



Preparedness News and Information

From FEMA's Office of National Preparedness

May 2, 2003

NATIONAL NEWS

Agencies Still Fail to Share Information, Reports Say

NY Times, April 29, 2003

Nearly 20 months after the Sept. 11 attacks, many federal agencies are still failing to share critical information about terrorist suspects with other agencies due to both cultural and technological barriers, according to federal officials.

- [GAO Criticizes System for Tracking Terrorists](#), *Washington Post*, April 30
- [Homeland Security Has not Consolidated Terrorist Watch Lists](#), *GovExec*, April 30

EPA is Said to Be Concentrating on Terror

NY Times, April 28, 2003

Criminal investigators at the Environmental Protection Agency are referring fewer cases and working more on counterterrorism efforts and guarding Christie Whitman, the agency's administrator, according to interviews with senior agents and a [report](#) released by an advocacy group.

Security Program to Rely on Biometrics

Associated Press, April 29, 2003

Homeland Security Department officials said the new congressionally mandated biometrics system will make it easier for visitors to come to the United States despite stricter border security, while making it more difficult for potential terrorists to enter.

- [Homeland Security to Launch New Entry-Exit System](#), *GovExec*, April 29

Interagency Team Studies Geospatial Preparedness

Government Computer News, April 28, 2003

The Federal Emergency Management Agency formed an interagency team in February to develop a comprehensive national strategy for delivering geospatial data, which is critical to response and recovery efforts in natural and manmade disasters, to emergency responders.

Health Systems Match Wits with Nation's Terrors

USA Today, April 27, 2003

Since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and the subsequent mailing of precision-manufactured anthrax spores, our health system's definition of disaster has changed.

- [GAO Says Smallpox Program Lacks Guidance](#), *GovExec*, May 1

Homeland Chief Urges Firms to Bolster Cybersecurity

GovExec, April 30, 2003

At a speech before the Northern Virginia Technology Council, Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge cited a poll showing that 90 percent of CEOs do not think their

companies are a target for terrorist attacks, and he expressed concern that companies may not be vigilant enough in trying to prevent hackings or other types of cyber attacks.

- [Homeland Security Office Asks for Tech Help](#), *PC World*, April 30

New U.S. Terrorism Threat Center to Open Thursday

Reuters, April 30, 2003

In another response to the Sept. 11 attacks, the U.S. government will launch a new terrorism threat center on Thursday as a hub for intelligence aimed at preventing major attacks on the United States.

- [CIA Opens New Terrorism Intelligence Center](#), *GovExec*, May 1

CONGRESS

Senator Seeks Flexibility for First Responders

GovExec, April 28, 2003

Senator Susan Collins is sponsoring two bills aimed at increasing the flexibility and coordination of money going to local and state first responders, one of which would allow agencies to use the money based on their needs, the other would move the Office of Domestic Preparedness from the department's Border and Transportation Directorate to Tom Ridge's office.

- [Administration Rethinks System for Allocating Security Funds](#), *GovExec*, May 1

Senators Grill Ridge About Homeland Security Budget

GovExec, April 30, 2003

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge was back on Capitol Hill on Wednesday defending his department's expenditures or, in some cases, lack of expenditures.

BILLS RECENTLY INTRODUCED

- **S930:** A bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to establish a program to provide assistance to enhance the ability of first responders to prepare for and respond to all hazards, and for other purposes, *Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works*, April 28
- **H.R.1861:** A bill to help protect the public against the threat of chemical attacks, *House Energy and Commerce Committee*, April 29
- **H.R.1915:** To waive the limitation on the use of funds appropriated for the Homeland Security Grant Program, *House Judiciary Committee, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee*, June 1

RECENT HEARINGS

- [The Transition of the USFA to DHS and other Homeland Security and Firefighting Issues](#), Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, April 30
- [FY2004 Appropriations for Emergency Preparedness and Response Directorate](#), House Appropriations Committee, April 30
- [Investing in Homeland Security: Streamlining and Enhancing Homeland Security Grant Programs](#), Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, May 1

STATE AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES

State, Local Anti-terror Aid Earmarked

Associated Press, April 29, 2003

States and localities will receive \$1.5 billion to help pay for the costs of increasing security during the war with Iraq in addition to \$1.6 billion in federal funds already going to state and local governments, Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge said Tuesday.

