deliver those capabilities.
- Validating and monitoring progress made towards achieving the National Preparedness Goal.
- Reviewing and updating efforts as needed to promote continuous improvement.

The National Preparedness System description incorporated input from state, local, tribal, and territorial representatives, many of whom also served on the writing team for the document. The National Preparedness Goal, which was the first deliverable to PPD-8 and was released on Oct. 7, sets the foundation for the implementation of PPD-8. The directive also called for the development of a National Preparedness System description to explain the resources and tools needed to achieve the National Preparedness Goal. Implementation of the National Preparedness System is a multi-year effort that is being coordinated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the description lays out how the six components will interact to build, sustain and deliver the core capabilities needed to achieve the Goal. The National Preparedness System description and additional information about PPD-8 and its

implementation are available at www.fema.gov/ppd8/. Earlier this month, FEMA launched an ongoing dialogue and are asking for residents input. This forum provides an opportunity to provide input into the development of several activities over the coming months. To provide input, visit fema.ideascale.com and click on one of the topics in the left sidebar under Presidential Policy Directive 8 to share and vote on ideas.

Active 2011 Hurricane Season Breaks “Hurricane Amnesia”

The 2011 Atlantic hurricane season officially ended Nov. 30, having produced a total of 19 tropical storms of which seven became hurricanes, including three major hurricanes. This level of activity matched NOAA’s predictions and continues the trend of active hurricane seasons that began in 1995. According to the Director of NOAA’s National Weather Service, Hurricane Irene broke the “hurricane amnesia” that can develop when so much time lapses between landfalling storms. The 19 tropical storms represent the third-highest total (tied with 1887, 1995, and 2010) since records began in 1851 and is well above the average of 11. However, the number of hurricanes and major hurricanes is only slightly above the average of six and two, respectively. This year’s totals include a post-storm upgrade of Tropical Storm Nate to hurricane status, and the addition of a short-lived, unnamed tropical storm that formed in early September between Bermuda and Nova Scotia. This unnamed storm, along with several other weak, short-lived named storms, could have gone undetected without modern satellite technology. Irene was the lone hurricane to hit the United States in 2011, and the first one to do so since Ike struck southeast Texas in 2008. Irene was also the most significant tropical cyclone to strike the Northeast since Hurricane Bob in 1991.



Hurricane Irene - August 27, 2011

Hurricane Irene made landfall at approximately 7:30 a.m. EDT on Aug. 27, near Cape Lookout, N.C., with maximum sustained winds of 85 mph (Category 1).
Photo Credit: NOAA

http://www.noanews.noaa.gov/stories2011/20111128_endofhurricaneseason_2011.html

SBA Disaster Assistance Marks \$50 Billion Milestone

Emergency lending by the U.S. Small Business Administration to survivors of natural and man-made disasters since 1953 has surpassed \$50 billion. The \$50 billion in SBA assistance represents loans made to help residents and business owners recover from many of the most devastating disaster events in U.S. history. Since FY 1989, more than \$36 billion in SBA disaster loans have been made, with significant portions of that total going to those rebuilding after the Northridge Earthquake in 1994 (\$4 billion), 1997’s Upper Midwest Floods (\$738 million), Hurricane Ivan in 2004 (\$2.2 billion), and the 2005 Gulf Coast Hurricanes (\$10.9 billion). Disaster loans are the only form of SBA assistance not limited to small businesses. The SBA makes low-interest loans to homeowners, renters and non-farm businesses of all sizes. Homeowners may borrow up to \$200,000 to repair or replace damaged real estate. Individuals may borrow up to \$40,000 to cover losses to personal property.

<http://www.sba.gov/about-sba-services/7367/34181>

SBA Loans Available for Fairfax County

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) made low-interest disaster loans available to homeowners, renters and businesses that sustained major damage from severe weather in Fairfax County during Tropical Storm Lee Sept. 8 and 9, 2011. The SBA opened a Disaster Outreach Center on Wednesday, Nov. 16, through Tuesday, Nov. 22, at the South County Government Center, 8350 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. For more information about the available loans, contact SBA’s Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955, or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov. Applicants may also apply online using the Electronic Loan Application (ELA) via SBA’s secure website at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>. Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals may call 800-877-8339. SBA loans also are available in the counties of Arlington, Fauquier, Loudoun and Prince William, and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park.

<http://fairfaxcountyemergency.wordpress.com/category/recover/>

Secretary Napolitano Highlights DHS' Progress in 2011

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano on Monday toured operations and received briefings at DHS facilities in the National Capital Region. The Secretary toured Transportation Security Administration and Customs and Border Protection operations at Washington Dulles International Airport, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Cyber Crimes Center in Virginia, the Secret Service's James J. Rowley Training Center in Beltsville, Md. and the FEMA IMAT and the Fairfax [County] USAR team -- highlighting the major steps the Department has taken this year to enhance America's capabilities to guard against terrorism; secure the nation's borders; engage in smart enforcement of our immigration laws; safeguard and secure cyberspace; prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters; and to mature and strengthen the homeland security enterprise.

