



ESF 15 Business / Nonprofit Update

Produced by Emergency Support Function 15 – External Affairs

December 2012

ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR ESF 15

Donate Wisely to Help Hurricane Sandy Survivors

Cash is the most effective. Cash donations allow nonprofit organizations to purchase what disaster survivors need. Buying from local businesses helps the economy recover. Donations of used clothing, miscellaneous household items and mixed or perishable foodstuffs must be sorted, packaged, transported, warehoused and distributed. These tasks require agencies to divert resources away from providing services, while the donated items may not meet disaster survivors' needs. Donate to reliable national or local organizations. Beware of solicitations to help Sandy survivors from people or groups you haven't verified. These may be from con artists. To find reputable organizations accepting donations of cash or looking for volunteers, go online to www.aidmatrixnetwork.org/fema. Finally, be patient. Recovery lasts a lot longer than the media attention. There will be a need for donations and volunteers to help Hurricane Sandy survivors recover for many months, even years, to come.

Now's the Time – Resolve to be Ready in 2013!

New year ... new start! Now is the time for you and your family to make an important resolution for 2013 that won't cost much and could save a lot of heartache: **Resolve to be ready** for any emergency. Whether severe winter storms, tornadoes, spring flooding, earthquakes, hurricanes or something else hits Virginia next year, you can be prepared ahead of time. To get started on your resolution, make an emergency plan. Get a free worksheet at www.ReadyVirginia.gov or call toll-free 1-866-782-3470 to have one or more mailed to you, free of charge. Decide with your family:

- **Who is our emergency point of contact?** Choose an out-of-town friend or relative to be your contact. During emergencies, it's often easier to make long distance rather than local calls. So choose an out-of-town person to call who can help communicate among your family members if you are separated from each other because of the emergency. Make sure every family member knows your emergency contact's phone number.
- **Where are our meeting places?** In case you can't return to your home, choose a place to meet in your neighborhood and another place outside your neighborhood if you can't get back in there. Your neighborhood meeting place may be a friend's house on the next street. A meeting place outside your neighborhood may be a nearby church, store or another friend's home.
- **Do our schools have emergency plans?** If you are a parent, ask your schools and daycare providers about their emergency plans. Find out how they will communicate with families during a crisis. Ask if they are prepared to stay in school if necessary and where they plan to go if they must leave.
- **Do you own a small business?** If so, find helpful information and steps on how to protect your business against disasters at www.Ready.gov.

Emergencies will happen, but taking action now helps minimize the impact they will have on our lives. Now is the time ... **Resolve to be Ready**, and make your plan for 2013.

Ladder Safety Video

This time of year many of us are putting up and taking down holiday lights on our house and lifting heavy boxes. See how safety tips from the Fairfax County Risk Management Division can help you avoid injury during the holiday season. More information is online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news/holidays/tips.htm. Watch a YouTube video showing the proper way at <http://youtu.be/CW1VYtb8KI>.





NFPA and the U.S. Fire Administration Team Up to Put a Freeze on Winter Fires

More fires occur in December, January and February

While a warm home and a hot meal on a cold winter's day may conjure up thoughts of safety and security, the unfortunate reality is that winter is the leading time of year for home fires in the United States. That's why the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) have teamed up to help prevent home fires in the winter months. Through a jointly sponsored initiative – Put a Freeze on Winter Fires – NFPA and USFA are working collaboratively to tell the public about ways to stay fire-safe this winter. The effort targets home heating and cooking, which represent the two leading causes of U.S. home fires. Both types of fires peak in the winter months. According to a recent NFPA report, heating equipment was involved in an estimated 57,100 reported U.S. home structure fires, with associated losses of 490 civilian deaths, 1,530 civilian injuries and \$1.1 billion in direct property damage in 2010. As in previous years, space heaters account for about one third of home heating fires and approximately 80 percent of associated fire deaths. The USFA's report, "Winter Residential Building Fires," shows that winter home fires occur mainly in the early evening hours, peaking from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. NFPA and USFA recommend these safety tips to prevent winter home fires:

- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period, turn off the stove.
- Space heaters need space; keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from each heater.
- Check electrical cords often and replace cracked or damaged electrical or extension cords. Do not try to repair them.
- Never use your oven or stovetop to heat your home. They are not designed for this purpose and can be a fire hazard. In addition, carbon monoxide (CO) gas might kill people and pets.
- Do not put your live Christmas tree up too early and take it down before it dries out. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times and place the tree at least three feet from any heating source.
- Select the new "flameless" candles that operate by battery to bring the look and scent of real candles to your home. If you must use burning candles, place them in sturdy candleholders that won't burn.
- If you smoke, use only fire-safe cigarettes and smoke outside.

For more information about Put a Freeze on Winter Fires and tips for staying safe all winter long, visit USFA at www.usfa.fema.gov/winter and NFPA at www.nfpa.org/winter.

