



Department of Homeland Security

Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report for 23 December 2008

Current Nationwide Threat Level is

ELEVATED
SIGNIFICANT RISK OF TERRORIST ATTACKS

[For info click here](http://www.dhs.gov/)
<http://www.dhs.gov/>

- According to an online report in the Wall Street Journal, braking problems may be to blame for a Continental Airlines flight running off a runway in Denver on Saturday, leaving many of those on board with injuries. (See item [17](#))
- USA Today reports that communities nationwide have repaired fewer than half of the 122 levees identified by the government almost two years ago as too poorly maintained to be reliable in major floods, according to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers data. (See item [35](#))

DHS Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report Fast Jump

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Energy Sector

Current Electricity Sector Threat Alert Levels: **Physical: ELEVATED, Cyber: ELEVATED**
Scale: LOW, GUARDED, ELEVATED, HIGH, SEVERE [Source: ISAC for the Electricity Sector (ES-ISAC) – <http://www.esisac.com>]

1. *December 22, Bloomberg* – (Texas) **Houston ship channel reopens to tanker sailings as fog clears.** The Houston ship channel, a link for tankers carrying crude oil from the Gulf of Mexico, reopened to vessels after fog lifted, an official who arranges transits said. The channel reopened at about 3 a.m. local time on December 21, an official at Houston Pilots said Monday by telephone. It had closed at 6:20 p.m. on December 20, he said.
Source:
<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601072&sid=aMaPtHKqIGI&refer=energy>

2. *December 21, Reuters* – (Texas) **Ike damage to delay Exxon facility start-up.** Hurricane damage discovered at Exxon Mobil Corp's \$1 billion natural gas terminal under construction in Texas will postpone the facility's start up, according to a report in the online edition of the Wall Street Journal on December 20, citing people familiar with the matter. The liquefied natural gas, or LNG, facility in southeast Texas was damaged by seawater from Hurricane Ike nearly three months ago and assessing damage has taken time. A report said that people briefed on the matter confirmed the scheduled mid-2009 start-up of the terminal will be delayed as a result.
Source: <http://www.reuters.com/article/rbssEnergyNews/idUSN2146197420081221>
3. *December 20, Corpus Christi Caller Times* – (Texas) **Valero plant continues to flare.** Valero's West Plant in Corpus Christi, Texas, continued to flare Friday after the refinery lost power for several hours Thursday. Air monitoring indicated no off-site impact, company officials said. Valero Energy Corp.'s facility suffered a power outage at about 10:30 a.m. Thursday and was without electricity and steam until about 1 p.m. The company evacuated about 300 contract workers as a precaution. An employee trying to remove a hose from a pump inhaled vapor and had to be hospitalized. He was released on Friday afternoon, said a Valero spokeswoman. The flaring was expected to continue Saturday, according to an emissions report submitted to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. According to Valero's estimates, the company released 5,000 pounds of carbon monoxide from four flares and the heavy oil cracker unit. It also estimates about 100 pounds of hydrogen sulfide from three of the flares. Normal operations were expected to resume over the weekend, she said. How the outage affected production was not known Friday.
Source: <http://www.caller.com/news/2008/dec/20/valero-plant-continues-to-flare/>
4. *December 19, Reuters* – (National) **Transco Northeast U.S. natgas line issues cold alert.** Williams Cos Inc. unit Transcontinental Gas Pipeline Corp. said on December 19 that it would issue an operational flow order on its natural gas pipeline system effective December 21, due to cold weather forecast for the U.S. Northeast and a September pipeline rupture in Virginia. The company said in a website posting that it issued the system-wide alert in order to manage imbalances on its system and handle within-day volatility due to operating challenges in conjunction with a previous pipeline rupture in Appomattox, Virginia, and the incoming cold weather.
Source: <http://www.reuters.com/article/rbssEnergyNews/idUSN1949199520081219>
5. *December 19, Reuters* – (National) **Ice storm knocks out power to 220,000 in U.S. Midwest.** Snow and ice storms across the U.S. Midwest knocked out power service to more than 220,000 homes and businesses in Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio early December 19, local utilities reported. The storm left 161,000 customers out in Indiana, 47,000 out in Illinois, and 15,000 out in Ohio. The utilities said the outages would likely grow as the storm marches across the Midwest toward the Atlantic Coast. The large storm was expected to drop snow from Minnesota to Connecticut, with ice and freezing rain falling in northern Indiana, Ohio, and western Pennsylvania. Freezing rain was causing more damage to the power system than the snow because the ice weighs down tree branches, snapping them onto power lines. American Electric Power Co Inc.'s Indiana Michigan

Power unit was reporting the most outages with more than 94,000 customers out in Indiana.