<http://www.dhs.gov/ynews/releases/20111222-dhs-progress-2011.shtm>

Put a Freeze on Winter Fires

As we move closer to winter, and home fires begin to increase, the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) are reminding individuals and communities that fire safety awareness and efforts are especially important in the coming months. To support this effort, the USFA and NFPA are sponsoring a special initiative – *Put a Freeze on Winter Fires* – to help get the word out about home fire safety. Each winter, an estimated 108,400 home fires occur in the United States, resulting in approximately 945 deaths and \$1.7 billion in property loss. Cooking is the leading cause of winter home fires, and holiday decorations and winter storms can cause people to turn to alternative heating sources, such as space heaters, which account for about one third of home heating fires and approximately 80 percent of home heating fire deaths. The following fire safety tips can help maintain a fire-safe home this winter season:

- Stay in the kitchen when cooking something on top of the stove or when grilling or broiling food.
- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from space heaters, woodstoves, etc.
- Replace damaged electrical or extension cords.
- Never use the oven or stovetop to heat a home; carbon monoxide gas can kill people and pets.
- Don't put a live Christmas tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks. Keep the tree stand filled with water.
- Avoid using lighted candles; try flameless candles instead.

http://www.usfa.fema.gov/citizens/home_fire_prev/holiday-seasonal/winter.shtm



Grants Totaling More Than \$5 Million Approved for Survivors of Virginia's Earthquake and Aftershocks

One month after federal disaster aid was made available for Louisa County earthquake survivors, more than \$5 million in grants has been approved, officials of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) announced earlier this month. Additionally, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has made financial assistance totaling more than \$700,000 available in the form of low-interest disaster loans. Through Sunday, Dec. 4, of state and federal assistance to Louisa County residents and business owners who suffered losses due to the earthquake and aftershocks between Aug. 23 and Oct. 25:

- \$5,171,588 in total housing and personal needs has been approved. Of that amount, \$5,142,403 has been approved for housing expenses, including temporary rental assistance, home repair costs and assistance toward replacing destroyed homes.
- \$29,185 has been approved as Other Needs Assistance to cover essential disaster-related needs, such as medical and dental expenses and lost personal possessions.
- \$715,100 in loans to homeowners, renters or business owners has been approved by SBA.
- 2,559 applicants have registered with FEMA for some form of disaster assistance.

Joint VDEM/FEMA teams of /Community Relations (CR) field specialists have distributed more than 10,000 flyers

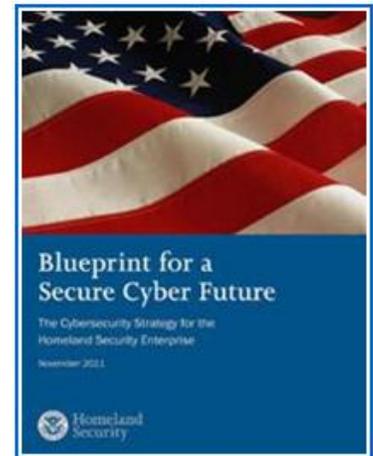
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and worked throughout Louisa County to identify disaster survivors and urge them to register for assistance. Recently, the CR teams have been reminding survivors that the deadline for registering is Jan. 3, 2012, and recommending that they register before the hectic holiday period.

<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=59760>

Fact Sheet: Blueprint for a Secure Cyber Future

The United States is facing a continued and growing cyber threat, which has the potential to jeopardize our national security, public safety and economic competitiveness. This threat makes securing cyberspace one of the most important missions facing the homeland security community today. The Department of Homeland Security's 2010 Quadrennial Homeland Security Review (QHSR) established the safeguarding and securing of cyberspace as a critical mission of DHS, with the goals to create a safe, secure and resilient cyber environment and promote cybersecurity knowledge and innovation. The Blueprint for a Secure Cyber Future proposes a path forward to achieve these goals. The Blueprint calls for a coordinated effort across the homeland security community to protect our nation's critical information infrastructure and build a safer and more secure cyber ecosystem. Specific actions range from hardening critical networks and prosecuting cybercrime to raising public awareness and training a national cybersecurity workforce. Cyberspace forms the backbone of our modern economy and society. The Internet is an engine of immense wealth creation and a force for openness, transparency, innovation, and freedom. Information and communication technologies allow generators to turn, businesses to operate, and families and friends to communicate. Cyberspace is vital to our way of life, and we must work to make this domain more secure – the safety of our critical infrastructure, the strength of our national security, our economic vitality and public safety depend upon it. The Blueprint outlines an integrated and holistic approach to protecting our nation's cyberspace. It is a map – a guide – to enable the homeland security community to leverage existing capabilities and promote technological advances that enable government, the private sector and the public to be safer online. The document complements the President's International Strategy for Cyberspace, the National Strategy for Trusted Identities in Cyberspace and the recently released Department of Defense Strategy for Operating in Cyberspace. Together, these documents provide a whole of government approach to the many opportunities and challenges the nation faces in cyberspace.



