



ESF 15 Business / Nonprofit Update

Produced by Emergency Support Function 15 – External Affairs

November 2008

ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR ESF 15

Winter Preparedness Week is Nov. 30-Dec. 6

Virginia is overdue for a major statewide winter storm and residents should get ready now for the upcoming snow and ice season. Businesses and residents can find winter-specific safety information and related links at www.ReadyVirginia.gov. You can prepare now for severe winter weather by following a few simple steps:

- Get a kit. Emergency supplies for winter weather include essential items to last at least three days in case of power outage. At a minimum, these supplies include a battery-powered radio and extra batteries, food and water, flashlights and extra batteries, a first aid kit, blankets and warm clothing, medications if needed and pet supplies.
- Make a plan. A family communications plan means discussing with your family what you would do in case of severe winter weather in your area. Decide on a meeting place if your family cannot return home because of closed roads. Choose an out-of-town friend or relative as a point-of-contact for family members. Always tell someone before you travel on snowy or icy roads where you are going and when you expect to arrive.
- Stay informed. Before, during and after a winter storm, it is critical that you stay informed of conditions by listening to reports from media and emergency officials who are closest to you. Local media will give instructions from local, state and federal agencies including road conditions, winter storm watches and warnings, and power outages.
- Plug space heaters directly into wall sockets, not extension cords. Keep them at least three feet from other objects. Never leave space heaters unattended.
- Fireplaces and wood stoves should be prepared for winter by having professionals inspect and clean them. Residue can build up that can cause fires.
- Driving is most dangerous when the temperature is at or under 32° F, and most vehicle crashes occur within the first two hours after a storm begins. For road conditions call 5-1-1 or go to www.511Virginia.org. Even after roads have been treated with salt and/or sand, drivers should slow down. Leave a safe distance between vehicles, and never use cruise control in winter weather conditions.

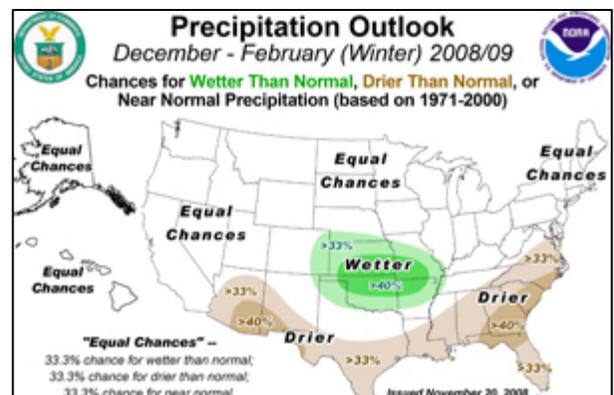
For more winter weather preparedness tips, visit www.ReadyVirginia.gov.

http://www.vaemergency.com/newsroom/releases/2008/misc/111708winter_campaign.cfm

NOAA's U.S. Winter Outlook Calls for Variability

In announcing the 2008-2009 U.S. Winter Outlook for meteorological winter from December through February, forecasters at the NOAA Climate Prediction Center are calling for warmer-than-normal temperatures for much of the central part of the nation, and a continuation of drier-than-normal conditions across the Southeast. Regional outlooks:

- Northeast and the Mid-Atlantic: Equal chances for above-, near-, or below-normal temperatures and precipitation.
- Southeast: Increased chance of above normal temperatures in the central and western parts, along with below-normal precipitation.
- Central Region: Increased chance of warmer-than-normal temperatures, with above-normal precipitation anticipated in parts of the central Plains.
- Western Region: Equal chances for above-, near-, or below-normal temperatures, and an enhanced likelihood of below-normal precipitation across parts of the Southwest.
- Alaska: Milder-than-normal temperatures except along the southern coast. Equal chances for above-, near-, or below-normal precipitation.



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- Hawaii: Above-normal temperatures for eastern Hawaii and below-normal temperatures for western Hawaii. There are equal chances for above-, near-, or below-normal precipitation throughout the state.

The U.S. Winter Outlook does not include a snowfall forecast. Snow forecasts are heavily dependent upon winter storms and are generally not predictable more than several days in advance.

http://www.noaaneews.noaa.gov/stories2008/20081120_winteroutlook.html

NOAA Watch: <http://www.noaawatch.gov/>

NOAA Weather Radio: <http://www.weather.gov/nwr/>

New GAO Report Looks Into Disaster Recovery Lessons from Past Major Incidents

The U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) has published a new report entitled “Disaster Recovery: Past Experiences Offer Insights for Recovering from Hurricanes Ike and Gustav and Other Recent Natural Disasters.” The report seeks to capture some of the main disaster recovery lessons that have emerged from six major disasters that occurred from 1989 to 2005.