Source:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/rbssIndustryMaterialsUtilitiesNews/idUSN1944463220081219>

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Chemical Industry Sector

6. *December 22, CBS 13 Sacramento* – (California) **Highway 12 closed due to chemical spill.** A major road closure and sig alert is being reported in Solano County, California, due to a chemical spill. Highway 12 through Jameson Canyon has been closed in both directions, and could stay closed throughout the entire rush hour after a truck carrying chemical pesticide flipped over in Cordelia. The chemical has mixed with rainwater to trigger a hazmat incident. A 450 foot perimeter is being cleared around the crash, including a shelter-in-place order for homes in the area. The highway is expected to stay closed for about three hours.

Source: <http://cbs13.com/local/highway.12.spill.2.892734.html>

7. *December 21, United Press International* – (National) **Report: EPA allows chemical secrecy.** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has kept data about potentially dangerous chemicals secret, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel says. The newspaper said its analysis of more than 2,000 EPA dangerous chemical filings during the last three years found that the U.S. department allowed chemicals' names to remain undisclosed in more than half those cases. The Journal Sentinel said the secretive EPA entries appear to be in opposition to a federal law that requires EPA officials to publicly report any new data regarding potentially dangerous chemicals. Under the related EPA regulations, the federal department can only agree to retain confidentiality for a company or product under rare circumstances. A University of Texas-Austin law professor said the newspaper's findings appear to indicate the agency has violated Toxic Substances Control Act rules.

Source:

http://www.upi.com/Science_News/2008/12/21/Report_EPA_allows_chemical_secretcy/UPI-26121229888569/

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Nuclear Reactors, Materials, and Waste Sector

8. *December 22, Boston Business Journal* – (Massachusetts) **Pilgrim reactor restarted after shutdown.** The Pilgrim 1 Reactor in Plymouth, Massachusetts, was shut down December 19 due to complications from that day's snowstorm. According to an Entergy Corp. news release, the nuclear reactor that generates 680 megawatts of power for the region has been restarted and is running at 1 percent of capacity. "We had an icing situation in the switchyard. We are doing some testing now on equipment and preparing to restart," said a spokesman for the company. According to a U.S. Nuclear Regulatory

Agency report, no significant problem was encountered, but the reactor was shut down as a preventive measure.

Source: <http://www.bizjournals.com/boston/stories/2008/12/22/daily1.html>

9. *December 21, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission* – (Illinois) **Weather-related loss of emergency sirens.** A telephone notification was provided on December 21 to report complications from an ice storm, including a loss of power, which disabled 17 of the 50 EP sirens (34 percent) at LaSalle nuclear plant in Illinois. The sirens were lost at 7:22 a.m. and have not been restored. This meets the threshold of reportability based on the loss of a public notification system. Restoration efforts are underway and are expected to occur as soon as reasonably possible with the current winter weather conditions. At the time of the event, Unit 1 and Unit 2 are unaffected by the loss of power. Twelve of the lost sirens were due to a loss of power. Five were lost due to a loss of communications with the data center. The licensee notified the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission resident inspector.

Source: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/event-status/event/2008/20081222en.html#en44738>

10. *December 19, KXNT Las Vegas* – (Nevada) **Nevada makes case against Yucca Mountain.** The state of Nevada filed more than 200 legal objections with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission over the Yucca Mountain project in Nevada. Nevada is contesting the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) suggested safeguards for the proposed nuclear waste repository. The DOE wants high-tech metal containers for the waste, along with multibillion-dollar titanium shields to protect the containers from drips and corrosive water, and robots to install the shields 100 years from now. Opponents of the project say that technology does not yet exist.