<http://www.dhs.gov/files/publications/blueprint-for-a-secure-cyber-future.shtm>

PLANNING / PREPAREDNESS

National Terrorism Advisory System

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS) is a robust terrorism advisory system that provides timely information to the public about credible terrorist threats and replaces the former color-coded alert system. Under NTAS, DHS will coordinate with other federal entities to issue detailed alerts to the public when the federal government receives information about a credible terrorist threat. NTAS alerts provide a concise summary of the potential threat including geographic region, mode of transportation, or critical infrastructure potentially affected by the threat, actions being taken to ensure public safety, as well as recommended steps that individuals, communities, business and governments can take to help prevent, mitigate or respond to a threat. NTAS Alerts will include a clear statement on the nature of the threat, which will be defined in one of two ways:

- **—Elevated Threat**: Warns of a credible terrorist threat against the United States.



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- **—Imminent Threat**”: Warns of a credible, specific, and impending terrorist threat against the United States. Depending on the nature of the threat, alerts may be sent to law enforcement, distributed to affected areas of the private sector, or issued more broadly to the public through both official and social media channels – including a designated DHS webpage (www.dhs.gov/alerts), Facebook and via Twitter @NTASAlerts. NTAS alerts and posters will also be displayed in places such as transit hubs, airports and government buildings. NTAS threat alerts will be issued for a specific time period and will automatically expire. Alerts may be extended if new information becomes available or as a specific threat evolves. For more information on the National Terrorism Advisory System or to receive NTAS alerts, visit www.dhs.gov/alerts.

Preparing a Power Failure Response Strategy

Power outages are one of the most common causes of business disruption and a good response strategy requires much thought and planning. According to a recent Forrester Research survey, nearly half of the declared disasters reported over a one-year period were due to power failures. To ensure that this type of event does not escalate into a disaster that results in business disruption and lost revenue for your organization, you need to be prepared. And this requires a power failure response strategy as part of a wider business continuity plan. The author of the article, Dr. Jim Kennedy, has over 30 years' experience in the information and cyber security, business continuity, disaster recovery and incident management fields. He is the co-author of three books, *—Security in a Web 2.0+ World, A Standards Based Approach,* *—Blackbook of Corporate Security* and *—Disaster Recovery Planning: An Introduction* and author of an e-book, *—Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery – Conquering the Catastrophic.* Kennedy's steps:

- Determine what you have.
- Determine what your organization's mission critical requirements are for emergency power.
- Determine what type of emergency power your organization should use.
- Making the generators ready for the next outage.
- Ensure the generators are functional when needed.
- Formal process and procedures are critical to success.

Read the complete article at <http://www.continuitycentral.com/feature0928.html>

Prepare Your Phones for Emergencies

Destructive tornadoes, a 5.8 magnitude earthquake, Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee all hit Virginia in 2011. In the minutes and hours after these disasters, it was difficult to make calls on cell phones because the mobile networks were so busy. Follow these tips to make sure you can communicate during and after an emergency:

- If you have a traditional landline, keep a non-cordless phone in your home, because it will work even if you lose power.
- Keep a list of emergency phone numbers in your cellphone and near your home phone.
- Prepare a family contact sheet with at least one out-of-town person who can serve as your family's emergency contact. Often it's easier to make long distance rather than local calls during an emergency. Get a worksheet at www.ReadyVirginia.gov. Click on *—Make a Plan* and look on the right side of the page for wallet cards (shown below left).
- Have charged batteries and car phone chargers for back-up power.
- Subscribe to text alert services from local or state governments and schools to receive emergency alerts.
- Use text messaging, email or social media instead of making calls on your cell phone. Texts and emails are less likely to experience network congestion. You also can use social media to let family and friends know you are okay.
- Keep all phone calls brief to avoid tying up voice networks.
- Conserve your cellphone battery by reducing screen brightness and closing apps you are not using.
- Limit streaming videos, downloading music or playing video games on cellphones after a disaster to help emergency calls get through to 9-1-1.
- If you have a life-threatening emergency only, call 9-1-1. At this time, 9-1-1 cannot receive texts.

For more tips, go to www.vaemergency.gov/readyvirginia/stayinformed/how-to-communicate.

Tip sheet: www.vaemergency.gov/sites/default/files/Communicate.pdf

“Preparedness in the Private Sector – 2011”

Despite the potentially crippling impact of security events on corporate performance, many executives report that their security function is not well coordinated with enterprise risk management or a similar risk function. This is one of the key findings of a new Conference Board report, “Preparedness in the Private Sector – 2011.” The report (\$395) highlights the results from a survey of 263 executives from companies of different sizes and industries on how they approach resilience and security. The survey examined security planning and programs in five key areas: physical security, IT security, business continuity, crisis management and pandemic planning. Only about half of surveyed executives said IT security, business continuity and crisis management at their company were “completely” or “very coordinated” with enterprise risk management ERM or risk management (RM), while only 43 percent said the same about physical security.