- [Department of Homeland Security Announces Funding for States and Localities](#), *Department of Homeland Security*, April 30

US Adds \$1.9 Million for Emergency Use

Birmingham News, April 27, 2003

Another \$1.9 million in federal funds is headed for Calhoun County as county commissioners race against the clock to prepare for the startup of the chemical weapons incinerator later this year.

Officials focus on Saving Lives if NW Attacked- Hypothetical Disaster Scenario Puts Terrorism in Perspective

King County Journal, April 27, 2003

Last year, Washington received \$21 million in federal money to fight biological terrorism which paid for preparedness planning, surveillance and epidemiology, an enhanced state laboratory and training tools such as the Independence Day Massacre, a scenario of a bioterrorism attack in the Northwest.

Preparedness Funds Targeted

The Union, April 26, 2003

The scenic Sierra is the last place anyone would expect terrorists to strike, but state and federal agencies are pouring hundreds of thousands of dollars into Nevada County for training, planning and equipment that could be used if terrorism strikes.

Baxter Co. Exercise Featured by FEMA

Baxter Bulletin, April 29, 2003

Baxter County is in the FEMA 2003 Smart Practices Section this week as the Federal Emergency Management Agency highlights the county's mass immunization clinic in which 5,000 people were vaccinated during as a bioterrorism preparedness exercise to help Baxter County and the state formulate its overall preparedness plan.

Emergency Management Ready to Tackle Any Town Disaster

Stoneham Sun, April 29, 2003

Stoneham's Emergency Management Team, comprised of town and local elected officials and representatives of the business community, met for the first time last Wednesday morning in the police station's training room to outline a comprehensive plan including risk assessments for all possible emergencies and disasters that could happen in Stoneham.

Official Stresses Bioterror Plan

San-Antonio Express News, April 30, 2003

A two-day conference on bioterrorism and the law at St. Mary's University focused on emergency preparedness and response to bioterrorist attacks or other potentially catastrophic incidents with speakers from the Office of Emergency Response from the Department of Homeland Security.

University's Emergency Plan Now Revised, Available on New Web Site

Minnesota Daily, April 30, 2003

More than a year and a half after former University President Mark Yudof cited a need to reform the University's emergency plan, officials have completed the update and this week are publicly introducing the revised version.

➤ [Colleges Seek Slice of U.S. Security Pie](#), *Post-Gazette*, April 29

State to Receive \$22 Million for Security Efforts

Channel 5, April 30, 2003

Oklahoma will receive almost \$22 million to help state and local public safety and law enforcement personnel pay for costs associated with enhanced security measures during a heightened state of alert.

State will Hold Security Hearings

Philadelphia Inquirer, April 26, 2003

State Rep. John Perzel announced a series of statewide public hearings on homeland security, with the first session set for Philadelphia on May 8, to examine the potential for terrorism at the port of Philadelphia, as well as steps taken already to guard against it.

RELATED INFORMATION

RECENT REPORTS

- [Protecting Your Community from Terrorism: Strategies for Local Law Enforcement](#), Police Executive Research Forum, April 2003
- [Federal Assistance: Grant System Continues to Be Highly Fragmented](#), GAO-03-718T, April 2003
- [Information Technology: Terrorist Watchlists Should Be Consolidated to Promote Better Integration and Sharing](#), GAO-03-322, April 2003
- [Smallpox Vaccination: Implementation of National Program Faces Challenges](#), GAO-03-578, April 2003
- [Transportation Security Research: Coordination Needed in Selecting and Implementing Infrastructure Vulnerability Assessments](#), GAO-03-502, April 2003

The information contained in this newsletter was collected from Internet sources. Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the official position of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Office of National Preparedness.