



Around The Region In Homeland Security April 2009

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

- How the Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Program is helping prepare for emergencies
- Multichannel radios being piloted in the Northwest
- A former Under Secretary's thoughts on the nation's expanding perspective in homeland security.

RCPP Helps Seattle Region to Prepare for Catastrophes

Seattle and the surrounding region form one of the ten highest-risk urban areas eligible for a federally funded grant program supporting catastrophic event planning. Under these grants, eight Washington counties are working together through the Regional Catastrophic Planning Program to address shortcomings in existing plans, build regional planning processes and communities, and link operational and capabilities-based planning with resource allocation.

The Regional Catastrophic Planning Team is made up of representatives from state, local, and Tribal governments; the Metropolitan Medical Response System; the Citizen Corps; and the private sector. The team reports to the Seattle Urban Area Security Initiative Working Group. To enhance regional planning, the team is focusing on two scenarios:

- **Catastrophic earthquake** – a shallow-crust earthquake along the Seattle Fault
- **Biological weapons attack** in the form of a mass-aerosolized anthrax attack in the Seattle core (similar to what is being considered for the Interagency Biological Restoration Demonstration project sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security [DHS] and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency in the Seattle region).

Team member agencies are working to accomplish the following:

- Inventory Puget Sound region emergency plans, identify gaps, and develop mechanisms to achieve regional readiness for a **Regional Coordination Plan**
- Develop a **Regional Transportation Recovery Plan** for a multi-jurisdictional transportation system

Puget Sound RCP Region	
State of Washington	
Counties Included	Principal Cities Included
Island County	Oak Harbor
King County	Bellevue, Kent, Renton, Seattle
Kitsap County	Bremerton
Mason County	Shelton
Pierce County	Tacoma
Skagit County	Mount Vernon
Snohomish County	Everett
Thurston County	Olympia

- Develop a comprehensive region-wide **Resource Management and Logistics Plan** with a strategy for resource sharing, staging, and deployment that considers critical infrastructure limitations and vulnerabilities
- Catalog, coordinate, and plan **regional evacuation and sheltering** efforts, emphasizing high-risk populations, and develop a **regional volunteer and donation management plan**
- Develop a comprehensive strategic **Regional Structural Collapse Rescue Plan** to facilitate an effective and efficient response to structural collapse incidents
- Develop a comprehensive catastrophic **Mass Casualty Incident plan** that addresses field triage, treatment, and transportation needs from first alarm through the emergency medical and hospital system
- Develop a **regional disaster victim patient evacuation and tracking plan** for long-term care facilities to serve as a model for regional partners
- Develop a **Regional Victim Information and Family Assistance Plan** to meet informational and services needs during and after a mass casualty/fatality event
- Develop messages and materials for a **Regional Public Preparedness Campaign** for catastrophic events.

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DHS to Test Multichannel Radios in Northwest

The DHS Science and Technology Directorate’s Command, Control, and Interoperability Division is making multichannel radios available to Pacific Northwest agencies to test the technology for use in emergency response. Currently emergency response radio communication crosses several frequency bands, but each radio only operates in a single band. As a result, state and local response agencies must use a variety of techniques to maintain communications with emergency response agencies and support units such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, National Guard, and U.S. Coast Guard. While some agencies swap or share radios, others employ time-consuming methods to exchange information, including relaying messages through dispatchers or using runners to hand-carry messages.

The multiband radios, developed by Thales Communications, enable emergency responders to communicate with partner agencies regardless of the radio band. The radios can operate on all the emergency response frequencies, including the primary public safety bands, Department of Defense bands, and other federal bands. The radios can be programmed in the middle of operations and can encrypt both voice and data transmissions.

The Northwest pilot is part of a national effort to test and evaluate the radios. These pilots will focus on testing radio operations across multiple systems — analog, conventional, digital, etc., as well as multiple agencies including local, tribal, state, federal, and military. A limited number of the radios will be available in Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, and Washington, as well as Vancouver, British Columbia, for operational testing in the coming months.



Former DHS Under Secretary Advocates New Perspective on Homeland Security

George Foresman sees a new day coming for homeland security. The former DHS Under Secretary for Preparedness provided insights into the next stage of homeland security at the PNNL Homeland Security Lecture Series on March 25. He stressed that in the early years of DHS the focus was on “gates, guards, and guns.” This short-term perspective is giving way to a longer-term focus for a more holistic approach to homeland security.

“We’re beginning to understand that homeland security is a complex problem that requires complex solutions,” Foresman said. “It’s about the role of local, state, and federal governments and the private sector. These are all different perspectives, and we need them all at the table. Being proactive is much better than being reactive.”



Foresman is currently President of Highland Risk & Crisis Solutions, Ltd., a firm that assists businesses in understanding and mitigating domestic and international risks. Previously he served as the first Under Secretary of Preparedness and subsequently became the first Under Secretary for National Protection and Programs, before leaving DHS in May 2007. As the number three official at DHS he led efforts to harmonize national readiness through the creation of integrated all-hazards domestic prevention, protection, response and recovery capabilities. Mr. Foresman is a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute and the Virginia Executive Institute. He is the recipient of numerous awards including the Secretary of Homeland Security Achievement Award, United States Coast Guard Distinguished Public Service Award, and the Director’s Award from the United States Secret Service.

Upcoming Events

May 4-8, 2009

Small Maritime Craft Radiation/Nuclear Detection Exercises
Puget Sound

May 26-28, 2009

Pacific Northwest Regions Sixth Annual Cross Border Public Health Surveillance and Response Workshop
Sheraton Wall Centre, Vancouver, B.C.

May 27-29, 2009

Montana Infrastructure Protection Alliance Conference
Whitefish, Montana

May 28-29, 2009

Maritime and Port Security Summit
Bell Harbor Conference Center, Seattle

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://nwrtec.pnl.gov>.

