



Around the Region in Homeland Security September 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 monthly status report summarizes activities related to Homeland Security in the Pacific Northwest, and this issue highlights

- Workshops on the role of the private sector businesses and property owners in disaster restoration and recovery
- Northwest input to the White House Homeland Security Council
- Availability of a report on dealing with a potential catastrophic biological event.

The Role of Private Sector Businesses and Property Owners in Disaster Restoration and Recovery

August 12 - 14, 2008, private sector business owners and property owners met in a series of workshops at PNNL's Seattle Offices to discuss their roles in a disaster. The workshops were sponsored by the Interagency Biological Restoration Demonstration (IBRD), a joint program between the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA). The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER) teamed with PNNL to organize the meetings.



**Pacific NorthWest
Economic Region**

The objectives of the meetings were to assess private sector readiness to restore property and recover business operations that could be affected by a disaster in the Seattle urban area and to understand what private property owners and businesses need to support recovery and restoration from a disaster such as anthrax. The hope was to help identify measures that could increase community resiliency. The information shared during the workshops will be used by DTRA and DHS to support the development of guidance or other resources to enhance the ability of the private sector to recover and restore operations after such a disaster.

The three workshops targeted property owners, critical service providers, and large and mid-size private businesses. To prepare for the workshop, coordinators conducted pre-workshop interviews to determine what participants wanted as outcomes. Businesses, property owners, and critical service providers hoped to improve public-private sector communications and information sharing, determine how to standardize procedures and training, understand how to manage client and public expectations, identify best practices, and coordinate with key stakeholders.



Participants represented the building community such as building owners, building service providers, and commercial and residential real estate managers; major Northwest industry such as Boeing, Safeco Insurance, Costco, Premera Blue Cross, United Grocers, Port of Seattle, and Unigard; and the service sector, such as transit, railway, medical services, and power, sewer, and water providers. After hearing an overview of the IBRD program and a scenario involving anthrax, they discussed the major concerns regarding the ability to recover from a biological disaster and restore property and normal business operations. They then prioritized these concerns and discussed what might be needed to address the top issues.

For private business, the top concerns involved lack of planning guidance, inconsistent messaging from multiple sources, confusion over how recovery priorities are set, limited remediation resources, and indemnification and liability issues. Building owners and managers were most concerned about how to plan for remediation, communications issues, information on how to access federal support, and financial viability issues. Critical service providers were most concerned about communications, worker safety, and command and control issues.

The workshops captured significant information for the IBRD program and identified several areas where opportunities can enhance resilience. Participants indicated that the discussion were valuable and had enhanced their thinking on preparedness. The DHS and DTRA representatives praised the PNNL team and their PNWER and other partners for organizing and conducting the workshop. PNNL is currently drafting the workshop report, which will be vetted with participants. The results of the workshops will help DHS and DTRA develop solutions that are responsive to the top concerns of each group.

The report from the workshop is now available for free on the NWRTC website at http://nwrtp.pnl.gov/docs/anthrax_symposium_report.pdf. The report shares insights from the key presenters as well as implications to the economy, public health, and medical services from a potential catastrophic biological event. The report also offers a decision-making framework for recovery.

Upcoming Events

October 9, 2008

Regional Workshop on Federal Support for Restoration and Recovery from Disasters
Seattle Convention Center



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

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