Around the Region in Homeland Security
September 2007

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, including Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Alaska.

This issue highlights

- Small Maritime Vessel Rad/Nuc Detection pilot program in Puget Sound
- Demonstration of Interconnected EOC pilot
- Region’s approach to interoperable communications grants
- Regional input to an interagency program on recovering from a biological attack
- Launch of the Northwest Regional Technology Center website.

Puget Sound Chosen to Pilot Small Maritime Vessel Rad/Nuc Detection

On September 5, the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO) announced that it had selected Puget Sound and the San Diego area for the West Coast Maritime pilot program. The 3-year program involves the development of a radiation detection architecture to reduce the risk of radiological and nuclear threats that could be illegally transported on recreational or small commercial vessels. The pilot will be coordinated with the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

DNDO plans to invest approximately $10M in the pilot program, leveraging existing federal grant funding to support small vessel radiation detection programs and procure recommended equipment. The goal of the program is to evaluate the efficacy and begin to facilitate the use of radiation detection equipment, such as human-portable detectors, mobile sensors, and fixed-position detectors, among local authorities and maritime partners as part of routine operations.

Initial assessment activities began in July. DNDO is working with maritime partners and local authorities to assess the geographic configurations of the ports to maximize detection
and interdiction opportunities. Additional analyses will include a baseline survey of the existing radiological and nuclear detection capabilities, a gap and risk assessment, and associated recommendations. Maritime stakeholders will also receive guidance from DNDO on operational protocols, training, and exercises that support small vessel radiation detection capabilities.

PNNL will support development of a Conduct of Operations, technology acquisition, and technology insertion, as well as training. Bill Peterson of PNNL is the Project Manager.

**Interconnected EOC Pilot Demonstrated**

On August 15, the initial pilot system for the interconnected emergency operations centers (EOCs) was demonstrated in Seattle to emergency response managers from the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) and the state. The system allows EOCs for various jurisdictions to share and combine geographic information system data and collaborate in adding incident information, providing a common operating picture.

Attendees at the demonstration provided input that the software interface was easy to use and that the system allowed data to be shared quickly and more easily than in current methods. Attendees also recognized that this was a preliminary concept and approach based on prior meetings in the region. Still, regional emergency managers were very pleased with the direction and impact of this initial effort. A more advanced version of the system will be demonstrated in October 2007.
Region Proposes Candidates for Interoperable Communications Grants

The Puget Sound Regional Interoperability Executive Committee met at PNNL’s Seattle offices in August to identify potential projects that the region could put forward for the Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant Program. This one-time program through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (U.S. Department of Commerce) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) provides funding to states and territories to enable and enhance interoperable communications for public safety agencies. Grant applications are due mid-September and will be evaluated by Washington State as well.

The committee brainstormed criteria to be used to rate potential projects and discussed which projects it might submit or endorse as a region. Part of the discussion centered on the Washington State Communications Interoperability Plan, which is under development. A statewide plan is required to receive future DHS grants as well as the PSIC grant.

Washington hopes to use portions of the interoperable communications plan being developed under the Regional Technology Initiative (RTI) through the Naval Space and Warfare Center (SPAWAR). The state plan includes discussion of the Multi-Agency Coordination System, participating agencies and points of contact, and a current assessment of the governance structure, technologies, standard operating procedures, training and exercise plans, and usage around the state. Also included is a strategy to gain interoperability for compliance with the National Incident Management System. State planners recognized that UASI and regional support is critical to developing and implementing a robust plan.

The region expects to submit several projects for consideration for the grants.

Region Provides Input to IBRD Baseline

The Interagency Biological Restoration Demonstration (IBRD) effort conducted two workshops with regional stakeholders in August to further develop the baseline assessment of current regional capabilities. The IBRD Project is a joint effort with the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, DHS, the UASI, and the Washington State Military Department to develop protocols, procedures, and plans to recover from a biological attack.

One workshop focused on the civilian organizations, the other on military organizations. Although participants at both workshops provided some interesting insights to the project team, it became clear that there is significant confusion about the scope of the program and the final deliverable. Team Management is reviewing feedback from these sessions and considering measures to address the issues.
Northwest Regional Technology Center Launches Website

The Northwest Regional Technology website is now live! The website includes information on the center’s objectives, staff, projects and demonstrations, workshops, and collaborations. Also included is a calendar of events of training, demonstrations, and exercises related to homeland security activities and links to other homeland security agencies at the federal, state, and local levels. For more information, see http://nwrtc.pnl.gov/

Upcoming Events

September 28, 2007
IBRD Joint Civilian and Military Workshop
Seattle

October 15 - 17
Top Officials (TOPOFF) Full-Scale Exercise 4
Oregon Metro Area

October 29 – November 3
Washington State Annual Bioterrorism Exercise (WASABE) IX
Spokane and Washington State Homeland Security Region 9

Late October or early November
RTI Demonstration on the Interconnected EOC
Seattle

Around the Region in Homeland Security is a monthly status 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.