Report: <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/statistics/v10i5.pdf>

FCC Announces Commitment by Major U.S. Wireless Carriers and Public Safety Leaders to Accelerate Nationwide Text-to-911 Services

FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski announced this month that the nation's four largest wireless carriers – AT&T, Verizon, Sprint, T-Mobile – have agreed to accelerate the availability of text-to-911, with major deployments expected in 2013, and a commitment to nationwide availability by May 15, 2014. Building on text-to-911 deployments and trials that are already underway, this agreement will accelerate progress and ensure that over 90 percent of the nation's wireless consumers, including millions of consumers with hearing or speech disabilities, will be able to access emergency services by sending a text message to 911, where local 911 call centers (known as a Public Safety Answering Points, or PSAPs) are also prepared to receive the texts. Text-to-911 will provide consumers with enhanced access to emergency communications in situations where a voice call could endanger the caller, or a person with disabilities is unable to make a voice call. Text-to-911 will be a complement to, not a substitute for, voice calls to 911 services, and consumers should always make a voice call to 911 during an emergency if they can. In addition, to help eliminate consumer confusion while text-to-911 capability is being phased-in, the carriers have committed to provide an automatic "bounce back" text message to notify consumers if

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their attempt to reach 911 via text message was unsuccessful because this service is not yet available in their area. Such a message would instruct the recipient to make a voice call to a 911 center. The four carriers will fully implement this “bounce back” capability across their networks by June 30, 2013. The agreement was signed by APCO International, AT&T, NENA-The 9-1-1 Association, Sprint Nextel, T-Mobile USA and Verizon.. <http://www.fcc.gov/document/chairman-genachowski-announces-commitments-accelerate-text-911>



Emergency News
by email
Subscribe → www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog

Receive emergency preparedness information and emergency news by email

Google’s Flu Map Might Predict The Next Big Epidemic

You’re definitely going to get the flu this year. Alright, sorry, maybe not definitely. But the CDC is reporting that flu season is off to an “early start,” and will likely be one of the worst in the past decade. How does the CDC predict such things? With cold, hard clinical evidence: The organization publishes a weekly FluView report based on the number of patients who have reported flu-like symptoms and the number of hospitalizations. But as CDC Director Thomas Frieden noted, the spread of the flu is fairly “unpredictable,” and FluView has a one- to two-week lag. Leave it to Google to leverage our search data to create an almost real-time prediction map.

<http://www.fastcodesign.com/1671408/infographic-googles-flu-map-might-predict-the-next-big-epidemic#1>

Brochure to Assist in Communicating Drivers Who Are Deaf

Two students at the Iowa School for the Deaf are helping people nationwide. Seniors John Issacson and Johanna Scherling created a sign language brochure to help emergency personnel communicate with hearing impaired individuals. “There should be no communication barriers between two people,” Isaacson said. The chart has basic messages to help people on the road. “We took pictures that were our idea and a design and put it into a brochure,” Scherling said. Dean Bentizer is a volunteer for the Metro Area Motorist Assist Program. “Some people, some of them call us ‘road angels,’” Bentizer said. Bentizer rescues people on the highway by helping change tires and taking people to get gas. “When I approached them, the young girl let me know that she could not speak or hear. I went and got the chart and showed it to her,” Bentizer said. “I think it’s really cool that we’ve done something for our community,” Issacson said.

<http://www.wmtw.com/news/Deaf-drivers-get-assistance-on-the-road/-/8792352/17227356/-/item/0/-/ts00lwz/-/index.html>

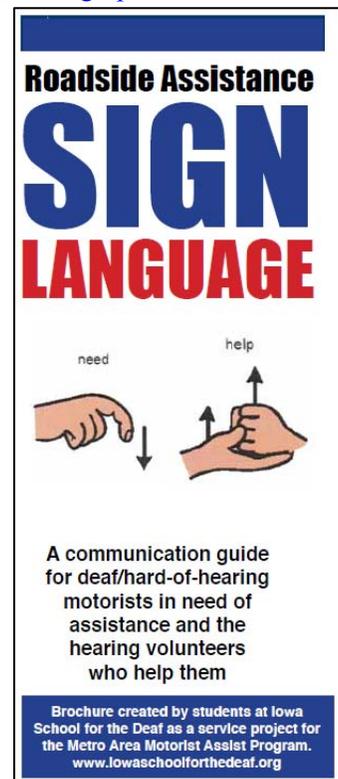
Brochure:

<http://www.sheriffs.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/motoristassist.pdf>

Be On The Safe Side This Season: Top 10 Tips for Safer Holidays

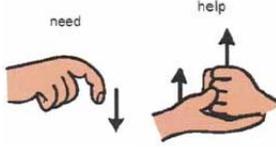
With the hustle and bustle of the holidays, it seems that there’s never enough time to get everything done. It’s important, though, to make sure that safety doesn’t get left off the list: during the holiday season, fires cause more than \$18 million in property damage and holiday decorating injuries send more than 13,000 to the emergency room. Help keep your family safe this season with these quick, simple steps.

- **Water, water, water your tree.**
Dry trees pose a fire risk – make a fresh cut on the base before putting your tree into a sturdy stand, and water frequently.
- **Check your lights, check them twice.**



Roadside Assistance
SIGN LANGUAGE

need help



A communication guide for deaf/hard-of-hearing motorists in need of assistance and the hearing volunteers who help them

Brochure created by students at Iowa School for the Deaf as a service project for the Metro Area Motorist Assist Program. www.iowaschoolforthe deaf.org

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Inspect all of your electric lights and decorations for damage or wear. Cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires and loose connections may pose a fire or shock hazard.

- **Plan your fire escape.**

Use the holidays as a good time to practice a fire escape plan with your loved ones. Identify at least two exits from every room in the house.

- **Sleep safe: Install carbon monoxide alarms.**

Be sure that at least one carbon monoxide alarm is installed on each floor of your home, and always close to sleeping areas.

- **Be flame aware.**

Always blow out unattended candles and teach your children to stay away from lit candles or fireplaces.

- **Give wrapping paper a second life.**

Don't burn used wrapping paper as it may cause intense flash fires. And throwing it out adds waste. Consider recycling or repurposing it instead.

- **Check extension cords.**

Do not connect more than three miniature light strings together. Also, be sure to check the rating on your extension cords and do not plug in more than the recommended wattage.