Amongst other things GAO found the following insights:

- Create a clear, implementable, and timely recovery plan. Effective plans provide a road map for recovery.
- Build state and local capacity for recovery. State and local governments need certain capacities to effectively make use of federal assistance, including having sufficient financial resources and technical know-how.
- Implement strategies for businesses recovery. Business recovery is a key element of a community’s recovery. Small businesses can be especially vulnerable to major disasters because they often lack resources to sustain financial losses.
- Adopt a comprehensive approach toward combating fraud, waste, and abuse. The influx of financial assistance after a major disaster provides increased opportunities for these things. Looking for ways to combat such activities before, during, and after a disaster can help states and localities protect residents from contractor fraud as well as safeguard the financial assistance they allocate to victims.

<http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-08-1120>

Top 50 Homeland Security Blogs

The e-Justice Blog has come out with its list of the top 50 Homeland Security blogs. According to e-Justice, While homeland security isn’t the same buzzword it was several years ago, it is still an important element and oft-discussed topic of American politics. From immigration laws to cyber-security to emergency preparedness to foreign policy, these blogs will bring you the latest discussions and research taking place with homeland security experts and novices alike. These blogs represent the government, researchers, professionals in the field, and every-day citizens and their offerings on the ever-evolving and important topic of homeland security.

<http://www.criminaljusticeusa.com/blog/2008/top-50-homeland-security-blogs/>

Emergency Management Research Can Now Be Counted as Professional Contribution

The International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) has announced that the Certified Emergency Manager® (CEM®) Commission has approved a change in the Professional Contributions requirement for candidates for the CEM® credential. The change allows the conducting of emergency management research to be counted toward the Professional Contributions requirement. The concept of professionalism is ultimately defined as one’s contributions to the emergency management profession. Candidates for the CEM® can list any and all such activities, giving special consideration to the most current activities. Specific verification documenting each activity is requested, and submissions for at least six different categories of professional contribution are required. All submissions must contribute to and support the field of disaster/emergency management, have occurred during the 10 years preceding the CEM® application, and must be beyond the scope of the candidate’s normal job.

<http://www.iaem.com/certification/generalinfo/documents/IAEMnewsrelease111108.pdf>

DHS Announces Fiscal Year 2009 Grant Guidance For Over \$3 Billion In Preparedness Grant Programs

The Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency has released Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 Application Guidance for 14 federal grant programs, totaling more than \$3 billion available in federal funding to assist state and local governments in strengthening community preparedness. More than \$27 billion has been provided since 2002 to strengthen our nation’s ability to prevent, protect, respond and recover from terrorist

attacks, major disasters or other emergencies. DHS also is announcing for the first time FY 2009 targeted allocations under the State Homeland Security Program and Urban Areas Security Initiative. This is the result of direct stakeholder feedback and will assist states and urban areas in writing investment justifications that reflect available grant resources. The department will continue to use the peer review process and applicants' effectiveness scores in determining final allocations. The FY 2009 Application Guidance reflects the strategic priorities set by the Homeland Security Strategy as well as the National Preparedness Guidelines and National Response Framework. Further information on preparedness grant programs is available at www.dhs.gov and www.fema.gov/grants.
<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=46633>

FLUEX 2008

The Virginia Department of Health held FLUEX08 on Nov. 20-21, a two-day pandemic influenza functional exercise that allowed state, local, private and nonprofit organizations to demonstrate preparation and response capabilities for a statewide pandemic influenza outbreak. The exercise was designed to:

- Demonstrate emergency response plan capability regarding a pandemic response.
- Provide an opportunity for the healthcare community to demonstrate capabilities and capacities for coordination and communication, medical surge, mass prophylaxis, laboratory testing, and other variables appropriate for a pandemic response.
- Identify and discuss policy decisions corresponding to functions most needed to decrease mortality, social disruption, critical infrastructure degradation, economic strain, and other adverse consequences of a pandemic influenza.
- Identify additional steps necessary to assure the Commonwealth of Virginia is prepared for pandemic influenza, as well as appropriate areas for improvement and identify corrective actions.

Reprinted from EM Update newsletter, Nov. 5 edition, published by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management.

New GAO Presidential Transition Web Site Addresses Homeland Security

The Government Accountability Office has just launched its 2009 Congressional and Presidential Web site to provide resources to assist in a smooth presidential transition. The Web site covers 13 of the most urgent issues that the nation currently faces. Two of the most important issues are Homeland Security and Public Health Emergencies and the Web site provides GAO reports and other resources regarding these topics.

http://www.gao.gov/transition_2009/

President-Elect's New Web Site and Homeland Security Page

President-Elect Barack Obama's new Web site focuses on the 25 most important topical areas for the American people. The Homeland Security Page outlines Obama and Joe Biden's plan for protecting the United States from domestic terrorist attacks and for preparing for and responding to emergencies and natural disasters. This site provides information and outlines Obama's strategy for addressing these most important issues and ensuring that the United States remains a competitive, safe and prosperous country into the future.

