



Around the Region in Homeland Security August 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. This newsletter summarizes homeland security activities affecting the Pacific Northwest, and this issue highlights:

- Installation of software to interconnect emergency operations centers
- Ways to link public health and chemical/biological research
- An opportunity to develop emergency response technology through an innovative program
- How the region is helping set research agendas.

iEOCs Being Installed Around the Region

One of the projects being implemented under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology (DHS S&T) Infrastructure and Geophysical Division's Regional Technology Integration (RTI) Program is developing and deploying an integrated set of prototype functions to improve interconnectivity among emergency operations centers (EOCs) in the Seattle Urban Area. The need for interconnected EOCs (iEOCs) was recognized early on, when it became apparent that situational information wasn't easily shared among area EOCs. Based on guidance from area emergency managers, researchers developed a software system compatible with a commonly used EOC information management system, WebEOC. The new software allows information to be pulled from various sources, including WebEOC, and portrayed in a common geographic visual representation. The information can be selectively shared with other EOCs to improve situational awareness and anticipate and respond to needs in the field.

The prototype system was first demonstrated on October 19, 2007, at the King County EOC. The system has since been modified based on feedback from several successive demonstrations. Beginning in September and October, the completed system will be installed in the Pierce, King, and Snohomish county EOCs, Seattle and Everett city EOCs, and the U.S. Coast Guard Joint Harbor Operations Center and potentially in Bellevue, Washington. Emergency staff will also be trained on its use.

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DHS Program Manager Hopes to Enhance Links to Public Health

On July 17, DHS Program Manager Jim Anthony traveled to the Pacific Northwest to review a multi-lab bioassay development project that is led by PNNL and includes collaboration with Los Alamos National Laboratory and Idaho National Laboratory. Anthony leads several DHS programs focused on the development of near-term and next-generation bioassays for the Chemical and Biological Division in DHS S&T.

Anthony expressed interest in learning about additional ways public health organizations can team with DHS to support homeland security activities and specifically how to enhance linkages between the DHS chemical and biological research programs and public health laboratories. Currently any bioassays developed by his program are tested and evaluated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for possible deployment to the Laboratory Response Labs.

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Region Emergency Responders May Benefit from STOC Program

On July 22, PNNL staff briefed emergency managers from Pierce County, Bellevue, and Port of Seattle and staff from the Washington Joint Analytic Center on the Support to Operational Components (STOC) program, which is funded through the DHS S&T's Command, Control, and Interoperability Division. The STOC program identifies needs of responder organizations and works to transition analysis and visualization technology for use in DHS components and DHS-supported agencies.

Researchers discussed the idea for a tool to give incident commanders situation awareness that is context-specific (e.g., geospatial-sensitive, relevant for event type, currently impacting weather, etc.) and can automatically pull together event-relevant information in desired formats, send the information only to those who have need for or are impacted by it, and be easily adaptable by the user organization for different event types and locations.

Attendees shared that they needed technology or other solutions that would enable them to do the following:

- Find and view relationships among information contained and visualized in multiple analytic tools for intelligence analysis. The Washington State Fusion Center, for instance, uses multiple analytic and visualization tools, all of which have different capabilities and which may each use different, though overlapping, data.
- Make the best use of human analysis capabilities when using analytic tools.
- Triage and prioritize calls, information, and reports in an emergency.
- Accelerate access to information and thus accelerate response.
- Provide a high-level summary for an EOC manager of complex, voluminous information relevant for an event.

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Regional Homeland Security Partnership Moves Forward in Follow-Up Meeting with State of Oregon

The Regional Homeland Security Partnership first shared with 11 western states, DHS, and the U.S. Department of Energy national laboratories at the Homeland Security Summit in May took another step forward in July. Only July 10, Major General Rees, the Adjutant General for the State of Oregon, arranged for PNNL staff to provide a briefing on this partnership and the capabilities that exist at the national laboratories to a broad group from the Oregon emergency response community.

The briefing was held in Salem, Oregon, and over 20 representatives from the state Department of Emergency Management, the Military Department, State Patrol, Association of Chiefs of Police, fusion center, public health, emergency response, information security, information technology, and Department of Administrative Services participated. They were very engaged in the discussions and in moving this partnership forward. One of the advantages that they noted regarding this partnership was the ability to share information and gain access to technical resources. PNNL came away with a number of follow-on tasks that will continue the discussions, identify specific actions where the labs can demonstrate value and contributions, and truly advance the partnership with Oregon as well as with the broader Northwest states.

Upcoming Events

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

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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://nwrtp/pnl.gov>.