Source: <http://www.kxnt.com/pages/3526149.php>

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Defense Industrial Base Sector

11. *December 22, Navy Times* – (National) **Growler grounded by left engine fire.** A Navy EA-18G "Growler" made an emergency landing at Nellis Air Force Base in California after its left engine caught on fire on November 17, Navy officials say. The plane landed safely and nobody was injured. The cause of the fire remains under investigation, said a spokesman for Naval Air Forces. The aircraft was conducting "routine operational testing" and was one of three assigned to Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Nine based at Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake in California, an official said. The engine fire marked the first Class A mishap for the Growler since the Boeing-made aircraft went into service earlier this year. The Navy plans to buy 88 Growlers, which will replace the EA-6B Prowler as the fleet's primary electronic warfare aircraft. The first operational Growler squadron is expected to reach initial operational capacity by September 2009, Navy officials said.

Source: http://www.navytimes.com/news/2008/12/navy_growlerfire_122108/

12. *December 19, Ventura County Star* – (California) **Boeing ordered to remove tainted**

soil. Boeing Co., the owner of a former rocket engine and nuclear test site south of Simi Valley, has been ordered to remove contaminated soil to keep pollutants found in storm water from running off the site. Heavy metals, perchlorate, and other toxic materials have been found in storm water running off the Santa Susana Field Laboratory at two outfalls that drain into Dayton Canyon Creek and the Arroyo Simi. In 2007, Boeing was fined for exceeding limits of chromium, dioxin, lead, mercury, and other pollutants in wastewater and storm water runoff over a period of nearly 18 months. Boeing had planned to install engineered natural treatment systems to treat the storm water as it runs off the site. That work will be put on hold so the polluted dirt can be removed first. A Boeing spokeswoman said the order to remove the soil complements the company's plans to build the natural treatment systems. "We will absolutely move forward to carry out the order," she said.

Source: <http://www.venturacountystar.com/news/2008/dec/19/boeing-ordered-to-remove-tainted-soil/>

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Banking and Finance Sector

13. *December 22, Bloomberg* – (National) **FBI uses triage to shift from terror to Madoff, subprime probes.** The Federal Bureau of Investigation has engaged in "triage," taking agents off terror and other crimes to respond to a cascade of financial frauds, the head of the bureau's New York criminal division said. The FBI was forced to reallocate its manpower in New York to deal with recent frauds involving subprime mortgages, auction-rate securities, and a well-known stock broker, who prosecutors said confessed this month to bilking investors out of \$50 billion. "We have to work those cases which we think pose the greatest threat," he said. "In this case, it is a threat to the financial system and Wall Street."

Source:

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601087&sid=aVHDu98R3s6s&refer=home>

14. *December 22, Nashville Business Journal* – (National) **Survey: Workers facing layoffs could be security threat.** Fifty-eight percent of Wall Street office workers surveyed say they would take valuable company data with them if faced with a layoff, if they knew they could get away with it. The survey on the recession and its effects on work ethics were conducted among 226 office workers on New York City's Wall Street by IT security firm Cyber-Ark. The survey found that many office workers are downloading sensitive company secrets right now under their bosses' noses in anticipation they could lose their jobs. Among the survey's findings were more than half the workers surveyed who admitted to already downloading competitive corporate data said they would use it as a negotiating tool to secure their next post because they know the information will be useful to future employers. The top-of-list of desirable information being extracted from employers is customer and contact databases. Plans and proposals, product information, and access and password codes are also popular choices. HR records and legal documents were the least favored data employees were interested in taking. Finally, 62 percent of workers admitted it was easy to sneak company information out of the office.

Source: <http://www.bizjournals.com/nashville/stories/2008/12/22/daily3.html>

15. *December 22, KRVN 4 Reno* – (Nevada) **Reno residents contacted in apparent credit scam.** The Reno Police Department is now investigating an alleged credit card scam. Reno residents say they received a phone call with a recorded message saying there was concern about their credit card account activity. The recording then asks them to key in a 14 digit credit card number. The Reno Police Department says subscribers of T-Mobile and Sprint cell services have also reported getting text messages saying their services would be disconnected if they did not respond with private information such as their social security number and street address. The fraud crimes unit of the Reno Police Department is now looking into all of the complaints.