- **Steer your tree clear.**

Your tree should be positioned at least three feet away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources. It should also not block any doorways or exits.

- **Decorate with a safe eye.**

Cords should not be run under carpets or tacked-up with metal nails or staples. Small decorations can be choking hazards so keep them out of the reach of toddlers.

- **Look for UL.**

The UL mark on a product means that samples of that product have been tested to the highest safety standards. Make sure to look for it to help keep your holidays safe and bright.

<http://www.safetyathome.com/seasonal-safety/holiday-safety-articles/be-on-the-safe-side-this-season-top-10-tips-for-safer-holidays/>

Virginia State Police Remind Residents to Put Shopping Safety on their Holiday To-Do Lists

With the holiday shopping season in full swing and Virginians scrambling to get everything done, the Virginia State Police Crime Prevention Program is reminding everyone of the importance of safeguarding one's self and helping "crush crime" before it happens. "The hectic pace many keep this time of year easily puts the distracted shopper at the disadvantage," said 1st Sgt. Ron Watkins, Virginia State Police Crime Prevention Program Coordinator. "We want to remind Virginians to make safety a priority with all aspects of shopping and traveling during the holiday season." When shopping, try to:

- Park your car in well-lit areas. Especially keep this in mind when parking during daylight, but will be leaving a store in the dark.
- Don't overburden yourself with packages. Trying to carry too many things to your vehicle can cause a trip hazard and/or make you an easy target for a thief. Make multiple trips to your vehicle during your shopping excursion so as to lessen your load.
- Before leaving a store, have your keys in hand for easy and immediate access to your vehicle.
- Review with young children before entering a store the importance of staying at your side at all times, to never talk or leave with strangers, and to notify a store employee if/when separated from you.
- Avoid wearing expensive jewelry or carrying large amounts of cash. If you do carry cash, then keep it in your front pocket.
- Be extra careful if carrying a wallet or purse. They are prime targets especially in crowded shopping areas



and public transportation.

- Remain alert at all times to your surroundings. Avoid talking on a cell phone while walking to your vehicle in a parking lot.

When driving, try to:

- Avoid distractions. Put down the cell phone and pay attention to traffic, which typically increases this time of year especially around shopping destinations.
- Prepare your vehicle for winter weather, especially if traveling for the holidays. Check tires, fluids, windshield wipers, and head/taillights to make sure they are all in good, working condition.
- Plan ahead for possible travel delays. Know your travel route in advance, in case the GPS fails you.
- Always buckle up your seat belt. Avoid driving fatigued. Never drive impaired by alcohol or drugs.

Governor McDonnell Announces School Safety Task Force and Initiatives

While the nation continues to mourn the horrific and senseless murders that took place at the hands of a lone gunman in Newtown, Connecticut, Governor Bob McDonnell has announced a state plan to review school safety in Virginia at all levels and to identify statewide and locality, school division, college and university resource needs to ensure that we are doing everything humanly possible to keep our children, young people and educators safe while they are in the classroom. The governor has asked Secretary of Education Laura Fornash and Secretary of Public Safety Marla Graff Decker to review recently submitted school safety audits with school superintendents and to identify any changes in procedures or additional resources needed in light of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings. The governor also announced the establishment of a task force comprised of leading educators, public safety experts, local leaders and legislators to review school safety, including established policies and procedures, crisis and emergency management plans, threat assessment protocols, as well as to share best practices and identify resource challenges. This task force will also provide legislative and budget proposals to the governor to address any critical gaps or needs associated with safety and security in our schools and on our campuses. Additionally, the governor announced the creation of a position within the Department of Criminal Justice Services dedicated to issues associated with school and campus safety. This School and Campus Safety Coordinator position originated as a recommendation from the Governor's Domestic Violence Prevention and Response Advisory Board and will be funded using existing resources.

<http://www.governor.virginia.gov/news/viewRelease.cfm?id=1561>



www.CapitalRegionUpdates.gov

PLANNING / PREPAREDNESS

Wiki Launches Accessibility Toolkit to Empower People with Disabilities to Use Social Media in Emergencies

The Emergency 2.0 Wiki Accessibility Toolkit has been designed to help people with disabilities to use social media to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters. The online toolkit provides tips, resources and apps to help people with a disability to overcome accessibility challenges of social media. The kit also includes guidelines to assist the emergency sector, government, community, media and business to make social media messages more accessible. Social media can save lives, but people with disabilities often have difficulty accessing important

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messages because the social media platforms themselves are inaccessible. It's vitally important that people with disabilities, who are the most vulnerable in our communities during emergencies, are empowered to access instant, lifesaving messages through social media and the accessibility toolkit enables this.

<http://emergency20wiki.org/20121210/wiki-launches-accessibility-toolkit>

How to Enjoy Winter Activities Safely

Now that December is upon us, kids are keeping their fingers crossed in much of the country for a snow day so they can go sledding, have snow ball fights and do lots of other winter activities. You and your family may also get outside this winter to enjoy the ski slopes, ice skating rinks and other fun the weather brings. USA.gov offers these tips to stay safe while enjoying all that winter has to offer:

- When heading out to a winter sports activity, such as skiing or snowboarding, remember to always dress appropriately with a helmet, boots and other cold weather gear, all of which help prevent injury, hypothermia and other hazards of winter fun. Read up on winter safety and health tips so you're prepared before you head out. <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/staysafe/index.asp>
- It's important to look for winter storm warnings, watches and advisories before you hit the slopes or other recreational areas. Twenty-five percent of winter weather fatalities are because people are caught off guard. Make sure you're prepared by knowing the projected snowfall and other advisories before leaving your house. <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/winter/winter1.shtml>
- For tips on specific winter sports safety equipment, such as hockey, ice skating, sledding and more, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission offers time- tested tips for each specific winter activity and how to dress yourself and your kids appropriately for each one. <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml73/73046.html>
- If you're heading out on a hike or camping on public lands, you can use Recreation.gov to search for recreation areas with winter sports activities near you. The site also provides information on winter sports activities across the nation and tips on taking care of our public land while visiting. http://www.recreation.gov/recFacilityActivitiesHomeAction.do?goto=winter_sports.htm

<http://www.usa.gov/>

Winter Weather Preparedness

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) winter weather Web page has been updated; check out the page to learn how to stay safe and healthy during winter weather. It features a cool tip of the week, as well as sections on winter weather and extreme cold, staying safe and healthy, related resources and steps you can take to have a safe winter. According to the CDC, when winter temperatures drop significantly below normal, staying warm and safe can become a challenge. Extremely cold temperatures often accompany a winter storm, so you may have to cope with power failures and icy roads. Although staying indoors as much as possible can help reduce the risk of car crashes and falls on the ice, you may also face indoor hazards. Many homes will be too cold – either due to a power failure or because the heating system isn't adequate for the weather. When people must use space heaters and fireplaces to stay warm, the risk of household fires increases, as well as the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. Among the tips from the CDC:

- Make sure you have a battery-powered and/or NOAA weather radio.
- Have at least a week's worth of food and safety supplies and a water supply.
- Ensure that you have a

HIGHLIGHTS

- You may have to cope with power failures and icy roads.
- Many homes will be too cold.
- Space heaters and fireplaces increase the risk of household fires and carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Exposure to cold temperature can cause other serious health problems.
- When temperatures drop below normal, heat can leave your body more rapidly.

way to heat your home in case a winter storm hits.

In addition, protect yourself against hypothermia and frostbite during cold weather. Wear warm clothing that covers your skin and remove any wet clothing immediately. Limit your time outdoors. Watch for signs of hypothermia and frostbite among elderly adults, babies, people drinking alcohol, and others at risk. Seek immediate medical attention if you suspect someone has hypothermia or frostbite.

Inauguration 2013 Online Resources

- Capital Region Updates
www.CapitalRegionUpdates.gov
- D.C. Inauguration Web page
<http://inauguration.dc.gov/>
- Presidential Inaugural Committee (PIC)
www.2013pic.org
- Joint Congressional Committee on Inauguration
www.inaugural.senate.gov/
- Metro Inauguration Web page
www.wmata.com/getting_around/metro_events/inauguration.cfm?nocache
- Special Metro Inauguration Twitter Feed
<http://twitter.com/metroyaug>
- MARC Train Service/Ticket Sales
<http://mta.maryland.gov/inaugural-day-information>
- Secret Service Twitter (which may be used on inauguration day in some capacity)
<https://twitter.com/SecretService>



Fifty-Seventh
Presidential Inauguration
January 21, 2013

Active Shooter Video

“RUN. HIDE. FIGHT. Surviving an Active Shooter Event” is a powerful video on how to survive an active shooter at your workplace. The video was produced and funded by the City of Houston Mayor’s Office of Public Safety and Homeland Security Department. The city released the how-to video on what people should do if a crazed gunman opens fire. The film crew actually wrapped up the project two weeks before the July 20 shooting in Aurora, Colo., that left 12 dead and dozens of others injured during a midnight showing of the Batman movie “The Dark Knight Rises.” Watch the video at <http://youtu.be/5VcSwejU2D0>.



December is Critical Infrastructure Protection and Resilience Month

December is Critical Infrastructure Protection and Resilience Month to recognize the importance of protecting our nation’s infrastructure resources and enhancing our national security and resilience. Critical infrastructure is the backbone of our economy, security and health. We know it as the power we use in our homes, the water we drink, the transportation that moves us, and the communication systems we rely on to stay in touch with friends and family. Resilience and modernization are key to sustaining and enhancing critical infrastructure. Addressing vulnerabilities in a way that recognizes current challenges and builds upon current knowledge and technology is central to our unified effort to make the Nation stronger and more secure. Protecting critical infrastructure is a shared responsibility. Just as we all enjoy and rely on the benefits of critical infrastructure, we all must play a role in keeping it strong, secure, and resilient. You can do your part at home, at work, and in your community by being prepared for all hazards, reporting suspicious activities, and learning more about critical infrastructure protection and resilience. The private sector also plays an important role in protecting and strengthening critical infrastructure. Partnerships between the private sector and Federal agencies as well as with state, local, tribal and territorial governments help foster information sharing with and between owners and operators, who make decisions about how to protect our most critical systems, assets, and networks. Throughout the month of December and beyond, the Department of Homeland Security is working to elevate awareness of protecting critical infrastructure. This includes engaging in partnerships

with state, local, tribal, and territorial governments as well as the private sector and reinforcing critical infrastructure protection and resilience. For more information about the Department's critical infrastructure protection and resilience programs, training and resources visit <http://www.dhs.gov/critical-infrastructure-protection-month>.

Home Fire Sprinklers

Home fire sprinklers save lives. Installing sprinklers and smoke alarms in your home increases your chance of surviving a fire by more than 82 percent.

