



Around the Region in Homeland Security November 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

- The results of a workshop on the federal-state-local interface during emergencies
- A recent audit of a pilot to protect Puget Sound from threats born by small vessels
- The Northwest's contribution to border agent training.

Workshop Delves into Federal-State-Local Interfaces During Emergencies

On October 9, 2008, federal, state, and local policy makers, emergency managers, and medical and public health officials convened in Seattle for a workshop to address the federal-state-local interfaces during catastrophic events like an anthrax attack. The day-long interactive workshop was sponsored by the Interagency Biological Restoration Demonstration (IBRD), a collaborative regional program jointly funded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). The IBRD program seeks to develop policies, methods, plans, and applied technologies to restore large urban areas, DoD installations, and critical infrastructures following the release of a biological agent.

Some of the issues that have frequently been raised by local emergency management personnel regarding recovery from a catastrophic event, such as an anthrax attack, have been the role, responsibilities, and interfaces between the federal government and state and local authorities. Some of the questions asked include the following:

- What is the role of each of the federal agencies (nationally and locally)?
- How do federal agencies support command and control?
- How are federal agency roles coordinated with one another at the federal level?

- What would Stafford Act assistance and non-Stafford Act assistance look like from the federal government during the recovery period after a wide-scale, largely unprecedented event?

The objective of the October workshop was to clarify and share information about the federal government's role during a catastrophic event. Approximately 90 people registered for the workshop. Pre-workshop interviews with key participants identified a set of topics for the workshop and the beginnings of a diagram depicting a concept of operations during an emergency.

At the workshop, Rear-Admiral John Currier of the U.S. Coast Guard provided insight into his role as the Principal Federal Official (PFO) in the region for a catastrophic event. His focus is on interfacing with the Secretary for Homeland Security and other federal agencies. He stressed that federal agencies do not come in and act at the point of service delivery unless the state government and local government cannot provide essential services.

The remainder of the day was focused on interactive discussions among federal, state, and local emergency management experts in the areas of decision-making, prioritization, and command and control; public health and medical services; and community resiliency and continuity of government. That discussion centered around the following key topics and issues:

- Whether there is a need for local representation in the Joint Field Office (JFO)
- How the JFO transitions to the Long-Term Recovery Office
- How needs are prioritized, by whom, and how the federal/military process might intervene
- The process used for regional coordination
- How limited resources are allocated
- The importance of maintaining a healthy hospital system
- The need for a process to establish a consensus, across all jurisdictions including the military, on when it is safe to re-enter a formerly contaminated area
- Insurance coverage for both private businesses and individuals
- Interaction between the government and industry.



Participants suggested that the IBRD project hold another workshop to make sure that all local jurisdictions and state agencies share a common definition of the unified command and area command structures. Local organizations also discussed creating a collective process for developing a unified voice and setting priorities for the emergency management community. A summary report of the workshop is being created and will be sent to all participants soon.

borders. The course work, led by PNNL's subject matter experts, has evolved over the years and currently includes information on chemical, biological, special nuclear



Bill Cliff of PNNL explains to CBP agents the potential threats they may face and how to respond.

materials, and other types of radiological materials, the threats a CBP officer or agent would be most likely to encounter today. The training is hosted in Richland at the HAMMER training facility, which offers training support in transportation security, border security, hazardous materials, and weapons of mass destruction, as well as emergency management and response at all levels of government and the private sector. HAMMER is an extraordinary facility featuring an extensive line of life-sized training props. Using the props, students train in a

controlled environment, eliminating dangerous situations often found during on-the-job training. Approximately 3,300 CBP officers and agents have been trained as of August 2008.

Upcoming Events

January 8, 2009

Homeland Security Lecture Series: Admiral David Stone
PNNL Richland Campus, Washington

February 23-26, 2009

DHS Science and Technology Directorate's Stakeholders Conference West
Meydenbauer Center, Bellevue, Washington



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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