



Preparedness News and Information

From FEMA's Office of National Preparedness

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NATIONAL NEWS

Operation Safe Commerce

TSA Press Release, July 25, 2003

As part of the Bush Administration's ongoing commitment to strengthen security throughout the nation's transportation system, Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security Tom Ridge today announced the awarding of \$28 million in Operation Safe Commerce grants.

Attorney General Ashcroft Promotes Antiterrorism Law

GovExec, July 28, 2003

Attorney General John Ashcroft on Monday used the occasion of a conference on the response to the September 2001 terrorist attack on the Pentagon to decry critics of an antiterrorism measure enacted later that year.

Ridge: America Better Prepared Than Ever

DefenseLink, July 29, 2003

While there are no guarantees that America can prevent another terrorist attack on U.S. soil, Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge said the "American people are more secure and better prepared today than ever before."

Security Officials Discuss Efforts to Combat Computer Crime

GovExec, July 28, 2003

Dartmouth University's Institute for Security Technology Studies has three projects in the works to fend off national cyber attacks: intelligence reports on cybersecurity and the cyber capabilities of threat groups; an investigative contact list for cyberattacks; and a national R&D agenda for investigative tools and technologies related to such attacks.

GAO Says Hospitals Unprepared for SARS

Associated Press, July 30, 2003

Federal and local health officials are preparing for the possibility of a new SARS outbreak, yet hospitals may still be overwhelmed because they lack key workers and equipment, congressional investigators report.

Terrorism Alert Issued to Airlines

GovExec, July 29, 2003

Fearing that al Qaeda may soon strike again, the Homeland Security Department has warned commercial airlines carriers to be on alert for potential hijackings but has not increased the national threat level which remains at yellow, indicating an "elevated level" of risk.

- [Feds to Begin Testing Passenger Screening Program](#), *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, July 31
- [TSA Restricts Database Queries via Screening System](#), *Government Computer News*, July 31

CONGRESS

Arizona GOPers Introduce Border Security Bill

GovExec, July 25, 2003

Sen. John McCain, along with fellow Arizona Republican Representatives Jim Kolbe and Jeff Flake introduced the "[Border Security and Immigration Improvement Act](#)" which allows individuals who enter the country illegally to pay a fine and then be issued a three-year temporary work visa, with an option to reapply at the end of that time.

- [McCain Introduces Immigration Reform](#), *Washington Times*, July 26

Uproar over Air Marshal Cuts

CBS News, July 31, 2003

A Bush administration plan to cut back the air marshal program that mushroomed after the Sept. 11 attacks was rejected by Republicans and Democrats in Congress.

Panel Extends Aid to Emergency Responders

GovExec, July 30, 2003

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee took on emergency preparedness and energy conservation Wednesday, approving [bills](#) to aid first responders and increase the energy savings and environmental benefits from certain federally funded projects committee on unanimous voice votes.

Homeland's Supporters Advocate Permanence

The Hill, July 31, 2003

Two senior members of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security are spearheading a bipartisan effort to give the panel permanent status after its schedule expiration at the end of the 108th Congress.

BILLS RECENTLY INTRODUCED

- **H.R.2898:** To improve homeland security, public safety, and citizen activated emergency response capabilities through the use of enhanced 911 wireless services, and for other purposes, *House Energy and Commerce Committee*, July 25
- **H.R.2901:** To protect human health and the environment from the release of hazardous substances by acts of terrorism, *House Energy and Commerce Committee*, July 25
- **S.1484:** A bill to require a report on Federal Government use of commercial and other databases for national security, intelligence, and law enforcement purposes, and for other purposes, *Senate Judiciary Committee*, July 29

- **S.1504:** A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide protections and countermeasures against chemical, radiological, or nuclear agents that may be used in a terrorist attack against the United States, July 31

RECENT HEARINGS

- [The Emergency Preparedness and Response Act of 2003](#), Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, July 30
- [Terrorism Financing: Origination, Organization, and Prevention](#), Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, July 31

STATE AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES

[New Durham Fair Emergency Building Will Serve Community Too](#)

Town Times, July 29, 2003

The new facility on Durham fairgrounds will be the new Emergency Center, and will do double duty—not only serving the fair as a medical center and command post during its three-day event, but also acting as the town of Durham's EOC (Emergency Operations Center) during any catastrophe.

[Mock Attacks Test Security at Indian Pt. Nuclear Plant](#)

NY Times, July 31, 2003

Simulated attacks on the Indian Point nuclear power plant in Westchester have begun, as part of a test this week to look for weaknesses in the plant's security plan, officials said yesterday.

[New Gear Suits Coventry Emergency Personnel](#)

The Chronicle, July 30, 2003

While the town may never be a target for terrorists, it is as prone as any town to an accidental chemical, biological, or radiological disaster, which is why officials are welcoming the federal government's gift of 70 HAZMAT suits to protect police and firefighters.

[Homeland Security Secretary Pushes Partnerships](#)

GovExec, July 30, 2003

State-level coordination is key to maintaining an effective U.S. security strategy, according to Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge who also said that that while billions of dollars have been sent to states and local "first responders", specific goals at the local level are essential.

[Panel Paves Way for Security Training](#)

Sacramento Bee, July 31, 2003

A Senate panel approved legislation Tuesday that could lead to federal money for a regional national security-training center in Sacramento, with programs that would rotate several hundred trainees a week through the complex, getting training in everything from high-speed auto chases to advanced firearms use.

Mayors Meet on Homeland Security

Herald Community, July 31, 2003

Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge and Hempstead Village Mayor James Garner addressed terrorism and other potential emergency situations in the nation's cities and small towns at Hofstra University last week, setting the stage for a new round of federal funding that will allow local mayors to purchase homeland security equipment and provide emergency training.

Homeland Security Officials Tour Region In State

Hartford Courant, July 31, 2003

The deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the regional leader of the Federal Emergency Management Agency toured potential terrorist targets in southeastern Connecticut Wednesday.

Arlington County Officials Describe 9/11 Lessons

NBC 4, July 31, 2003

Arlington County officials told emergency officials from around the country Wednesday that they were not equipped to handle the Pentagon disaster on Sept. 11, 2001 during an extensive three-day conference on emergency preparedness that included guest speaker Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge.

Smallpox Vaccinations Fizzle

Fresno Bee, July 30, 2003

Central Valley health officers said plans to immunize doctors and nurses against smallpox failed to attract thousands of anticipated volunteers, and they are suspending plans to vaccinate police, firefighters and emergency medical crews.

RELATED INFORMATION

RECENT REPORTS

- [Federal Law Enforcement Training Center](#), GAO-03-736, July 2003
- [Transportation Security: More Federal Coordination Needed to Help Address Security Challenges](#), GAO-03-843, June 2003
- [Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome: Established Infectious Disease Control Measures Helped Contain Spread, but a Large-Scale Resurgence May Pose Challenges](#), GAO-03-1058T, July 2003
- [Container Security: Expansion of Key Customs Programs Will Require Greater Attention to Critical Success Factors](#), GAO-03-770, July 2003
- [Ready or Not-Chemical Terrorism Project](#), Association of Public Health Laboratories, July 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.