<http://youtu.be/xRpGTMRGKd8>



Save the Date for ShakeOut 2013

Some 1.8 million residents of Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Washington, D.C., participated in the first ever Great SouthEast ShakeOut multi-state earthquake drill held in October. Based on the success of the drill – and to provide a national exercise just after the annual National Preparedness Month campaign in September – states will once again have a simultaneous earthquake drill in 2013. **Mark your calendars for Oct. 17 at 10:17 a.m.** Additional information will be forthcoming starting in the spring.

Community Emergency Alert Network (CEAN)

Get emergency alerts by email, as well as by text or pager. Sign up at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cean. Businesses can also register up to five people in their organizations – such as security officers – who can receive alerts and then share that information with their workforce.

National Terrorism Advisory System

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS) is a robust 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 individuals, communities, businesses 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.
- "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 Web page (www.dhs.gov/alerts), Facebook and via Twitter @NTASAlerts. NTAS alerts and posters will 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.



MEDIA ARTICLES OF INTEREST

DHS Grants are Wasteful

The U.S. Senator known for his annual “Wastebook” report on careless government spending has taken a similar tack in his latest report on DHS’s grant programs. Sen. Tom Coburn released an oversight report on Dec. 5, entitled Safety at Any Price: Assessing the Impact of Homeland Security Spending in U.S. Cities, which he said was the culmination of a year-long investigation of the Department of Homeland Security's grant programs and the Urban Areas Security Initiative Government Security

http://www.gsnmagazine.com/node/27960?c=law_enforcement_first_responders

CDC says US. Flu Season Starts Early, Could be Bad

Flu season in the U.S. is off to its earliest start in nearly a decade – and it could be a bad one. Health officials this week said suspected flu cases have jumped in five Southern states. Missouri also has seen an early start. The primary strain circulating tends to make people sicker than other types. It is particularly hard on the elderly. The good news is that the nation seems fairly well prepared, said Dr. Thomas Frieden, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. More than a third of Americans have been vaccinated, and the vaccine formulated for this year is well-matched to the strains of the virus seen so far, CDC officials said. Reports of moderate to high levels of flu-like symptoms have come in from Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee and Texas.

http://www.stltoday.com/lifestyles/health-med-fit/cdc-says-us-flu-season-starts-early-could-be-bad/article_b283eb91-0a40-56ad-9337-0873d997a8cf.html

FEMA “Ill Equipped” for Disasters in Cities, Congressman Says

Superstorm Sandy presented an array of new challenges when it slammed into New York City, from getting relief supplies to people inside skyscrapers to finding affordable housing for displaced residents, a New York congressman said Tuesday. “Hurricane Sandy should be a major wake-up call,” Democratic Rep. Jerrold Nadler said at a hearing before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. “When disaster strikes, our densely populated urban areas and economic centers must be able to recover quickly.” The Federal Emergency Management Agency isn't positioned to handle a natural disaster in a densely populated urban setting, said Nadler, who represents Lower Manhattan and the Brooklyn waterfront communities of Red Hook, Sea Gate and Coney Island. He said his office and other volunteers collected and hand-delivered blankets, water and food to stranded residents.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2012/12/04/congressman-says-fema-ill-equipped/1747213/>

Schools and Students Are Targets Worldwide

A half-day before a young gunman committed one of the deadliest school attacks in U.S. history, a Chinese farmer took a kitchen knife and hacked at more than 20 children as they entered their rural elementary school. Though the outcomes are different – 28 dead in Connecticut and 23 injured in China – the Friday attacks show how disturbingly frequent rampages against children and schools are. Attackers often seek out the vulnerable, hoping to amplify their outrage before they themselves often commit suicide. News of one mass killing often serves as inspiration and blueprint to other potential mass killers.

<http://www.hstoday.us/industry-news/general/single-article/schools-and-students-are-targets-worldwide/d45260b8b9095e28ff4fa1585e7883a6.html>

Twitter Could be Used to Take 999-style Emergencies, Fire Brigade Says

The London Fire Brigade has used social media to tackle fires in the past. The brigade has said it is considering allowing people to tweet emergencies instead of dialing 999. It currently advises against using social media to make the service aware of fires as it is not monitored 24 hours a day. But it has acknowledged that the increasing proliferation of smart phones means they must “improve how we communicate with the public.” It said it would share its experiences with other emergency services.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-20754978>

Va. Ranks High in Health Emergency Preparedness

An annual report released Wednesday by two health advocacy groups ranks Virginia high compared with the rest of the country in being prepared for public-health emergencies, but said spending cuts could threaten the state's ability to prevent and respond to disease outbreaks, disasters and other threats. The Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation say Virginia was among 10 states that meet seven of 10 key benchmarks of public-health preparedness. No state met all 10 benchmarks, and a majority of states met six or fewer of the measures.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2012/12/19/public-health-emergency-preparedness/1778439/>

and

http://www.timesdispatch.com/news/state-regional/ap/va-ranks-high-in-health-emergency-preparedness/article_e9e58d23-b509-5c65-97dc-34463922deab.html

