



## **Around The Region In Homeland Security December 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 newsletter summarizes activities related to homeland security in the Pacific Northwest, and this issue highlights

- A new website where state and local agencies can provide input on long-term disaster recovery
- Washington and Oregon's response to a possible pilot of a multi-state information sharing platform
- The confirmation of a new homeland security Under Secretary for Science and Technology
- A new report on pandemic planning for law enforcement.

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### **DHS/HUD Seek Input on Long-Term Disaster Recovery**

In October, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) launched [an interagency website](#) to solicit comments from state, local, and tribal agencies as well as the public. The website is a way for the federal government's newly-formed Long-Term Disaster Recovery Working Group—co-chaired by HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan and DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano—to receive ideas for disaster recovery; articulate objectives for recovery assistance going forward; identify examples of best practices; raise challenges and obstacles to success; and share thoughts, experiences, and lessons learned.

The Long-Term Disaster Recovery Working Group comprises more than 20 federal departments, agencies, and offices. Its goal is to ensure that individuals, communities, and the nation's economy can withstand and rapidly recover from disasters. To develop a better national strategy for an effective approach to long-term disaster recovery, the Working Group will conduct the following tasks:

- Offer operational guidance for effective and unified disaster recovery
- Review disaster recovery programs and the framework of disaster recovery, and identify gaps as well as overlapping authorities
- Examine areas to improve planning and collaboration among federal agencies
- Examine methods to build capacity within state, local, and tribal governments as well as within the nonprofit, faith-based, and private sectors
- Examine successful practices and lessons learned during previous disaster recovery efforts.

Based on information received from state, local, and tribal agencies as well as results of the Working Group, the Secretaries will make recommendations to the President regarding long-term disaster recovery. Recommendations will also help develop a National Disaster Recovery Framework that will provide detailed operational guidance to recovery organizations under existing authorities.

The website also includes links to additional resources on disaster recovery.

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## Oregon/Washington Weigh In on Virtual USA Pilot

In November and December, the DHS Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) hosted meetings with Washington and Oregon state agencies, respectively, as part of its Virtual USA pilot in the Northwest. Virtual USA is a communication and data analytics platform that supports a wide range of information sharing, from general discussions to development and sharing of a common operating picture. Nearly 80 representatives from state agencies in Washington were briefed on the concept. More than 100 attended the Oregon briefing.

State representatives saw demonstrations of similar systems from Alabama and Virginia. Oregon and Washington staff were supportive of the concept and agreed to work with S&T and the NWRTC to gather requirements for a system.

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## Tara O'Toole Confirmed as New DHS Under Secretary for S&T



On November 4, Dr. Tara O'Toole was confirmed as the next DHS Under Secretary for S&T. She replaces acting Under Secretary Brad Buswell.

O'Toole has experience in government, academia, and industry. Until her confirmation, she was the founder and Director of the Center for Biosecurity at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC), and UP Professor of Medicine and Public Health. The Center for Biosecurity is an independent

organization dedicated to improving the country's resilience to major biological threats.

Before founding the Center, O'Toole was one of the original members of the Johns Hopkins Center for Civilian Biodefense Strategies and served as its Director from 2001 to 2003. She also served as Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) for Environment, Safety, and Health. In this position, she was principal advisor to the DOE Secretary on environmental protection and the health and safety of the approximately 100,000 workers in the U.S. nuclear weapons complex and DOE national laboratories. O'Toole is already working with her leadership team at DHS S&T to develop her vision and goals for the future.

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## New Report Offers Benchmarks for Pandemic Planning for Law Enforcement

The U.S. Department of Justice recently issued a [report on pandemic flu planning](#) for law enforcement. The report offers a step-by-step approach for developing new plans and reviewing and revising existing plans that ensure continuity of operations during a pandemic. It also addresses communications before and during a pandemic and planning for activation and recovery.

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## Upcoming Events

January 20-23

[Winter Meeting](#) of the National Sheriff's Association  
Washington, D.C.

March 10

Social Network Workshop  
Seattle

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*Around the Region in Homeland Security* is a monthly report from PNNL's Northwest Regional Technology Center for Homeland Security. For more information, contact Director Steve Stein at [steve.stein@pnl.gov](mailto:steve.stein@pnl.gov) or 206-528-3340, Deputy Director Ryan Eddy at [ryan.eddy@pnl.gov](mailto:ryan.eddy@pnl.gov) or 509-372-6622, or Deputy Director Regional Programs Ann Lesperance at [ann.lesperance@pnl.gov](mailto:ann.lesperance@pnl.gov) or 206-528-3223, or see the website at <http://nwrtec.pnl.gov>.



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