Story: <http://www.hsdl.org/hslog/?q=node/4466>

Homeland Security Web Page: <http://change.gov/agenda/homelandsecurity/>

TSA Expands Popular Family Lanes to Every Airport in America

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) earlier this month announced the expansion of its popular family lane concept to every security checkpoint in America. This expansion came weeks before the busy Thanksgiving travel season. The lanes, part of TSA's Diamond Self-Select program currently at 48 airports, allow families, individuals unfamiliar with air travel procedures and travelers with special needs to go through security at their own pace. Individuals carrying medically necessary liquids, aerosols and gels in excess of three ounces will also be directed to these popular lanes. Individuals traveling with liquids, gels and aerosols within 3-1-1 limits will experience no change to their screening procedures. The introduction of lanes that will serve as both family lanes and dedicated lanes for passengers carrying medically necessary liquids strengthens TSA efforts to build a network of technology to detect liquid explosives.

<http://www.tsa.gov/press/releases/2008/1110.shtm>

DHS Announces Security Standards for Freight and Passenger Rail Systems

On Nov. 13, The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced regulations aimed at strengthening the security of the nation's freight and passenger rail systems and reducing the risk associated with the transportation of security-sensitive materials. The Rail Security final rule will require freight and passenger rail carriers to designate rail security coordinators and report significant security concerns to the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). The rule also will codify TSA's broad inspection authority. For freight rail, the rule will ensure the positive handoff of security-sensitive materials as well as establish security protocols for custody transfers of security-sensitive material rail cars between receivers of these materials that are located in high threat urban areas, shippers of these materials, and rail carriers. The freight rail provisions of the rule will address the transport of security-sensitive materials by rail, from start to finish, including shipment handoffs, secure areas for transfers, and reporting of shipment locations to TSA. The Rail Security final rule has been sent to the Federal Register for publication and is currently available at www.tsa.gov.

News release: http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr_1226590026515.shtm

Fact Sheet: http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr_1226590692881.shtm

Rail Transportation Security Final Rule: http://www.tsa.gov/assets/pdf/20081110_rail_rule.pdf

Survey Measures Public Readiness for Nuclear Accidents

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission recently released a publication that provides new insights into how best to protect the public during a nuclear power plant accident. The publication is based on the results of focus groups and telephone surveys conducted in the Emergency Planning Zones (EPZs) around reactor sites. The data will help the NRC review its regulations and guidance related to emergency preparedness and determine if changes need to be considered to existing protective action strategies. Focus groups were used in 2007 to collect information that guided the development of the phone survey. The phone survey was administered in 2008 by Sandia National Laboratories, under contract to the NRC, to approximately 2,500 households randomly selected in order to obtain 800 completed, anonymous surveys. The surveys found that a majority of the residents living within the EPZs of nuclear power plants:

- Were generally well informed about what to do in a nuclear power plant emergency.
- Remembered receiving emergency response information from the nuclear power plant and kept it readily accessible.
- Recalled receiving information about evacuation and sheltering.
- Agreed they would evacuate, shelter-in-place or monitor for more information, if directed to do so.
- Agreed they would support a staged evacuation, during which some residents would shelter while others would evacuate.

The survey also found that many parents will get their children from school even when told they were already being evacuated and that many "special needs" residents who don't live in special facilities had not registered for evacuation assistance.

News release: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/news/2008/08-206.html>

Full report: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/contract/cr6953/vol2/>

DHS Announces New Private Aircraft Requirements

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security recently announced additional measures to strengthen private aircraft security by requiring more detailed information about arriving and departing private aircraft and persons onboard, within a timeframe necessary for the department to assess the risks that certain flights may pose to national security. The Advance Information on Private Aircraft Arriving and Departing the United States final rule expands on existing regulations and is part of a comprehensive effort to strengthen general aviation security. The final rule will require pilots of private aircraft to send U.S. Customs and Border Protection their electronic manifest data relative to all people traveling onboard. The following information must be sent one hour prior to departure for flights arriving into or departing from the United States by filing manifest data through the Electronic Advanced Passenger Information System or an approved alternate system:

- Advance notice of arrival information.
- Advance notice of departure information.
- Aircraft information to foster aircraft identification.

- Complete passenger and crew manifest data.

The Advance Information on Private Aircraft Arriving and Departing the United States final rule has been sent to the Federal Register for publication and is currently available at www.cbp.gov.
http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr_1226943273725.shtm

TSA Education and Awareness

With more than 700 million travelers passing through airport security checkpoints yearly, TSA recently began introducing changes to passenger screening at the checkpoints to improve security and enhance passenger experience and enrich the work experience for Transportation Security Officers. These changes include: calming the checkpoint environment to improve security, deployment of enhanced technology and improved checkpoint signage at airports to help passengers learn the “why” behind what the TSA does and self-selected lanes for passengers. Because of these changes it is has become increasingly important to get the public to focus on what they need to do to get through the security checkpoints before they travel. So TSA and the Ad Council have created a national public awareness and education effort to build awareness about checkpoint security procedures so that passengers will be better prepared for airport travel. The campaign builds upon TSA’s commitment to communicate why certain procedures and requirements are part of airport security. The goal of the new campaign is to improve security by compelling airline passengers to be better prepared for the security processes, thereby resulting in less frustration and a safer and more positive experience.