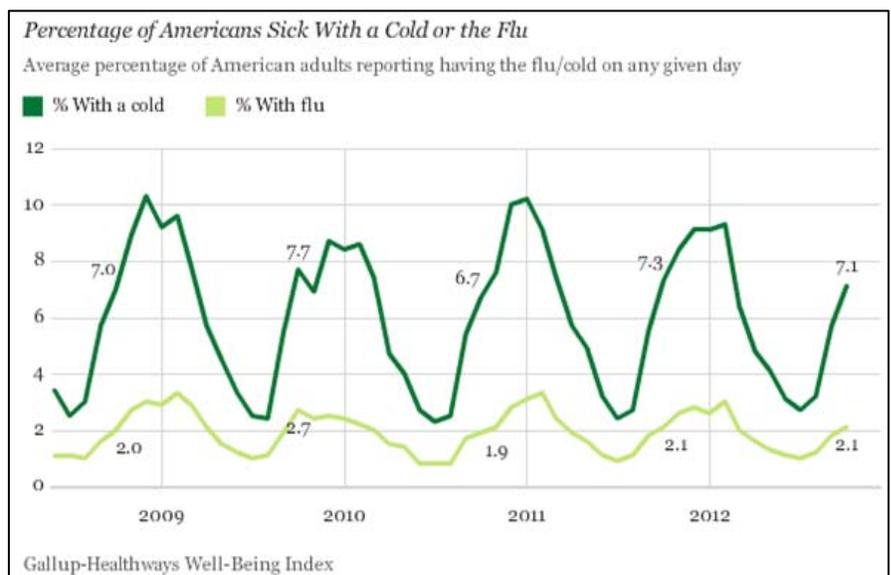
FLU

Snapshot: 2012 U.S. Cold and Flu Season Typical So Far

Average daily reports of 2.1 percent for flu, 7.1 percent for colds

An average of 2.1 percent of Americans reported having the flu on any given day in October, up from 1.8 percent in September and 1.2 percent in August – an upward climb that is on par with past years. And as usual, more Americans report having a cold than the flu -- with the 7.1 percent reporting having a cold the day prior to being interviewed in October, up from 5.7 percent in September and 3.2 percent in August. The percentage of daily flu or cold reports in October is also on par with levels from October of past years.

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/159023/snapshot-2012-cold-flu-season-typical-far.aspx>



U.S. Flu Season Off To Early Start, CDC Urges Vaccination

Early Vaccine Coverage Data Shows Millions Unprotected Still

December 3, 2012 -- Significant increases in flu activity in the United States have occurred in the last two weeks, indicating that an early flu season is upon us. These increases in activity overlap with National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) being observed December 2-8, 2012. According to Dr. Melinda Wharton, Acting Director of CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, "Increasing flu activity should be a wake-up call. For anyone who has put off vaccination: It's time to get your flu vaccine now." According to CDC's weekly surveillance report published on Nov. 30, 48 states and Puerto Rico have already reported cases of laboratory-confirmed influenza and, nationally, the percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza is rising fast. Influenza-like-illness (ILI) activity levels in parts of the country are already higher than all of last season. Nationally, the United States reached the baseline level for ILI the week ending Nov. 24, and 5 states are already reporting the highest level of activity possible. According to FluView, activity is most intense in the south-central and southeast of the country right now; however, it shows signs of increasing across the rest of the country as well. Most of the viruses characterized so far this season have been H3N2 viruses; which are typically associated with more severe seasons. The good news is that most of the viruses characterized at CDC so far this season are well-matched to the vaccine viruses.

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/spotlights/early-season-nivw.htm>

U.S. Plans for New H5N1 Research Stir Controversy

Elements of the plan have been “very controversial within [the] U.S. government” committee that developed it, Amy Patterson, associate director for science policy at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Md., told a meeting of the National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity (NSABB) recently. Patterson unveiled the proposal – formally known as [A Proposed Framework for Guiding HHS \[the Department of Health and Human Services\] Funding Decisions about Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1 Gain-of-Function Research](#) – at the Nov. 27 meeting of NSABB, which advises the U.S. government on overseeing “dual use” biological research that could be used for good and evil. Although it would now apply to just a handful of potential studies, the framework “is going to raise a lot of questions and concerns among researchers,” predicts microbiologist Ron Atlas of the University of Louisville in Kentucky who has worked on biosecurity policy issues for more than a decade for the American Society for Microbiology. Some influenza scientists are already calling the plan “misguided,” while others predict it will make it impossible to obtain NIH funding for an entire subset of potentially useful studies. Others, however, say it represents a needed “step forward” in government efforts to reduce the terrorism and public safety risks associated with H5N1 studies. The debate is expected to get a full hearing over the next few months. NIH says that it will soon release for public comment a white paper describing the plan in detail. And it plans to present the framework for discussion at an international workshop on H5N1 research that it is holding in Bethesda from 17 to 18 December. “We definitely want to hear what other countries are thinking about this,” Patterson said. “This is a global concern,” Atlas says, and any U.S. policy “that can't be globalized is in the long run going to be ineffective.” <http://crofsblogs.typepad.com/h5n1/2012/11/us-plans-for-new-h5n1-research-stir-controversy.html>

Who's at Risk for the Flu?

Are you or a member of your family at increased risk of getting the flu or having flu-related complications? People that fall into the following categories should get vaccinated and take special steps during flu season:

Seniors

- A weakening immune system makes seniors – adults 65 years and older – more susceptible to the flu. For seniors, the seasonal flu can be very serious, even deadly. Seniors have two options for vaccination: a regular or high-dose flu shot.

Children

- Children are at higher risk for the flu because their immune systems are not fully developed. Some children between 6 months and 8 years old require two doses of flu vaccine. The second dose should be given at least 28 days after the first dose.

Seasonal Flu

Seasonal flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by flu viruses. Approximately 5-20% of U.S. residents get the flu each year.

- Flu season typically peaks in January or February.
- Getting the **flu vaccine is your best protection** against the flu.
- Flu-related complications include pneumonia and dehydration.
- Illness from seasonal flu usually lasts one to two weeks.

Pregnant Women

- Pregnant women should get the flu shot, not the nasal spray. If a pregnant woman gets the flu shot during pregnancy, it will provide some protection to her baby after birth. Once the baby is born, breastfeeding will help her baby stay healthy during flu season.

