



## Preparedness News and Information

From FEMA's Office of National Preparedness

April 11, 2003

### NATIONAL NEWS

#### **Few Agencies Outside Washington Buy Antiterror Gear for Employees**

*GovExec, April 7, 2003*

As federal agencies craft plans to protect their employees from terrorism, few offices outside Washington are buying protective hoods that could help employees escape a chemical, biological, or radiological attack, according to federal officials.

#### **SARS Helps US Health System for Bioterrorism**

*GovExec, April 7, 2003*

The international outbreak of a naturally occurring respiratory virus is helping prepare the U.S. public health system for a possible bioterrorism attack, federal health officials told the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee Monday.

➤ [Biosystem on the Watch for SARS](#), *Federal Computer Week*, April 7

#### **Agencies: Fund Process is too Complicated**

*Associated Press, April 10, 2003*

Sen. Susan Collins plans to introduce a bill to let the Department of Homeland Security grant waivers to states allowing federal funds intended for one category, such as training, to be used for another purpose, such as equipment.

#### **Homeland Department to Allot \$100 Million for Emergency Preparedness**

*GovExec, April 8, 2003*

Allotted Homeland Security funding will be distributed under an urban-area security initiative aimed at improving the ability of local governments to prepare for and respond to potential threats, including terrorist activities.

➤ [New York Gains Largest Share of Antiterror Aid](#), *New York Times*, April 8

#### **U.S. May Lower Terror Threat Level Due to War Progress**

*Washington Post, April 9, 2003*

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge said yesterday that U.S. officials are beginning to consider lowering the national terrorist threat level from orange, or "high risk," in part because the war in Iraq has been going well.

#### **Former, Current Bush Officials Battle on Cybersecurity**

*GovExec, April 8, 2003*

The Bush administration's top information technology official and its former Cybersecurity czar locked horns Tuesday over the need for dedicated senior officials for Cybersecurity.

➤ [Ex-Officials Urge U.S. to Boost Cybersecurity](#), *Washington Post*, April 9

➤ [Agencies Make Security Improvements](#), *Federal Computer Week*, April 10

## **FEMA Offers First Responders Instant Messenger**

*GovExec, April 9, 2003*

Nearly 5,000 first responders are taking advantage of an instant messaging service to help bridge communications gaps among federal, state and local emergency relief workers, Federal Emergency Management Agency officials said Wednesday.

## **CONGRESS**

### **'Homeland security' Becomes Buzzword for Justifying Budget Requests**

*GovExec, April 7, 2003*

The congressional debate over the 2003 supplemental appropriations bill is only the opening round in what is shaping up to be a huge bidding war over homeland security.

### **Senate Chair Poised to Offer First Responder Bill**

*GovExec, April 9, 2003*

Senate Governmental Affairs Committee Chairwoman Susan Collins said on Wednesday that she will unveil a bill to help first responders in the states more easily obtain federal aid for homeland security.

### **Homeland Terror Threats Still Not Assessed, Aides Say**

*The Hill, April 9, 2003*

The ability to analyze raw intelligence data and assess vulnerabilities is essential for the 170,000-strong Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to fulfill its charge of protecting American citizens and resources according to key Republican and Democratic committee aides.

## **RECENT HEARINGS**

- [FY2004 appropriations for Emergency Preparedness and Response](#), Senate Appropriations Committee, April 8
- [Cyber Security: The Challenges Facing Our Nation in Critical Infrastructure Protection](#), House Government Reform Committee, April 8
- [Investing in Homeland Security, Challenges on the Front Line](#), Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, April 9
- [Assessing the State of Emergency Readiness in the Nation's Capital](#), House Government Reform Committee, April 10

## **BILLS RECENTLY INTRODUCED**

- **S.838:** A bill to waive the limitation on the use of funds appropriated for the Homeland Security Grant Program, April 9

## **STATE AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES**

### **Evacuation Drill Part of SDSU Emergency Preparedness**

*SDS Universe, April 8, 2003*

San Diego State University Police Captain Ted Williams says SDSU's Emergency Planning Team works actively to educate the campus community about steps individuals can take to ensure their safety in the event of an emergency.