<http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/why.shtm>

Web Site Aims to Help Small U.S. Businesses Win Post-Disaster Contracting Opportunities

Information about federal contracting opportunities for small businesses able to support post-disaster cleanup and rebuilding in areas devastated by recent storms and flooding is now accessible through the U.S. Small Business Administration’s Disaster Contracting Assistance Center. The DCAC provides a central point of reference for small businesses, particularly minority, women and veteran-owned businesses, to register for and learn about federal contracting opportunities. Business owners can visit the Web site at www.disastercontractingassistance.gov for a detailed look at how to seek government contracts. Also on the main page is a link to FedBizOpps, which allows businesses to sign up for e-mail notification of open contracts related to specified fields. In addition, steps on how to register for a Data Universal Number System identification number from Dun & Bradstreet, and information on how to sign up with the Central Contractor Registration — which establishes a company’s eligibility to seek federal contracts — are provided on the DCAC site. The site also provides information on prevailing wages in construction contracts, sub-contractor information and federal acquisitions regulations. Contact the center by e-mail at disastercustomerservice@sba.gov.

<http://www.continuitycentral.com/news04269.html>

GAO Report on DHS

The GAO report, “A Strategic Approach Is Needed to Better Ensure the Acquisition Workforce Can Meet Mission Needs,” concludes that the Department of Homeland Security has not developed a comprehensive strategic acquisition workforce plan to direct its future acquisition workforce efforts and generally lacks several elements key to developing such a plan: a coordinated planning process; a comprehensive acquisition workforce definition; and sufficient data on workforce size and skills, including the use of acquisition support contractors. DHS has not set an overall direction for acquisition workforce planning or fully involved key stakeholders, such as the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer and component procurement and program offices. However, DHS has recently taken steps that may help to include program office stakeholders in workforce planning. GAO recommends that DHS take several actions to better address acquisition workforce challenges, including: establishing an interim acquisition workforce definition and an implementation plan for current initiatives; developing plans as appropriate to expand current initiatives; establishing a coordinated planning process; and improving acquisition workforce data. DHS generally concurred with these recommendations and noted efforts under way to address them.

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0930.pdf>

IAEM-USA Calls for Restoring FEMA to Independent Agency Status

The U.S. Council of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM-USA) is calling for the Federal

Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to be restored to its former status as an independent agency reporting directly to the President. IAEM-USA also urges that the Director be designated as a member of the President's Cabinet. This position was adopted by association's leadership during IAEM's 56th Annual Conference attended by more than 1,500 emergency managers. Numerous experts in emergency management and homeland security – including former FEMA Director James Lee Witt – have suggested that now is the time to remove FEMA from the bureaucracy within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

<http://www.iaem.com/documents/IAEM-USACallsForFEMAToBeRestoredtoanIndependentAgency.pdf>

PLANNING / PREPAREDNESS

Current Threat Level – Elevated (Yellow)

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



Under an elevated threat level, businesses should:

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

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

http://www.dhs.gov/xinfo/share/programs/Copy_of_press_release_0046.shtm

<http://vaemergency.com/>

FEMA Announces Online Course for the National Response Framework

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has released the online IS-800.B National Response Framework (NRF), An Introduction training course. The NRF, which focuses on response and short-term recovery, articulates the doctrine, principles and architecture by which our nation prepares for and responds to all-hazard disasters across all levels of government and all sectors of communities. The course introduces participants to the concepts and principles of the NRF. This course is available at www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS800b.asp.

When individuals complete the course, they should take the online test, fill out the student information and submit the test for scoring. FEMA's Emergency Management Institute's Independent Study office will notify individuals via email of their successful completion of the course and a link will be included to access and print a course certificate. Individuals may contact the Independent Study office via e-mail Independent.Study@dhs.gov or contact the call center at 301-447-1200 or toll free at 1-800-238-3358, extension 1200. Independent Study Program office hours are 7:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m.

<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=46702>

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Ready Campaign Video Blog

The Ready Campaign has launched a Video Blog that features testimonials from Americans about the importance of being prepared for emergencies and natural disasters. These video submissions come from a range of Americans from across the country. And you too can submit a testimonial by uploading your video to www.YouTube.com/FEMA and then e-mail ready@dhs.gov about your submission. Be sure to follow the submission guidelines (<http://www.ready.gov/vblog/guidelines.html>). This new video blog will be hosted on the Ready.gov Web site (www.ready.gov) and aims to inspire more Americans to get an emergency supply kit, make an emergency plan and to be informed about the different emergencies that can happen.
<http://www.ready.gov/vblog/about.html>

DHS Conducts Full-Scale Exercise for Radiological/Nuclear Detection

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recently completed Southern Exposure, a full-scale exercise (FSE) marking the culmination of the Southeast Transportation Corridor Pilot (SETCP). The exercise ran from Oct. 23 through Nov. 5, 2008, and was sponsored by the DHS Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO), along with other federal, state, and local participants. The FSE was intended to demonstrate the Southeast region's capabilities to coordinate, communicate and respond during and after a possible radiological/nuclear threat to the region's interstate highways.
http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr_1225999813655.shtm

