



## **Around The Region In Homeland Security April 2010**

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 newsletter summarizes activities related to homeland security in the Pacific Northwest, and this issue highlights

- A workshop on how social media can be used in emergency response
- Successful completion of additional security measures for the 2010 Winter Olympics
- Requirements gathering in Montana for an innovative emergency response platform
- An opportunity for a master's degree in homeland security.

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### **Agencies Look at Social Media for Emergency Response**

On March 10, over 100 representatives from federal, state, and local government agencies; the private sector; and the news media met to share case studies, learn from research, and participate in demonstrations of social media tools used for emergency response.

Glen Woodbury of the Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Homeland Defense and Security laid out a decision framework for the use of social media tools, ranging from suppressing tool use within an agency to adapting or adopting the tools to designing tools that specifically address agency needs. James Graybeal, Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications and Director of Public Affairs, North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command, stressed the importance of differentiating the information chain and chain of command to be successful in joining the social media conversation. Other themes include the following:

- Trust – in data, in the public, in the government – is critical for social media tools to be useful.

- The public will use social media in an emergency. Agencies must determine how best to enter the conversation, preferably before the emergency so that trust can be built.
- The public appears to value timeliness over accuracy, particularly in an emergency. As one participant stated, "The public wants information, and they want it now!" Elaborate information release procedures may not be needed or advisable for social media applications.

A report describing the workshop will be available soon to participants and on the NWRTC website.

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### **Northwest Agencies Successfully Complete Olympics Security**

On March 1, after 17 days of operations, regional law enforcement completed their additional security measures for the 2010 Winter Olympics. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO) had deployed preventive radiation/nuclear detection gear to the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office, Washington State Patrol, and Customs and Border Protection for the

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event. The equipment included personal radiation detectors (PRDs) and Radiation Isotope Identification Devices (RIIDs).

During the Olympics, the officers gained an appreciation as to how they can incorporate such tools into existing operations. The training before the Olympics and the practice in using the equipment will assist the region in building an enduring capability in preventive rad/nuc detection.

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## Virtual USA Pilot Gathers Requirements in Montana

March 15 through 17, Montana emergency response agencies, their information technology specialists, and their grants analysts met with DHS staff to gain a better understanding of the project to pilot the Virtual USA technology across the region. Virtual USA is a platform that allows organizations to more seamlessly interact during emergencies. Meeting participants had been given a workbook to help define requirements for this type of technology; meeting activities were designed to help complete the workbook.

The objectives of the meeting were to gain a shared understanding of how operations, technical personnel, needs, capabilities, and resources interconnect; conduct a high-level walk-through of the operational requirements; and begin inventorying the technology (hardware, software, systems, and data) residing in the Montana emergency response community. Participants also collected and reviewed information needed to map business processes.

By the end of the meeting, the Montana participants had identified additional information needed to complete the workbook, responsibilities for next steps, and a timeline with milestones. The results of

the meeting will also help improve requirements gathering in the coming weeks with other states participating in the pilot.

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## Master's Degree Program Applications Due May 1

DHS and the Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Homeland Defense and Security offer an 18-month master's degree program in homeland security to eligible senior and fast-rising local, state, tribal, and federal officials with significant responsibilities in homeland security and related disciplines. The program requires participants to be in-residence only 2 weeks each quarter. The rest of the coursework is delivered via distance learning.

All travel and tuition expenses are paid for eligible participants. The next deadline for application is May 1; applications are available [online](#). Several Northwest homeland security leaders have already graduated from the program.

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## Upcoming Events

May 2-5  
7<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management ([ISCRAM2010](#))  
Seattle

June 2 & 3  
IBRD project tabletop exercise on regional response and recovery plans  
Seattle

June 21-24  
[4<sup>th</sup> Annual UASI Conference](#)  
New Orleans

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*Around the Region in Homeland Security* is a monthly report from PNNL's Northwest Regional Technology Center for Homeland Security. For more information, contact Director Steve Stein at [steve.stein@pnl.gov](mailto:steve.stein@pnl.gov) or 206-528-3340, Deputy Director Ryan Eddy at [ryan.eddy@pnl.gov](mailto:ryan.eddy@pnl.gov) or 509-372-6622, or Deputy Director Regional Programs Ann Lesperance at [ann.lesperance@pnl.gov](mailto:ann.lesperance@pnl.gov) or 206-528-3223, or see the website at <http://nwrwc.pnl.gov>.

