



Northwest Regional Technology Center for Homeland Security



Around the Region in Homeland Security

May/June 2008

The Northwest Regional Technology Center (NWRTC) is a virtual resource center, operated by the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL), to support regional preparedness, response, and recovery. The center enables homeland security solutions for emergency responder communities and federal, state, and local stakeholders in the Northwest. This newsletter summarizes activities related to homeland security activities affecting the Pacific Northwest.

This issue highlights

- An agreement among Western states to partner with Northwest national laboratories
- The need to communicate the results of a maritime protection project
- Interdependences in maritime commerce and infrastructure
- Stakeholder recommendations for the Regional Technology Integration Project
- Including private property owners in restoration and recovery efforts.

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States Endorse Concept of Partnering with National Laboratories

Across the nation, state agencies face challenges in homeland security, from choosing the right instrument to detect chemicals and radiation to raising awareness among staff on how to detect and respond to biological and explosive threats. Some challenges are so complex they can only be met by developing new technology and pushing the bounds of science. The stakes, and public expectations, are high, yet state budgets grow ever tighter and U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grants are becoming more competitive.

Ten western states and the Territory of Guam may have found the answer: partner with the regional national laboratories. Adjutant Generals, State Emergency Management Directors, the State Directors of Public Health, and the State Patrol Chiefs from Alaska, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, and Guam met on May 28 in Richland, Washington, to consider how a partnership of multiple states, teamed with national laboratories, could strengthen the collaboration with DHS and better ensure the security of the states. South Dakota has also indicated an interest in participating in the process. The Director of the DHS Domestic Nuclear

Detection Office (DND) and the Deputy Under Secretary for Science and Technology (S&T) were eager to hear what the state participants had to say.

"The national labs have impressive capabilities to help the states find solutions to challenges," said Roger Hieb of the Washington State Emergency Management Division. "The help they can provide goes far beyond what each of us could do individually. This partnership will benefit us all."

“Emergencies and disasters are local and regional events,” added Major General Timothy Lowenberg, Adjutant General for Washington State. “Our first line emergency managers and responders know better than anyone what the challenges are, where the shortcomings exist, and what successful solutions must be embraced. By working with the national labs, the states and territories gain a louder voice with DHS to influence and accelerate impactful, sustainable solutions to homeland security issues.”

Participants discussed recent national lab breakthroughs in biological defense and protection; chemical sensor development, deployment, and response; next-generation information analysis technologies to improve situational awareness; information sharing for field operations; improving protection for first responders; technologies to defend cyberspace; confronting nuclear and explosives threats; and protecting the aquatic environment from contamination. The national labs are uniquely positioned to provide technical guidance to help states choose the best technology for specific situations faced by each state, expertise on how to make the most of existing technology, research on new and emerging technologies, and training in real-world situations. The states are working with the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) and Idaho National Laboratory to further development and implement the partnering concept. Once realized, the concept could serve as a model for other regions.

DNDO Director Encourages Communicating Results of Maritime Project

On May 27, DND Director Vayl Oxford and Huban Gowadia (DND Director for Mission Management) met with staff of the West Coast Maritime Preventative Rad/Nuc Detection (PRND) Pilot Project to discuss progress and address potential issues. The pilot is working with maritime stakeholder agencies to identify effective ways to protect the marine environment from the potential radiation/nuclear threat posed by small maritime craft. Large marine vessels are subject to security regulations under the authority of the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 and the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code; small maritime craft (under 300 gross tons) such as commercial fishing vessels, recreational boats and yachts, towing vessels, and uninspected passenger vessels are not. These vessels could be used to illicitly transport nuclear materials into populated areas.

Project staff agreed with Oxford and Gowadia on the benefits of communicating the pilot's results with the public. Stakeholders also need to cooperate to share resources and work out jurisdictional issues among federal, state, local, tribal, and even international enforcement personnel. For example, the U.S. Coast Guard, Customs and

Border Protection, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police could cooperate in a pilot small vessel PRND enforcement project supporting the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver.