New Study Examines Effectiveness of State EM Agency Web Sites

The University of Kansas Transportation Research Institute recently published the results of a study – “Untapped Potential: Evaluating State Emergency Management Agency Web Sites 2008” -- which examined the role of state emergency management agency Web sites in emergency planning, preparedness and response. The focus of this research was the role of the Internet in crisis communications. It examined both the practice and the attitudes of the 51 state emergency management agencies (EMAs) toward the Web. It did this through a two-phased research design based on an earlier pilot study. The study also makes several recommendations regarding the role of EMA public information officers. The agencies with the most content-rich Web sites tended to be those where the PIOs reported directly to the agency's director and had direct control over the agency Web site. While this study does not say that PIOs must be trained in Web site design, it does cite a need for greater Web savvy on their part. One indicator of this was the finding that EMA Web sites based on a design template imposed by the state government appeared to be more content rich than those designed in-house. The report also recommends several steps to increase EMA transparency and Web site accessibility.

** The Virginia Department of Emergency Management Web site, according to the study, received a Content-Richness Index score of 2, second only to the state of Maryland which topped the survey.*

<http://people.ku.edu/~dguth/WebVersionEMA.pdf>

MEDIA ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Homeland Security Department Preps For Transition

Barack Obama will be the first new president since the creation of the Department of Homeland Security. Both the incoming and outgoing administrations say they want a smooth transition because the country could be more vulnerable to a terrorist attack during the transfer of power.

The Homeland Security Department has been preparing for the change in administrations for the past 18 months. It has named career employees to fill the No. 2 or No. 3 spots in every division — such as the Transportation Security Administration, Customs and Border Protection and the Federal Emergency Management Agency — and prepared them to take over, if needed, during the transition. They'll also be able to train incoming political appointees.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=96827904>

Federal Agencies Fall Short of ID Card Goal

The federal government fell far short of meeting an October deadline to issue secure personal identification cards to agency employees and contractors, the Office of Management and Budget reported, according to NextGov. “Less than a third of all federal employees and contractors, about 29 percent, had been issued a new high-tech ID card,

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which contains a cardholder's biometric information." The Office of Management and Budget "had set Oct. 27 as the deadline for agencies to issue the cards to all federal employees and contractors."

http://www.nextgov.com/nextgov/ng_20081031_5823.php?zone=itsecurity

FEMA Encourages Business Leaders in Texas to Discuss Their Role in Emergencies

Representatives of business, energy and government in Texas recently met with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) officials to discuss ways the private sector can play a bigger role in emergency management efforts. FEMA Administrator David Paulison said the agency believes that developing strong partnerships with the private sector is important to the agency's mission of reducing the loss of lives and property in the event of a disaster. Paulison said FEMA is looking at public-private partnerships as an integrated part of its emergency management plans. Local entities, such as business organizations, nonprofits and chambers of commerce, provide a ready-made network of contacts when a disaster hits. Advance preparation by such organizations, such as creating an emergency plan and obtaining adequate insurance, can speed recovery from disasters.

<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=46723>

Wiki to Boost Collaboration at DOD

Contractors will be able to access an external version of a new wiki in early 2009 that the Defense Department launched last month to improve collaboration. The wiki, named DODTechipedia, is designed to improve collaboration among agency scientists, engineers, acquisition personnel and military service members. John Young, undersecretary of Defense at the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Acquisition Technology and Logistics, told Washington Technology that DODTechipedia is similar to the online encyclopedia Wikipedia and the intelligence community site Intellipedia. DOD spends about \$10 billion a year on science and technology. DODTechipedia is available to federal employees and contractors who are registered with the Defense Technical Information Center.

http://www.washingtontechnology.com/print/23_16/33824-1.html

Classification System is Broken Says Report from Homeland Security Advisory Council

The national security classification system at the Department of Homeland Security is "broken," and one of the top ten challenges facing the next Secretary of Homeland Security is to fix it, according to a recent report from the Homeland Security Advisory Council.

http://www.hstoday.us/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=6044&Itemid=193

Report: <http://www.fas.org/irp/agency/dhs/topten.pdf>

VDOT Prepared for Inclement Winter Weather

Despite massive budget cuts announced last month and the widely criticized handling of a February ice storm this year, the Virginia Department of Transportation says it is ready for winter weather. Maintaining last year's staffing levels, the agency has prepared 3,200 crew members and 3,700 pieces of snow removal equipment. It has \$75.8 million set aside to pay for manpower and supplies, about \$5 million less than it had last year. The agency also contracts with private companies to have an additional 4,300 pieces of equipment at the ready. There are 234,000 tons of road salt and 62,000 tons of sand in stock – more salt and less sand than last year. VDOT aims to have all roads passable within 48 hours after a storm ends. Crews begin by clearing interstates, primary roads and major secondary roads that connect important public facilities. Secondary roads and subdivision streets will be treated in case of severe or multi-day storms.

<http://www.fairfaxtimes.com/news/2008/nov/12/vdot-prepares-winter/>

TSA's Full-Body Scanners: How Private for Passengers?