People with Disabilities

- Not all people with disabilities are at high risk for the flu. You are at high risk if you have limited mobility, may come in contact with a sick caregiver, or are unable to communicate symptoms.

People with Health Conditions

- People with health conditions, including arthritis, asthma, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, or HIV/AIDS, may be at higher risk for flu-related complications.

Travelers

- Flu season varies by location. Travelers should research the current flu threat level where they are going. The U.S. vaccine will protect against the major flu viruses found in other parts of the world.

Be sure to check with your health care provider about your specific situation and treatments.

<http://www.flu.gov>

CDC FluView

The CDC FluView report provides weekly influenza surveillance information in the United States. These applications were developed to enhance the weekly FluView report by better facilitating communication about influenza with the public health community, clinicians, scientists, and the general public. This series of dynamic visualizations allow any Internet user to access influenza information collected by CDC's monitoring systems.

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/fluviewinteractive.htm>

Protect Yourself from the Flu

The best protection against the flu is to get the vaccine. But there are other ways to keep you and your family healthy this holiday season. Follow these simple steps to stop the spread of germs:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Practice good health habits. Get plenty of sleep and exercise, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat healthy food.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

Learn more at www.flu.gov or the Fairfax County Health Department at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd.



Controversial H5N1 Influenza Work Likely to Resume

Some scientists may resume controversial experiments on the highly pathogenic avian influenza virus H5N1, following a high-level meeting this month. The suggestion comes in the wake of a global debate about the risks and benefits of such research and a voluntary moratorium on the experiments lasting nearly a year. International flu experts, research funders and public-health officials met Dec. 17-18 at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Md. to discuss the future of the work — so-called gain-of-function experiments that change the properties of this flu strain in ways that might make it more transmissible and infectious in humans, in order to investigate the possible natural evolution of the virus. The meeting did not reconcile all differences of opinion over the risks and benefits of such work, or explicitly address the moratorium, although it appears likely that some investigators might resume H5N1 work.

<http://www.nature.com/news/controversial-h5n1-influenza-work-likely-to-resume-1.12089>

H5N1 Researchers Question Proposed HHS Funding Framework

Federal health officials are in the midst of crafting a framework for funding H5N1 avian influenza gain-of-function studies, and at a workshop earlier this month they heard varied feedback from researchers, biosecurity experts and others. The 2-day workshop, held at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), is the latest chapter in an intense scientific controversy that was triggered by the publication of two recent studies involving lab-engineered H5N1 strains that showed signs of being transmissible in mammals. Publishing the details of the experiments in two scientific journals in May and June sparked bioterror concerns, and the existence of the engineered strains in labs raised fears about an accidental or intentional release. Early in the debate the H5N1 community agreed to a 60-day research moratorium, which has now tarried for almost a year. The global scientific community is closely watching the framework discussions, because the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is one of the world's biggest funders of H5N1 research, including the two studies that sparked the controversy. Studies on H5N1 are considered a key pandemic preparedness step, and research findings have been used to help governments guide the

development of vaccine and antiviral countermeasures.

<http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/influenza/avianflu/news/dec1712durc.html>

WHO's Latest H5N1 Report

WHO has published an update to Influenza at human-animal interface – “Monthly Risk Assessment Summary.” It’s a PDF providing considerable background information as well as very sketchy details on two human cases in December: A two-year-old in Egypt who survived and a four-year-old in Indonesia who died.

<http://crofsblogs.typepad.com/h5n1/2012/12/whos-latest-h5n1-report.html>

WHO Report (PDF):

http://www.who.int/entity/influenza/human_animal_interface/Influenza_Summary_IRA_HA_interface_17Dec12.pdf

Fairfax County Flu Preparedness

Be sure to visit the county’s flu Web page for information and news on flu and flu preparedness.

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



www.flu.gov

TRAININGS / EXERCISES / CONFERENCES

International Disaster Conference and Expo

Jan. 8-10, 2013; New Orleans, La.

Conference brings together public and private sector professionals for discussions on policy, lessons learned, best practices, and forward thinking.

<http://www.internationaldisasterconference.com/index.html>

6th Annual Biometrics for National Security and Law Enforcement Summit

Jan. 30-Feb. 1, 2013; Pentagon City, Va.

As technology continues to advance and national security remains at the forefront of discussion, it comes as no surprise that biometrics is a hot topic. The ability for scientists to determine ways to accurately identify people based upon physical and behavioral characteristics has been achieved; however, improvements in equipment, interoperability and database accuracy are essential. Biometrics is key to our nation’s intelligence and security efforts in the fight against terrorism. Establishing an individual’s identity with certainty provides our military personnel an immediate edge and aids our national security capabilities. By participating in this conference, you will have the exceptional opportunity to take part in continued discussions where debate, dialogue, and networking are encouraged. By the end of the Biometrics for National Security and Law Enforcement Training Summit, delegates will understand the future of biometrics, new guidelines and standards of biometrics, and the progress towards interoperability.

<http://www.biometricsevent.com/>

2013 Military Health System (MHS) Conference

Feb. 11-14, 2013; The Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center, National Harbor, Md.

The MHS conference promotes professionalism throughout the organization; enhance partnerships within and outside the federal sector, and concentrates on ways to best serve the preventive and health-care needs of its diverse beneficiary population. Four-thousand military and civilian medical personnel from the MHS attended the conference held in January 2012. The event will include an expanded exhibit hall featuring agency and commercial exhibitors

whose products and programs are aligned with the MHS mission. The focus of the conference is sharing knowledge and achieving breakthrough performance in healthcare delivery, research, education and training. Each day will feature a specific educational theme with all plenary and breakout sessions aligned to furthering the goals of the Quadruple Aim and the associated strategic initiatives.