<http://www.continuitycentral.com/news06020.html>

<http://www.conference-board.org/>

Emerging Risks: Flash Mobs

With the start of the 2011 holiday shopping season approaching, US retailers need to ensure they have plans in place to address the increased risk of a flash mob event, warns Marsh. Retailers have long been accustomed to preparing for and managing the risks associated with massive crowds at their stores on Black Friday —traditionally the biggest shopping day of the year — and throughout the holiday shopping season. But flash mobs — groups of people that organize through social media to assemble suddenly in a public place—present a new threat in 2011. Ten percent of retailers surveyed by the National Retail Federation in July 2011 reported being victimized by at least one criminal flash mob event over the previous 12 months. Such incidents have resulted in injuries to employees and customers, property theft, and property damage. In a new white paper, “Responding to Flash Mob/Rob Events,” Marsh outlines steps retailers should take before, during and after a flash mob event:

- Monitoring of social media websites to identify potential threats.
- Reviewing business interruption plans and insurance programs with regards to partial or full shutdown of a location.
- Providing training to employees related to disorderly conduct, assault, theft, and looting.
- Developing internal and external communications plans before an event.
- Communicating frequently with local law enforcement.

<http://www.continuitycentral.com/news06033.html>

<http://usa.marsh.com/NewsInsights/ThoughtLeadership/Articles/ID/13125/Responding-to-Flash-MobRob-Events.aspx>

FEMA Kicks Off Campaign to Encourage Americans to Resolve to be Ready in 2012

As 2011 – one of the most active years for disasters in recent history – comes to a close and Americans get ready to ring in a new year, the Federal Emergency Management Agency is encouraging all Americans to “Resolve to be Ready in 2012” by making a New Year’s resolution to be prepared for emergencies. As a recent report by the National Climatic Data Center highlights, 2011 has seen more billion-dollar natural disasters than any year on record. This year alone, the U.S. experienced its first hurricane landfall since 2008, the most deadly series of tornadoes since the 1950s, significant earthquakes and severe flooding – hazards that impacted every region of the country. All of these events have served as important reminders that disasters can strike anytime, anywhere and being prepared is one of the most effective things we can do to protect our homes, businesses and loved ones. Earlier this month, FEMA kicked off its annual campaign, “Resolve to be Ready in 2012,” which urges residents to make preparedness a priority during the holiday season by making a New Year’s resolution to be ready for disasters, or by thinking about preparedness tools for last minute gift ideas. By making a resolution to take a few simple steps in advance, residents can minimize the impact of an emergency on their families, homes or businesses. To take the pledge, visit www.ready.gov/resolve or www.listo.gov, which includes free information, checklists and guidelines about how to put together a kit, make a plan and stay informed. “Resolve to be Ready in 2012” is a nationwide effort to increase awareness and encourage individuals, families, businesses and communities to take action and prepare for emergencies in the New Year. For more information, visit Ready.gov and CitizenCorps.gov or follow the campaign on Twitter using the hashtags #ready2012 and #resolve.

Emergency Management – Measurements of Success

As 2011 nears an end, emergency preparedness officials at healthcare organizations across the United States are looking with watchful eyes toward 2012, during which the metrics for determining the level of success of preparedness efforts are likely to become an even more important component of the emergency management process. Emergency preparedness officials therefore have the difficult task of not only justifying the time and money spent on emergency preparedness but also, and of greater importance, determining exactly how prepared organizations are to respond to disasters and/or other expected or unexpected events. Those who participated in any of the numerous emergency management conferences held in various locales throughout the country this year – and/or who follow online blogs and LinkedIn discussions – have undoubtedly heard of and perhaps even participated in conversations about how to measure whether a healthcare organization has successfully prepared for an emergency or disaster. Unfortunately, there does not yet seem to be a commonly accepted or universally recognized measure for hospitals. [http://www.domesticpreparedness.com/Commentary/Viewpoint/Emergency_Management - Measurements_of_Success/](http://www.domesticpreparedness.com/Commentary/Viewpoint/Emergency_Management_-_Measurements_of_Success/)

Making An Important New Year's Resolution Stick

By Darryl Madden, Director, Ready Campaign (reprinted from the FEMA blog)

Before the ball drops and we ring in the New Year, I'm sure many of you have made New Year's resolutions for 2012. Many which I seem to repeatedly make year in and year out, like working more exercise into my daily routine, eating healthier, saving more or donating a larger portion to charitable causes. However, this year I have a New Year's resolution idea that could prove to be priceless. [Resolve to be Ready](#) in 2012 and commit to making family, home or business better prepared for an emergency. I know the hardest part of keeping a resolution is sustaining momentum after those first few weeks of the New Year. So here are some ideas for how you can phase in you resolution to be ready for an emergency in 2012:

- **Set a monthly reminder in your calendar to test your home's smoke alarms** – the first of every month in your personal or work calendar can serve as a great reminder to test your smoke alarms.
- **Pick up one item for your emergency kit on each of your shopping runs** – building your family's emergency kit doesn't need to happen in one fell swoop. Pick up canned food, bottled water, a battery-powered radio, flashlight, extra batteries, and other recommended emergency items over the first month or two of the year (it will also spread the cost of building your emergency supply kit).
- **Set attainable preparedness goals for each month of 2012** – learning your home's fire escape routes or remembering your family's emergency communication plan is easier with regular practice. So during each month of the year, set small goals like finishing your emergency kit, practicing your fire escape plan, reviewing family emergency meeting locations, bookmarking useful websites and mobile websites and learning about local resources in your area.