According to Newsweek magazine, "Virtual strip searches' are currently being done using full-body scanners at Los Angeles International, JFK, Baltimore-Washington International, Miami, and many other airports," writes Newsweek "Budget Travel" blogger Sean O'Neill. "Passengers are randomly selected to step into the machines.... But late last week, Germany decided that it would not allow its airports to use full-body scanners," and the machines have sparked protests in Australia. However, the lurid images from the German magazine Der Spiegel reproduced in the Newsweek blog "are not the images that our officers see," wrote "Blogger Bob" of the Transportation Security Administration Eos Blog. TSA uses two "types of passenger imaging technology: backscatter and millimeter wave,"

according to the TSA “Whole Body Imaging” Web page. The TSA “Evolution of Security” blog shows images typical of what TSA security officers see using both technologies.

TSA Whole Body Imaging Web Page: http://www.tsa.gov/approach/tech/body_imaging.shtm

Newsweek article: <http://tinyurl.com/6n8xnm>

TSA Evolution of Security blog: <http://www.tsa.gov/blog/2008/05/which-is-it-millimeter-wave-or.html>

Reprinted from The Weekly Homeland Security Newsletter, Nov. 14, 2008 edition.

Defense Science Board Says Counterterrorism Should Focus on Open-Source Intelligence

The new administration must broaden the scope of its counterterrorism activities, including a focus on collection of domestic and open source intelligence as well as traditional foreign intelligence, that according to the Defense Science Board in a new report, “Defense Imperatives for the New Administration,” as reported by NextGov. “The intelligence community has acknowledged the need to share information and has improved collaboration among agencies, but it’s not enough, the board said.”

http://www.nextgov.com/nextgov/ng_20081106_5296.php?zone=itsecurity

This Police Cruiser Scans License Plates, Sniffs out Dirty Bombs

Hundreds of American police chiefs meeting in San Diego this month couldn’t stop talking about what they’d seen on the convention floor: the world’s first “purpose-built” police car. More “RoboCop” than “Beverly Hills Cop,” the Carbon E7 is a 300-horsepower bio-diesel-fueled bad-guy chaser equipped with sensors for weapons of mass destruction and automatic license-plate scanners. “It’s really a homeland security machine, not a cop car,” says William Li, CEO of Carbon Motors in Atlanta. Faster and “greener” than the standby Crown Victoria Police Interceptor, Carbon Motors’ car is a bold entry for a start-up company challenging an increasingly fragmented auto market. In a wily move to gather engineering ideas and create viral marketing buzz, the company created a “Carbon Council” of nearly 2,000 beat officers across the United States who contributed 88 original ideas to the car – including a “hoseable” rear seat, an extra-wide driver’s seat set into a helicopter cockpit-style front compartment, and side emergency lights to increase visibility and safety. Computer-aided design technology and outsourcing of the drive train have kept development costs low.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/1112/p01s03-usgn.html>

Google Uses Searches to Track Flu’s Spread

Because “a lot of ailing Americans enter phrases like ‘flu symptoms’ into Google and other search engines before they call their doctors,” the Web site has a new early warning system for fast-spreading flu outbreaks, called Google Flu Trends, reports the New York Times. It “may be able to detect regional outbreaks of the flu a week to 10 days before they are reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.... The premise behind Google Flu Trends—what appears to be a fruitful marriage of mob behavior and medicine—has been validated by an unrelated study indicating that the data collected by Yahoo, Google’s main rival in Internet search, can also help with early detection of the flu.... the data collected by search engines is particularly powerful, because the keywords and phrases that people type into them represent their most immediate intentions.... Google Flu Trends avoids privacy pitfalls by relying only on aggregated data that cannot be traced to individual searchers.”

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/12/technology/internet/12flu.html?_r=1&8au&emc=au&oref=slogin

Va. Tech Alert System Fails in First Use

One of four methods Virginia Tech uses to alert students and faculty in an emergency failed on Thursday, Nov. 13, when school administrators attempted to warn the campus about reports of gunfire in a dorm, the university said. This is the first time Virginia Tech has used its new emergency alert system since the April 16, 2007, massacre. That day, a student gunman killed 32 people and himself, and injured more than 20 others in a rampage that began in a dorm and ended in a classroom building. A state report that analyzed the university’s emergency response concluded that lives could have been saved if the university had notified students after the initial dorm room shooting and had locked down the campus. University administrators on Thursday issued a first alert at 1:40 p.m. after Tech police responded to a report of gunfire near the Pritchard Hall dormitory, university spokesman Larry Hincker said. As police searched the dorm, the university posted a message to the university Web page, e-mailed it campuswide, sent it to electronic message boards in classrooms and relayed it to the VT Alerts system, the school said. The VT Alerts

system is designed to send a text or voice message to mobile devices such as cellphones. The VT Alerts system failed to deliver some of the messages, the university said. Two other messages sent later Thursday afternoon to the VT Alerts system also failed, the school said. "The VT Alerts system did not perform as expected," the university said. http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2008-11-13-virginia-tech_N.htm

University of Virginia Notification System Hits Snag

Text messages, e-mails, loud sirens and public address announcements; those are the means of communication University of Virginia officials are depending on in case of an emergency. But what happens when some of those don't work? That's what school leaders are looking at after a system test on Nov. 20. The university's public address system had technical issues during the drill, something school officials say they've taken up with the vendor. Another issue that arose was with the mass e-mail the university tried to send out. The e-mail was sent to about 60,000 people a half-hour after they initially tried to send it. Officials say the IT department is looking into what went wrong there. But at the end of the day, enough went right with the test that leaders say should some sort of catastrophic event hit the University of Virginia, they'll be ready for a team effort. University officials say they'll test the system again, probably in January. They say they're curious to see what impact cold weather could have on the siren system.

