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. This newsletter summarizes homeland security activities affecting the Pacific Northwest, and this issue highlights:

- Background radiation surveys in Puget Sound
- Efforts to raise awareness among the news media about catastrophic events
- Nuclear detection technology testing at the Port of Tacoma
- Upcoming demonstration of emergency communications.

**Background Radiation Surveys Piloted in Puget Sound**

In June, stakeholders around Puget Sound worked with PNNL and the Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL) to conduct nearly 100 background radiation surveys on small maritime craft and at marinas and other locations. The Battelle Research Vessel *Strait Science* completed the mapping of 15 harbor areas and selected connecting waterways. Understanding existing radiation levels (the background) in the area is critical to identifying when a new source of radiation appears on the scene. Such a source may be legitimate, or it may represent the incursion of terrorists into U.S. waters.

The work was conducted as part of the Small Vessel Preventative Rad/Nuc Detection Pilot Project sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO) and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). Stakeholders involved in the project include DHS Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Seattle Fire Department, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Seattle Police Department, Port of Seattle, Bainbridge Island Police Department, Washington Department of Health, Port of Everett, Port Orchard Police Department, and Washington State...
Patrol, among others. The surveys caught the eye of the news media and resulted in two articles: in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* on June 14 and in the *Sequim Gazette* on June 25.

On June 24, the Area Maritime Security Committee’s Ad Hoc Subcommittee for the pilot met to discuss the surveys and next steps in implementing results. One outcome of the work is the provision of radiation surveying equipment to various stakeholders. DNDO has begun the procurement process for human-portable equipment and is coordinating with the USCG Integrated Support Command Seattle for delivery. Once the equipment has been processed in Seattle, it will be distributed to the various stakeholder agencies. Records of equipment transfer will be recorded, and PNNL and DNDO will maintain copies for official records. The equipment comes with 3 years of maintenance support.

Each agency is developing standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the equipment, working from a template developed by PNNL based on existing USCG and CBP SOPs. The Whatcom County Sheriff and Bainbridge Island Police Departments have SOPs drafted. PNNL is working with other agencies to complete the SOPs, which will include the following information:

- Agency/organization documentation requirements
- Authority to detain (the agency’s perspective on its authority and limitations)
- Process to follow when other priorities prevent immediate response to an alert
- Public affairs guidance
- Safety issues (weather limits, boat operations, etc.)
- Interagency communications and notifications.

A report of survey results and development of SOPs will be completed in August.

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**Media Learns Science Behind Recovery from Catastrophic Events**

Recovering from a biological attack would be a complex endeavor with many health and safety issues. Restoring commerce and recovering economically from an attack that impacts multiple jurisdictions and the regional economic engine of Western Washington would be a daunting task. Any such attack would receive intense and prolonged coverage from local, regional, national, and international media. To better prepare for the interactions necessary to inform the public and to establish a working relationship with media, the Interagency Biological Restoration Demonstration (IBRD) program is reaching out to local and regional media.

The first element of this effort was a workshop for selected media representatives, which was held on June 26 in Seattle. Members of the news media included representatives from print and broadcast journalism as well as online reporters and bloggers. Participants were briefed on the IBRD program and the threat and impacts of the release of a biological agent, in this case weaponized anthrax. They were also given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the issues with local emergency managers and public information officers. The workshop’s goal was to create a dialogue between responders and the news media that will increase understanding of the issues by both groups and establish a national best practice in media engagement.

Results of the workshop will be included in an update to the IBRD Consequence Management Plan, which guides agencies in how to respond during a wide-spread biological attack. The plan will be distributed to emergency managers in the region.
Nuclear Detection Technology Tested at Tacoma Rail Test Center

CBP has an FY08 congressional mandate to evaluate crane-mounted radiation detection technologies (i.e., spreader bar technology). The spreader bar, which is attached to a crane, lifts and moves shipping containers directly off an incoming ship at U.S. sea ports. CBP issued a Request for Information (RFI) to identify manufacturers of this type of system that were interested in having their systems tested at an operational seaport (RFI2008). Two vendors were selected for evaluation, both of which had a fully operational prototype or commercially available technology.

The first vendor’s technology was evaluated in June at the Rail Test Center (RTC) at the Port of Tacoma. CBP, in consultation with DNDO which manages the RTC, selected a crane at the Husky Terminal to conduct the evaluation. The testing was conducted during off-peak (non-discharge) times to minimize disruptions to operations. A number of technical, logistical, and institutional challenges arose that required the test team to remain flexible and innovative to complete testing on time. The evaluation of the second vendor’s technology is scheduled for July, also at the Husky Terminal.

DNDO has contracted PNNL to be the RTC site manager. The PNNL RTC staff supported this important CBP-led test and was responsible for logistics support including acting as the primary liaison to the port in resolving issues as they arose.

DNDO established the RTC in May 2007 at the Port of Tacoma to evaluate technology and concepts of operations for radiation detection that will scan cargo at various points in transfer from ship to rail. DHS will identify and evaluate radiological and nuclear detection solutions for intermodal rail port facilities that can be used across the country, including scanning cargo on the dock, during transport to the rail yard, entering the rail yard, in the container storage stack, during train assembly, and as the train leaves the port. The Port of Tacoma fulfills the requirements mandated by Section 121(i) of the SAFE Port Act of 2006. The Port of Tacoma is a publicly owned facility and the seventh largest container port in North America – handling more than 70% of its total import cargo volume by rail at multiple intermodal rail terminals.

In addition to supporting the spreader bar test, the RTC team is working with DNDO and CBP to develop operational requirements for the on-dock rail environment and evaluating the potential use of a straddle carrier portal for on-dock rail applications. As DNDO’s site lead, PNNL is responsible for the overarching coordination function, establishing the RTC, all aspects of standing up specific test sites at the port, and conducting the initial test campaigns (Phase I) to evaluate operational impact and concept of operations.
INL Teams to Test Emergency Communications

In early September 2008, the Idaho National Guard, Idaho National Laboratory (INL), and Qualcomm Incorporated will team to demonstrate mobile communications for emergency operations. The team will connect the Idaho National Guard’s Joint Incident Site Communications Capability (JISCC) with an improvised wireless E911 Public Safety Answering Point. This answering point manages emergency calls (i.e., 911) to ensure that people in distress receive help. The answering point thus provides a mobile emergency operations center to areas devastated by disaster. With this capability, the Idaho National Guard could provide emergency communications and full use of cellular communications. The demonstration will include transmission of voice, data, and pictures/video.

The JISCC supports state, local, federal, or tribal governments when called upon by the Governor of Idaho during a natural disaster or terrorist attack. The capability offers a robust communications system for first responders that supplements the existing communications infrastructure or replaces any of that infrastructure damaged in the event. It includes all of the components necessary for managing a crisis in an emergency operations center. The current configuration of the JISCC doesn’t provide for operation of the Public Safety Answering Point if both the regular public switch telephone system and the cellular communications networks are not functioning. In other words, if the local Public Safety Answering Point is damaged, destroyed, or evacuated, people in distress (calling 911 on a cell phone) cannot be linked with the dispatch function for fire, medical, law enforcement, or other emergency services.

INL invites all interested first responders, National Guard personnel, or emergency operations management personnel to view the demonstration. Contact Curtis Papke at (208) 526-4329, cell (208) 360-0208, or curtis.papke@inl.gov for more information.

Upcoming Events

Aug 12 -14, 2008
IBRD Private Sector Resiliency Workshops
PNNL Seattle Office

September 16 -18, 2008
Washington State Emergency Management Association Conference
Quinault Beach Resort and Casino, Ocean Shores, Washington

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 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.