<http://blog.fema.gov/2011/12/making-important-new-years-resolution.html>

MEDIA ARTICLES OF INTEREST

FEMA Chief Works to Polish Agency's Image

Craig Fugate isn't your typical weather junkie. As head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Fugate's interest in weather goes far beyond the next high-pressure system. He's constantly on alert for potential disasters, from Guam to Maine. And he's ready — he hopes — to respond, preferably before the next storm hits. Years of monitoring up-to-the-minute data have given him a special instinct about weather-related danger. Fugate, 52, has been the nation's chief emergency responder for two-and-a-half years. For eight years before that, he ran Florida's Department of Emergency Management.

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/story/2011-11-30/fugate-fema/51509790/1>

America's Critical Infrastructure Security Response System Is Broken

Since the year 2000 DHS has encouraged states and cities to establish Fusion Centers to operate under local control

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and collect information from the likes of power companies and water utilities about incidents that might have national-security implications. There are now 72 of these Fusion Centers in the U.S., and when one of them, the Illinois Statewide Terrorism and Intelligence Center, issued a brief report titled “Public Water District Cyber Intrusion,” it led to a firestorm of controversy, putting what has been a secretive reporting system in the harsh glare of the public spotlight, and highlighting the intrinsic weakness in the way the U.S. critical-infrastructure incident reporting system works today.

<http://www.networkworld.com/news/2011/120111-scada-253659.html?hpg1=bn>

64 Weather Records Broken During 2011 in Virginia

At least 64 weather records were broken in Virginia this year according to a report from the Natural Resources Defense Council. The international nonprofit, which works to protect the environment and public health, counted 32 rainfall records, 27 heat-related records and five snowfall records.

http://www.dailypress.com/news/newport-news/dp-nws-deadrise-1213-20111212_0_602364.story

<http://www.nrdc.org/health/extremeweather/default.asp>

Norfolk Arrest Puts Focus on Right to Film Police

Filming police is a constitutional right. But in some cases, police tell people that recording them violates wiretap laws. The Virginia ACLU says it has noticed an increase in recent years in the confrontations that occur between police and people filming them. Stories and videos about police seizing cameras are abundant online.

<http://hamptonroads.com/2011/12/norfolk-arrest-puts-focus-right-film-police>

U.S. Says Details of Flu Experiments Should Stay Secret

A committee that advises the U.S. government says that details of two controversial experiments on bird flu virus should not be made public, because of fears that the work could provide a recipe for a bioweapon. The government-funded experiments were done by researchers who wanted to understand if bird flu virus might change in the future to cause a pandemic in people. By tweaking genes, they made the deadly bird flu virus more contagious between lab animals. In a landmark decision, an expert panel known as the National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity, which advises the government, says key details of the work should not be published openly.

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/health/2011/12/21/144021870/u-s-says-details-of-flu-experiments-should-stay-secret?sc=17&f=1001>

Communications Interoperability

Interoperability is an essential part of a communications-centric, information-driven business culture that seeks to answer its questions with a seamless, error-free result. When it comes to government, devices or systems that lack a method to work with others is a serious problem that could turn bad situations into disasters. So it comes as no surprise that government’s drive to ensure interoperability is a priority and that its quest for interoperability can also become an opportunity for communications-focused businesses. In the last few years, both federal and state agencies have made great strides in improving communications interoperability. Virginia, Utah and Washington are among the front-runners.

http://govwin.com/lindleyashline_blog/contracting-101-interoperability/347076

Emergency Preparedness Funding – The Dangers Of Reducing It

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) applauds the Trust for America’s Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for its publicity on strained resources in their ninth annual report of “Ready or Not?” The report highlights the dire consequences of continuous cuts of federal public health emergency preparedness on crucial state and local programs that identify and respond to emergencies, disease outbreaks and acts of terrorism.

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/239677.php>

Swine Flu Variant Reported in West Virginia

West Virginia has had two confirmed cases of a variant of the swine flu in children attending the same daycare in Mineral County, the state Office of Epidemiology and Prevention Services has reported. One case of H3N2v was

detected in mid-November, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, also known as the CDC. The other case was detected later that same month. H3N2v is an influenza A (H3N2) variant virus with genes from human, swine and avian lineages, according to the CDC.