<http://www.charlottesvillenevnewsplex.tv/news/headlines/34855789.html>

University of Virginia Office of Emergency Preparedness: <http://www.virginia.edu/emergency/>

Balloons Tested for Emergency Communications

On September 24, a consortium of federal agencies, universities and private companies tested communication payloads on a 75-foot long Army-owned aerostat in Sandusky, OH, reports Government Computer News. GCN reported that tethered blimp-shaped balloons could provide temporary wide-area communications when disaster wipes out fixed towers.

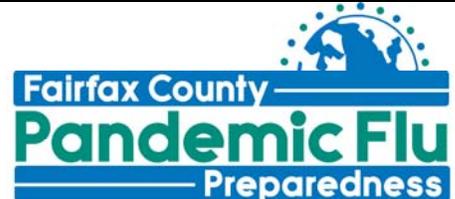
http://www.gcn.com/online/vol1_no1/47583-1.html

PANDEMIC FLU

Fairfax County Pandemic Flu Preparedness

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

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



Has Pandemic Complacency Come Home to Roost?

What impact could pandemic planning fatigue have on other business

continuity activities? Author John Glenn, a business continuity professional, says the H5N1 threat lingers. "Combine migratory fowl, people who literally live with poultry, and modern travel patterns, and the threat remains very real. As business continuity practitioners, we know that are two components to the risk equations – probability and impact."

<http://www.continuitycentral.com/feature0621.html>

Flu Pandemic Overdue

A flu pandemic is overdue, Region of Peel officials are warning residents. It's a matter of when, rather than if, they say. They're urging the community to be ready and prepared since the influenza pandemic may strike any time.

The region last week gathered more than 200 senior public and private sector decision-makers to participate in a pandemic influenza emergency preparedness exercise. Once the virus emerges in another part of the world, it can appear in Canada within three months and spread across the continent in weeks. The conference stressed the need for awareness, preparedness, working together and building strong connections within the community.

<http://www.southasianfocus.ca/community/article/60249>

Would an Influenza Pandemic Qualify as a Major Disaster Under the Stafford Act?

A report published by the Congressional Research Service looks at that question. It reports that although “neither disaster declarations nor congressional appropriations were issued for the 1957 Asian flu pandemic ... which resulted in almost 70,000 deaths in the United States [and] was one of the deadliest catastrophes of its time,”¹² emergency declarations under the Stafford Act in the event of an outbreak of infectious disease are not unprecedented. Further the report notes that in 2000, the detection of West Nile virus in New York and New Jersey was used as the basis of an emergency declaration under the Stafford Act.¹³ Despite the lack of a disaster declaration during the 1957 pandemic, a flu pandemic would likely qualify under the broad category of “any occasion or instance” in the statutory definition of an emergency.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL34724.pdf>

Pandemic Flu Blogs and Web Sites

- **Prepared Citizens** is a blog about pandemic influenza preparedness, with lots of resources, news information and even free graphics like the “Clean Hands, Save Lives” chart at right. According to the site, the blot is exists “to attempt to inform and educate ... the need to prepare for a pandemic of influenza. We enlist and encourage the assistance of fellow citizens and other civic groups for the dissemination of pandemic preparedness information. Prepared Citizens LLC also encourages those prepared citizens to assist those who cannot prepare for themselves. The elderly and the disabled will face additional burdens during a pandemic which may need to be alleviated through a combined effort.”
<http://www.preparedcitizens.org/>
- **Bird Flu Information Corner** is a Weblog developed based on collaboration work between Kobe University, Japan and Institute of Tropical Disease, Airlangga University, Indonesia in bird flu research field. It provides bird flu related information in Indonesia which derived from Indonesia cyber news, local newspapers and also international media such as ProMed and WHO website. All of the information here can be re-directed to the source or references for authentication.
<http://birdflucorner.wordpress.com/>
- **Pandemic Information News**, which is a blog that seems to specialize in computer translations from other languages. It bills itself as the “daily chronicle of ongoing events pertaining to infectious diseases.”
<http://pandemicinformationnews.blogspot.com/>
- **Avian Flu Diary** covers Pandemic Influenza and other emerging infectious diseases with an emphasis on personal preparedness.
<http://afludiary.blogspot.com/>



Malaria One-Two Could Stop Bird Flu

According to the Irish Times newspaper, a researcher at the University College Cork is studying a vaccine that could protect against any form of influenza, including bird flu, informed by earlier work on a two-step anti-malaria vaccine. Researchers working to find a vaccine against the dangerous bird flu virus are borrowing an idea from boxing - that a one-two combination punch can win the day. They have devised a two-step vaccine that should work not just against bird flu but against any form of the influenza virus. A collaborative effort is under way involving researchers from Britain, France, the United States and Ireland, and such a vaccine could possibly be ready for use within three years, explains Dr Anne Moore, who heads the Irish research team. The two-step approach was informed by earlier collaborative work by an international team including UCC, which reported progress towards a promising malaria vaccine in the journal Nature Medicine.