### **Agency has Program on Emergencies**

*Dayton Daily News, April 5, 2003*

The Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management has put together a program to help people cope with the new era of global terrorism and concerns about homeland security.

### **A Northeast Ohio Business Prepares for Disaster**

*Ohio News Network, April 4, 2003*

The Red Cross Business and Industry Council for Emergency Planning and Preparedness (BICEPP) held a conference in Cleveland this week at which 200 business owners discussed ways to prepare for disaster beyond getting everyone out safely.

### **County Focuses on Local Emergency Preparedness**

*Macomb Daily, April 7, 2003*

Louis Mioduszewski, director of the Macomb County Office of Emergency Management and Communications, said staffers would soon start working on a terror attack response guidebook that will be distributed to residents in 20 communities.

### **US Official Warns of Chemical Threat**

*Associated Press, April 8, 2003*

Monday, congressional investigators reported that cities and states vary widely in their preparations to deal with bioterror attacks and want clear guidelines from the federal government on what they should do.

### **GOP: Taking Funds from EMT Training a Bad Idea**

*Press of Atlantic City, April 8, 2003*

Republican legislators criticized the governor's proposal to transfer \$5 million from the state's emergency medical technician training program to use for bioterrorism preparedness.

### **Cities, States Differ on Bioterror Preparation Plans**

*Associated Press, April 7, 2003*

Cities and states vary widely in their preparations to deal with bioterror attacks and want clear guidelines from the federal government on what they should do, according to a [government study](#) released Monday.

### **Boca Raton Buys Use of Alert Technology**

*South Florida Business Journal, April 7, 2003*

The City of Boca Raton has named Ormond Beach-based Emergency Communications Network part of its emergency preparedness network due to its alert Code RED delivery system that can make over 60,000 phone calls in one hour.

## **HS Students Learn to Prepare for Disasters, Become Leaders, and Volunteer**

*American Red Cross, April 3, 2002*

With growing concern that another terrorist attack could occur, the American Red Cross in Nassau County (ARC/Nassau) is empowering high school students with the skills necessary to prepare for any disaster, including hurricanes, fires or terrorism.

## **New System Notifies Residents of Emergencies**

*Washington Post, April 10, 2003*

Loudoun County technology officials have begun a mobile alert system that can send bulletins about terrorism, crime or even game cancellations to residents' cell phones, pagers or desktop computers.

## **Crisis Management to Guide District in Time of War**

*Roxbury Register, April 10, 2003*

Three years ago, the Roxbury school district developed and implemented a comprehensive crisis management plan in close collaboration with local, county and state emergency personnel for dealing with a variety of emergency response situations.

## **Emergency Response for Hazmat at Issue**

*St. Joseph News-Press, April 10, 2003*

St. Joseph Fire Chief Stephen Richey, who also serves as the city's interim emergency management coordinator, has asked the City Council to entertain a new proposal to create a St. Joseph-based "hazmat" unit.

## **VA's New Anti-Terror Research Labs Halted**

*Washington Post, April 8, 2003*

The creation of four Virginia emergency preparedness centers intended to develop methods of detection, diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of injuries, diseases and illnesses arising from the use of chemical, biological, radiological, incendiary or other explosive weapons remains stalled due to lack of funding.

## **RELATED INFORMATION**

### **RECENT REPORTS**

- [Protecting the American Homeland: One Year On](#), The Brookings Institution, March 2003
- [Bioterrorism: Adequacy of Preparedness Varies Across State and Local Jurisdictions](#), GAO-03-373, April 7
- [Steps Needed to Ensure Interoperability of Systems That Process Intelligence Data](#), GAO-03-329, March 31
- [Infectious Disease Outbreaks: Bioterrorism Preparedness Efforts Have Improved Public Health Response Capacity, but Gaps Remain](#), GAO-03-654T, April 9

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