<http://www.dailymail.com/News/statenews/201112270156>

FLU

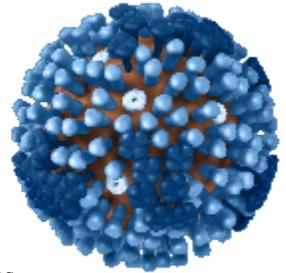
Fairfax County Pandemic Flu Preparedness

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

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

CDC Confirms Detection of A Different Influenza A Variant Virus

An influenza A (H1N1) virus that is known to circulate in U.S. swine but not humans has been detected in an adult in the state of Wisconsin. The patient reported occupational contact with swine prior to illness onset. No human-to-human transmission with this virus has been identified. CDC laboratory testing has confirmed that this is a new reassortant influenza A H1N1 virus as it has acquired the matrix [M] gene from the 2009 H1N1 pandemic virus. Laboratory testing shows that the virus is susceptible to the influenza antiviral medications, oseltamivir and zanamivir. Surveillance for additional human cases in the area has been enhanced. Providers are being asked to collect specimens for influenza virus testing from any patient presenting with influenza-like illness. The virus identified in Wisconsin has genes from avian, swine and human influenza viruses, making it a so-called "triple reassortant" (tr) virus. Triple reassortant viruses have been circulating in U.S. swine since the 1990s. However the virus detected in Wisconsin is different from earlier triple reassortant influenza A H1N1 viruses in swine (tr-H1N1) in that it has acquired the matrix [M] gene) from the 2009 influenza A (H1N1) virus.



Picture courtesy of CDC

http://www.cdc.gov/media/haveyouheard/stories/Influenza_A_Variant.html

New Flu Strain Makes Health Experts Nervous

A new variant of an influenza virus that circulates in pigs has been jumping occasionally into people, providing a surprisingly early opportunity for public health officials to test out some of the lessons learned from the 2009 H1N1 pandemic. Since the virus was first spotted in July, there have been 10 cases, all but one of which were children under the age of 10. (The exception was a 58-year-old.) All the cases have been in the U.S.; there have been no reports of this virus in people or pigs anywhere else. The most recent infections, in three young children in Iowa, almost certainly involved person-to-person spread. The Iowa cluster is likely larger—no one in the first child's family had exposure to pigs, suggesting an unidentified person was the source of virus. The cases leave public health authorities in the U.S. and elsewhere wondering if a new swine-origin flu virus is circulating at low levels among humans—and what needs to be done if that is indeed happening.

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=new-h3n2-flu-strain-from-swine>

Vietnam Launches Program in Response to Avian and Human Influenza for 2011-2015

Vietnam will stand side by side with the world community in actions to face with the risk of new animal- to-human epidemics which is rooted from the avian flu H5N1. The statement was made by Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) Dao Xuan Hoc at the Partnership on Avian and Human Pandemic Influenza (PAHI)'s international conference held on Dec. 8 to call for international support and to launch the National Coordinated Actions Program on Avian Influenza, Pandemics Preparedness and Emerging Infectious Diseases (AIPED) for the 2011-2015 period. Vietnam was once among the countries mostly hit by the avian flu, but with close coordination and support from the international community, the country has achieved encouraging results in preventing the disease over the past eight years.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/health/2011-12/08/c_131295921.htm

Changing Attitudes in China over H5N1 Bird Flu

Since 2006, nearly half of surveyed people in China stopped buying live poultry that potentially contains avian flu during a time when surveyed poultry workers in China perceived the risks of H5N1 infection as being low, according to two reports released Wednesday in the December issue of the journal *Emerging Infectious Diseases*.

In the first survey, researchers from the University of Hong Kong tested to see if public attitudes changed since restrictions on Chinese poultry were put in place in 2006. The number of those surveyed who bought live poultry dropped from 73 percent in 2006 to 41 percent in 2010, during a time when fewer respondents said that they worried about H5N1 exposure. The study included randomized telephone calls to 1,760 adults; 461 participated in 2006 and 2010. In the second 2009 study, only 60 percent of surveyed poultry workers knew that H5N1 could infect domesticated birds, according to research from the Chinese University of Hong Kong and University of Oxford. The survey included in-person interviews of 360 poultry workers with a response rate of 68 percent. Other routes of infection were also little known by the workers, who can act as a “bridge” population between livestock and consumers who shop wet markets in densely crowded urban locations. Only 60 percent of surveyed poultry workers knew bird feces contained H5N1 virus and a paltry 14 percent understood that undercooked eggs also contained the highly contagious virus.

<http://uk.ibtimes.com/articles/263911/20111208/changing-attitudes-china-h5n1-bird-flu.htm?>

Avian Influenza – Situation in Egypt (WHO Updated)

The Ministry of Health and Population of Egypt has notified WHO of a case of human infection with avian influenza A (H5N1) virus. The case is a 29-year-old male from Dakahlia Governorate. He developed symptoms on Dec. 8 and was admitted to hospital on Dec. 15, where he received oseltamivir treatment. He was in critical condition and died on Dec. 19. The case was confirmed by the Central Public Health Laboratories, a National Influenza Centre of the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network on Dec. 18. Investigations into the source of infection indicated that the case had exposure to backyard poultry. Of the 1 cases confirmed to date in Egypt, 1 have been fatal.

http://www.who.int/csr/don/2011_12_21/en/index.html

China Confirms B2B H5N1 Outbreak in Tibet

China’s Ministry of Agriculture on Monday [Dec. 12] confirmed an outbreak of bird flu at a village in Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region. Laboratory tests showed that the highly pathogenic H5N1 avian flu killed 290 fowls raised by farmers in the Sangda village of Doilungdeqen county on Dec. 2, said an official with the ministry who declined to be named. The epidemic is under control and no abnormal physical conditions were reported in people who had close contact with the dead birds, said the official. Authorities have sealed off and sterilized the infected area, where 1,575 fowls were culled and safely disposed of in order to prevent the disease from spreading.