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USCG Looks at Interdependencies

On May 22, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Sector Seattle led a region-wide stakeholder roundtable to discuss how various aspects of maritime commerce interact and depend on each other, including shipping, rail, and trucking transportation. Participants reviewed scenarios depicting potential disruptions to maritime infrastructure and commerce and discussed the steps necessary to restore normal operations. The goal of the roundtable was to better understand threats and risks.

Based on the effort, participants agreed that more work needs to be done in information dissemination to different user groups, communication with the federal government, and understanding broader regional impacts of possible disruptions.

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RTI Project Solicits Stakeholder Recommendations

On May 29, Christopher Doyle (Director, Infrastructure and Geophysical Division, DHS S&T), Larry Skelly (Program Manager, Infrastructure and Geophysical Division), and Lt. Randy Griffin (Dewitt Fire District, New York) met with local representatives of the Regional Technology Integration (RTI) Project to solicit feedback and recommendations for the project, including ideas on future areas of interest.

Barb Graff (Director of Emergency Management, City of Seattle), Robin Friedman (Director, King County Office of Emergency Management), and Kathryn Howard (Program Manager, King County Office of Emergency Management) suggested that DHS programs could be less prescriptive to allow better use of resources. Cities and counties are drowning in maintenance costs and are moving resources away from training to support technology purchases. Solutions need to be self-sustaining.

AD Vickery (Chief, Seattle Fire Department) shared that his main areas of interest are lightweight air supplies, simulation and training, and a three-dimensional locating device for responders.

Joe Huden (Homeland Security Planning, City of Everett Emergency Management) and Dave Dehaan (Assistant Fire Chief, Everett Emergency Management) supported continuing the interconnected emergency operations center project, which they believe encompasses a technology that can be deployed across the country.

Bill Schrier (Chief Technology Officer, City of Seattle) recommended conducting a programmatic review of RTI, reviewing the assessment from 4 years ago because so many things have changed (technology, price of gasoline, etc.).

Several participants expressed their appreciation to DHS S&T for their support of the project and for the way PNNL coordinated the work. Doyle and his colleagues will consider the recommendations as they decide the next steps on the project.

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IBRD to Empower Private Property Owners

Under the Integrated Biological Restoration Demonstration (IBRD) Project, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency seeks to determine optimized approaches to help define the roles and responsibilities of private property owners and aid in the restoration of critical functionality following a biological release in an urban area. Some of the types of private property being considered are commercial real estate and building management companies, grocery and retail stores, banking institutions, private hospitals and medical clinics, retirement housing, and private housing. Researchers at PNNL will partner with the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) to work with regional property owners in the Seattle Urban Area in determining the need for a community resiliency plan and appropriate toolkit to empower private property owners to participate in the recovery and restoration process.

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Upcoming Events

July 8 -11, 2008

Washington Fire Chiefs HAZMAT Conference

Coast Wenatchee Center Hotel, Wenatchee, Washington

July 10, 2008

Meeting with Oregon State Public Safety and Emergency Management to discuss the Regional Homeland Security Partnership

Salem, OR

July 15 - 17, 2008

IBRD Planning Meetings with multi-agencies and regional stakeholders

Alexandria, Virginia

Aug 12 -14, 2008

IBRD Private Sector Resiliency Workshops

PNNL Seattle Office

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Around the Region in Homeland Security is a monthly report from the Northwest Regional Technology Center, operated by the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. The goal of the NWRTC is to bring together major stakeholders from across the region that have a vested interest in homeland security issues and provide a collaborative environment that addresses Northwest regional homeland security requirements, needs, and challenges. For more information, contact Director Steve Stein at steve.stein@pnl.gov or 206-528-3340, Deputy Director Mary Peterson at mary.peterson@pnl.gov or 509-372-4655, or see the website at <http://nwrtc/pnl.gov>.