<http://www.health.mil/2012MHSConference.aspx>

12th World Congress on Stress, Trauma and Coping

Feb. 19-24, 2013; Baltimore, Md.

World Congress participants will identify the tools needed to solve current problems and explore the future direction of the crisis intervention field. The 12th World Congress on Stress, Trauma and Coping is the premier forum for multidisciplinary exchange of ideas and information for those who provide crisis and disaster mental health services.

<http://www.icsif.org/world-congress/12th-world-congress>

4th Annual Cybersecurity Symposium

Feb. 22, 2013; Washington, D.C.

The symposium will explore the state of U.S. cyber preparedness from a matrixed team perspective – CYBERCOM, DoD, military services, DHS, security agencies, federal civilian organizations and the private sector, all working together. Attendees will focus on efforts that can close the gaps to coordination, collaboration, information sharing and active threat deterrence across agencies, domains and private owners of U.S. infrastructure.

<http://www.afceadc.org/events/special-events/cybersecurity-symposium-fy13/>

MeriTalk Data Center Brainstorm

March 7, 2013; Washington, D.C.

Data center consolidation continues to be a high priority as we move closer to OMB's rigorous 2015 deadlines. How is the intersection of consolidation, cloud, mobility, and even big data going to affect the path forward? Which mandates are realistic and which should change? Join MeriTalk's Data Center Exchange for the second annual 2013 Data Center Brainstorm on Thursday, March 7, 2013 at the Newseum in Washington, D.C. The event will bring together savvy Federal data center movers and shakers to share best practices, collaborate on challenges, and discuss what is needed for effective consolidation. We'll cover key topics on today's data center horizon.

<http://meritalk.com/datacenterbrainstorm>

Learning in Disaster Health: A Continuing Education Workshop

April 2-3, 2013; Georgetown University Hotel and Conference Center, Washington, D.C.

A unique opportunity to assist with the nation's disaster health preparedness. This workshop will focus on education and training in disaster health and provide an interdisciplinary academic forum to:

- Explore concepts of adult learning in the context of disaster health.
- Highlight the implications of the latest research and practice for disaster health learning and performance and identify key areas for future research.
- Present a unique opportunity for collaboration among disaster health, human resource development and adult education professionals.
- Identify potential solutions for maximizing learning in a resource-constrained environment.

<http://ncdmpu.usuhs.edu/KnowledgeLearning/2013-04LearningWorkshop.htm>

Defense Intelligence Worldwide

April 8-10, 2013; Baltimore, Md.

Formerly known as the DoDIIS Worldwide Conference, the Defense Intelligence Worldwide is expanding to focus on all-source intelligence and information technology as it contributes to mission success, hence the theme, "Beyond DoDIIS - Mission Readiness 2020." This year the DoDIIS Worldwide Conference will now focus on all-source intelligence with a continued emphasis on information technology as it contributes to mission success.

<http://www.ncsi.com/dia/2013/index.php>

Critical Infrastructure Symposium

April 15-16, 2013; West Point, N.Y.

Symposium promotes the exchange of ideas and experiences among students, educators, practitioners and government officials developing critical infrastructure.

<http://www.tisp.org/index.cfm>

SPIE Defense Security + Sensing

April 29-May 3, 2013; Baltimore, Md.

Meeting for scientists, researchers and engineers from industry, military, government agencies and academia throughout the world.

<http://spie.org/x6766.xml>

GovSec Featuring TREXPO

May 13-15, 2013; Walter E. Washington Convention Center, Washington, D.C.

Description: Advanced-level education from public and private sector industry experts on today's hot topics and challenges, including: Homeland Security; Counter and Anti-Terrorism; Critical Infrastructure Protection; Cyberterrorism and Cybercrime; and Law Enforcement Case Studies, Tactics and Technologies.

<http://govsecinfo.com/Home.aspx>

International Hazardous Materials Response Teams Conference

June 6-June 9, 2013; Baltimore, Md.

The Hazmat Conference is recognized as a high quality, in-depth conference with cutting-edge educational programs designed for professionals at all levels of experience. For nearly 30 years the Hazmat Conference has offered informative sessions and unique hands-on training designed to tackle the most pressing issues facing hazmat professionals.

<http://www.iafc.org/micrositeHazConf/homeHazConf.cfm?ItemNumber=6165&navItemNumber=6150>

IS-450.NC - Emergency Preparedness for Federal Employees in the National Capital Region

The goal of this independent study course is to provide practical steps you can take to prepare for emergencies that could threaten your home, workplace, and community. This course is intended specifically for Federal employees living and working in the National Capital Region. The first lesson focuses on the importance of personal emergency preparedness and its relationship to your professional responsibilities as a Federal employee. The second lesson introduces the four steps to personal emergency preparedness: Be Informed, Make a Plan, Build a Kit, and Get Involved. The last lesson reinforces the concepts learned in the previous lessons by applying the four steps of emergency preparedness to a given scenario.

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is450nc.asp>

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.redcrossna.org/Online/disaster_registration.php

LINKS

Fairfax County Web Resources

- Fairfax County Emergency Information Blog - www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog
- Fairfax County Emergency Information Web page - www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/
- 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/>

Additional Web Resources

- Capital Region Updates - www.CapitalRegionUpdates.gov
- Virginia Citizen Corps - 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 NICCRReports@dhs.gov. You can access the Daily OSIR at:

http://www.dhs.gov/files/programs/editorial_0542.shtm.

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
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Emergency Information: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency

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.