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/sciencetoday/2008/1120/1227026440905.html>

EGYPT: Contingency Planning for an Avian Flu Pandemic

Egypt, the country hit hardest by avian flu in the Middle East, is working on preventative measures to stop a potential human influenza pandemic. The government, the UN World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture

Organization (FAO), and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) have put together a national contingency plan to boost rapid containment procedures, and build capacity to cope with a pandemic. A potential human influenza pandemic could come about if the H5N1 bird flu virus mutates to allow human to human transmission. Training exercises – involving the simulated conditions of a pandemic – are being organized in all 26 governorates.

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/IRIN/693684dbe482055acada1f04c3d493bd.htm>

OIE World Animal Health Information Database

Here's a resource for tracking pandemic flu – including weekly disease information, disease distribution maps, detailed list of countries with disease incidence, etc.

Avian Influenza Web Page: http://www.oie.int/eng/info_ev/en_AI_avianinfluenza.htm

http://www.oie.int/wahis/public.php?page=disease_timelines&disease_type=Terrestrial&disease_id=15&empty=999999

Feds Stage Airport Test of Plan to Slow Pandemic

Officials from several agencies recently converged on Miami's international airport to take part in a full-scale exercise of the federal government's risk-based strategy to slow the spread of a future pandemic influenza virus across US borders. Christine Pearson, a spokeswoman for the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), attended the first day of the 2-day drill on Nov 5 and told CIDRAP News that, unlike previous tabletop discussions to test the risk-based border strategy (RBBS), the exercise at Miami included a real plane and actors who played the role of passengers in an airport setting. The RBBS is a short-term strategy that the federal government will use in the initial states of a pandemic to delay the spread of the virus enough to afford officials a little extra time to educate the public on how to protect themselves from the disease, produce and distribute vaccine, and position medication and supplies, Pearson said. The strategy involves screening international air passengers to gauge if they are sick or have potentially been exposed to others who are sick with the pandemic virus. The system would begin when it's clear that a pandemic influenza virus is spreading globally and would end as soon as the virus begins causing illnesses in the United States.

<http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/influenza/panflu/news/nov1208airport.html>

U.S. International Avian and Pandemic Influenza Assistance Approaches \$950 Million

With the announcement of a new pledge of \$320 million for avian and pandemic influenza assistance, U.S. support to international organizations and to more than 90 countries now totals \$949 million. Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs, Paula Dobriansky, announced the U.S. pledge last month at the International Ministerial Conference on Avian and Pandemic Influenza at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. The conference, organized by the Government of Egypt in cooperation with the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza, has drawn representatives of more than 100 nations and 20 international and regional organizations working together to confront the threat of the disease to human and animal health. The United States is the largest single donor to the collaborative international effort to contain outbreaks of the highly pathogenic avian influenza virus in domestic and wild birds in 62 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Middle East, and to prepare for a potentially devastating global pandemic should the virus mutate to allow human-to-human transmission.

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2008/oct/111241.htm>

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>

FEMA Independent Study Courses

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

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American Red Cross Disaster Services Training

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

Coast Guard Innovation Expo

Nov. 17-20; Virginia Beach, Va.

This year's theme is "Collaboration Fuels Innovation." The conference will cover Joint Capability Technology Demonstration collaboration between the Defense Department and the Coast Guard, Coast Guard modernization, strategy-driven acquisition, and interagency innovation.

<http://www.uscg.mil/innovation/>



Counter IED

Jan. 27-29; Washington, D.C.

This second annual summit, presented by the Institute for Defense and Government Advancement, will present the latest developments and discuss opportunities for industry involvement in programs to counter improvised explosive devices.

<http://www.counteriedsummit.com/ShowEvent.aspx?id=150434>



Biometrics Conference 2009

Jan. 27-28; Arlington, Va.

This National Defense Industrial Association Conference will discuss policy development, existing and planned U.S. government programs, commercial application of biometrics to business goals, enabling technologies, international initiatives, and challenges to interoperability and information

<http://tinyurl.com/6lzs28>

CBRN Defense

Feb. 9-11, 2009; Washington, D.C.

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

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



LINKS

Fairfax County Blogs and Web Resources

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

DHS Science & Technology Directorate Newsletter

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

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

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DHS Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report (OSIR)

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

Fairfax County Government Emergency Information Web Page

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

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/

Fairfax County Government Emergency Information Line

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/opa/infoline.htm



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To Unsubscribe:

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

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

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

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

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

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