<http://crofsblogs.typepad.com/h5n1/2011/12/china-confirms-b2b-h5n1-outbreak-in-tibet.html>

Press Statement on the NSABB Review of H5N1 Research

The U.S. government remains concerned about the threat of influenza, for the risks it poses seasonally, as well as its potential to cause a pandemic. Our domestic and global influenza surveillance efforts have become increasingly capable, along with expanded vaccine manufacturing capacity and assistance to other countries in their efforts to detect and respond to a pandemic. To enhance the detection of and response to influenza outbreaks, the U.S. government supports a broad range of domestic and global preparedness and response efforts that include research on better diagnostics, vaccines, and therapeutics. Currently, H5N1 avian influenza virus — the strain commonly referred to as “bird flu” — rarely infects humans and does not spread easily from person to person. However, many scientists and public health officials are concerned that the virus could evolve in nature into a form that is transmissible among humans — an event that could potentially make this deadly virus an extremely serious global public health threat. Thus research on factors that can affect the transmissibility of the H5N1 virus is critically important to international efforts to prepare and prevent threats to public health. While the public health benefits of such research can be important, certain information obtained through such studies has the potential to be misused for harmful purposes. The National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity (NSABB) — an independent expert committee that advises the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and other federal departments and agencies on matters of biosecurity — completed a review of two unpublished manuscripts describing NIH-funded

research on the transmissibility of H5N1. These manuscripts — which describe laboratory experiments that resulted in viruses with enhanced transmissibility in mammals – concluded that the H5N1 virus has greater potential than previously believed to gain a dangerous capacity to be transmitted among mammals, including perhaps humans, and describe some of the genetic changes that appear to correlate with this potential.

<http://www.nih.gov/news/health/dec2011/od-20.htm>

Scientists Find H4N8 Avian Flu Strain to be Deadly in Mice

Japanese researchers have identified an H4N8 avian flu reassortant strain from shorebirds that proved deadly to mice, according to a study yesterday in *Virology*. They studied five isolates collected during surveillance in eastern Hokkaido, all of which had a genetically distinct PB1 gene, a subunit of the virus's RNA polymerase. Of nine mice intranasally inoculated with the unique strain, all suffered severe disease and two died within 3 days. The researchers isolated the virus from the mice's lungs and detected viral antigen in the lungs with pneumonia. Other H4 strains that they tested, however, did not cause symptoms even though they also isolated viruses from the lungs.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0042682211005484>

Advisors Issue Draft Guidance for Flu Vaccination in Health Workers

A vaccine advisory group to the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has issued draft guidance on increasing flu vaccination in healthcare workers and is soliciting public comments, according to a Dec 19 “Federal Register” notice. The guidance is aimed at helping the nation achieve 90 percent flu vaccination coverage in healthcare workers, a Healthy People 2020 goal. The draft guidance was developed by a National Vaccine Advisory Committee (NVAC) healthcare personnel influenza vaccination subgroup. Comments are due by Jan 16, 2012. According to the latest estimate from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the vaccination rate for the group so far this flu season is 63 percent. The NVAC recommendations include tiered strategies for achieving the 90 percent goal while acknowledging that no single strategy would apply to all. Recommendations urge facilities to establish flu prevention programs based on CDC guidance and integrate vaccination into existing infection-control programs. The draft also suggests that federal officials standardize ways to measure vaccination rates in this group. For facilities that can't achieve the 90 percent goal, the NVAC recommends that administrators strongly consider an employer requirement. The report also urges the HHS to foster new and better vaccines.

http://www.hhs.gov/nvpo/nvac/subgroups/nvac_adult_immunization_work_group.pdf

<http://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2011/12/19/2011-32308/solicitation-of-written-comments-on-the-draft-report-and-draft-recommendations-of-the-healthcare>

Hong Kong Bolsters Avian Flu Surveillance

Hong Kong has increased its surveillance for avian flu in the wake of raising its response level to “serious” after a marketplace chicken tested positive for H5N1, its Centre for Health Protection (CHP) said Dec. 21. The agency is conducting medical surveillance of poultry wholesalers and workers in the Cheung Sha Wan Wholesale Poultry Market, where the fatally infected bird was found. It is also assessing the health of local farmers. The CHP has written to all medical practitioners to apprise them of the situation. Authorities are also considering using tracking devices on live chickens to be better able to track their origin and will reimburse wholesalers for the 17,000 chickens culled in the poultry market after H5N1 was confirmed, according to a separate Hong Kong government news release.

http://www.news.gov.hk/en/categories/health/html/2011/12/20111221_144607.shtml

TRAININGS / EXERCISES / CONFERENCES

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>

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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



<http://training.fema.gov/EMI/>

Association of American Law Schools Annual Meeting

Jan. 4-8, 2012; Washington, D.C.

One topic on the program is "War, Terrorism, and the Federal Courts Ten Years After 9/11." The panel will focus on the unique issues that federal courts have confronted during (and relating to) the conflict against al-Qaeda and related terrorist groups, and how that body of jurisprudence has—and may yet—affect the role of the federal courts more generally going forward.

https://memberaccess.aals.org/eweb/DynamicPage.aspx?webcode=2012Aamwhy&Reg_evt_key=d4a06b1f-994e-4ffe-b5ea-548f57898594&RegPath=EventRegFees

Integrated Justice Information Systems Institute 2012 Winter Industry Briefing

Jan. 18-20; Washington, D.C.

This briefing presents an authoritative update on the justice, public safety, and homeland security information-sharing and information technology market, focusing on information sharing and national initiatives that impact our nation's safety and security. It offers breakout sessions for technical staff and executives, as well as extensive networking opportunities with industry and government attendees.

http://www.ijis.org/_newsroom/briefing_2012_winter.html



Disaster LockUps

Jan. 23, Chesapeake, Va. | Feb. 1, Richmond Airport, Va.

These classes sponsored by the Virginia Association of Museums assist participants in creating disaster plans for their institutions. After a short instructional webinar, attendees will be "checked in" for a full day's workshop on creating a disaster plan based on templates designed for an institution of their size. They will also learn crucial disaster prevention and basic preparation steps, as well as best practices in collections risk analysis and management.

<http://www.vamuseums.org/VirginiaCollectionsInitiative/DisasterLockups/tabid/222/Default.aspx>

Combating Terrorism Technical Support Office Advance Planning Briefing for Industry

Jan. 24; Washington, D.C.

This program office operates under the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict. The briefing, organized by the National Defense Industrial Association, forecasts the requirements anticipated for funding in fiscal year 2013, and advertised using a broad agency announcement.

<http://www.ndia.org/meetings/2090/Pages/default.aspx>

Infrastructure Risk/Vulnerability Assessment Taking CARVER to the Next Level

April 9-11 and June 25-27, Arlington, Va.

This course, using criticality, accessibility, recuperability, vulnerability, effect and recognizability (CARVER) – an all-hazards assessment tool – emphasizes kinetic threats from small arms (active shooter) and improvised explosive devices; students will learn to identify threats and vulnerabilities of all sorts and apply risk management processes for incident planning. The course is designed for facility security, law enforcement and emergency management

professionals charged with planning for and implementing protective measures for personnel, facilities, and infrastructure. Students will conduct an actual on-scene preliminary security vulnerability assessment and develop and deliver a briefing of their findings.

<http://www.governmenttraininginc.com/CARVER-Vulnerability-Assessment-120609.asp>

2012 Virginia Emergency Management Symposium

March 28-30, 2012; Hilton Richmond Hotel & Spa/Short Pump, 12042 West Broad Street, Richmond, Va.

The 2012 Virginia Emergency Management Symposium, sponsored by the Virginia Emergency Management Association and Virginia Department of Emergency Management, will be held in Richmond. The 2012 theme is —Don't Fail the Mission” and is designed for anyone whose professional commitment causes them to seek a greater understanding of emergencies, both natural and man-made.

http://www.vemaweb.org/apps/public/news/newsView.cfm?News_ID=125

2012 Chemical Sector Security Summit

July 31-Aug. 2, 2012; Baltimore, Md.

The National Protection & Programs Directorate's Office of Infrastructure Protection and the Chemical Sector Coordinating Council are co-sponsoring the 2012 Chemical Sector Security Summit in Baltimore, Md. The sixth annual Summit will provide a forum for representatives from the chemical community to exchange information and network with other security professionals, share best practices, learn more about chemical security regulations, and gain insight into the roles of state, local and federal agencies and departments involved in chemical security.

http://www.dhs.gov/files/programs/gc_1176736485793.shtm

LINKS

Fairfax County Blogs and Web Resources

- Fairfax County CERT - <http://fairfaxcountycert.blogspot.com/>
- Fairfax County Citizen Corps Web Page - www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem/citizencorps/
- 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 submit content comments or make suggestions by contacting the DHS Daily Report Team by telephone at 202-312-3421 or by e-mail at NICCRports@dhs.gov. You can access the Daily OSIR at: http://www.dhs.gov/files/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>

FEMA Private Sector

<http://www.fema.gov/privatesector/>

FAIRFAX COUNTY 703-817-7771
EMERGENCY
INFORMATION LINE

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To Unsubscribe:

E-mail publicaffairs@fairfaxcounty.gov with —Remove from ESF 1 B 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.

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