Source: <http://www.krnv.com/Global/story.asp?S=9563092&nav=8faO>

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Transportation Sector

16. *December 22, Associated Press* – (National) **Winter blast strands holiday travelers.** A blast of winter in the nation's northern tier stranded travelers far and wide Sunday just a few days before Christmas, with dozens of flights delayed or canceled and bus passengers sleeping on cardboard at a Seattle terminal. A weekend storm dumped about 5 inches of snow around Seattle by Sunday morning, and it snowed anew all afternoon, with the National Weather Service predicting up to 4 inches more by Monday morning. Storms in the Northeast and Midwest also produced travel headaches for those trying to get home by road, rail, and air. Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, one of the world's busiest, canceled about 150 flights Sunday. Some flights were arriving two to three hours late Sunday at New York's Kennedy Airport and Boston's Logan Airport, according to the Federal Aviation Administration. Even fair-weather airports weren't immune from tie-ups. George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston had delays averaging about five hours, and flights from Atlanta to Boston and New York were also delayed. Amtrak also canceled train service Sunday between Eugene, Oregon, and Vancouver, Canada; and between Seattle and Spokane. Service from Seattle to Los Angeles was still running but with "extreme delays," Amtrak said in a news release.

Source: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/28342940/>

See also:

http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5ivYomrkAo1flWq_9uxn66wRSWODw

17. *December 22, Reuters* – (Colorado) **Brakes looked at in Continental runway incident: report.** Braking problems may be to blame for a Continental Airlines flight running off a runway in Denver this weekend, according to an online report in the Wall Street Journal on Sunday. On Saturday, a Continental-operated Boeing 737 failed to take off from Denver en route to Houston. The airplane subsequently ran off the runway, dramatically catching on fire, and leaving many of those on board with injuries. The Journal, citing people familiar with early data gathered by investigators, said preliminary indications point to a braking malfunction. No safety officials have officially commented, according to the report. "We can not speculate on the cause of the

accident,” said a Continental spokeswoman, adding that the National Transportation Safety Board is in charge of the accident investigation.

Source:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/rbssIndustryMaterialsUtilitiesNews/idUSN2146567620081222>

18. *December 21, WCTV 2 Tallahassee* – (Florida) **Bomb threat in Tallahassee.** A passenger on an arriving bus reported hearing a fellow passenger make comments about the bus blowing up and planting a bomb on the bus. Portions of the bus terminal were evacuated, and incoming buses were diverted while Tallahassee police officers located the man’s luggage. It was determined there were no bombs or explosives on the bus or at the terminal. The man was arrested and charged with making a false report of a bomb or hoax device.

Source: <http://www.wctv.tv/news/headlines/36530294.html>

19. *December 19, Arizona Daily Star* – (Arizona) **Tucson police: I-10 reopens at Grant Road.** A suspicious item that prompted the closure of Grant Road near Interstate 10 for three hours was determined not to be a threat, police said. A bicyclist riding in the area spotted something wrapped in duct tape with wires and alerted police, said a Tucson Police Department spokeswoman. Police responded along with the bomb unit and a robot, she said. At that time they shut down both directions of travel on Grant in the area until the situation was deemed safe, she said. By 12:30 the roadway was re-opened.

Source: <http://fixed-mobile-convergence.tmcnet.com/news/2008/12/19/3869934.htm>

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Postal and Shipping Sector

20. *December 22, Reuters* – (International) **Cyprus probes suspect package at U.S. embassy.** A suspect package was sent to the U.S. embassy in Cyprus on December 22 and authorities were carrying out tests to determine what it contained, officials said. The sealed package roused embassy staff suspicions and police were called in. It was collected by the fire brigade for further tests for possible toxins. American embassies in 18 countries have received envelopes with white powder since December 8. At 16 of the missions the letters were found to be harmless, while envelopes sent to embassies in Prague and Tokyo last week were being tested for toxins.

Source: <http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSLM608089>

21. *December 22, WLEX 18 Lexington* – (Kentucky) **Pipe bomb found in mailbox.** Kentucky State Police (KSP) are investigating after a pipe bomb was found in a Campbellsburg mailbox. When troopers arrived, the PVC pipe bomb was located on the floor of the property owner’s vehicle. The Hazardous Devices Unit removed the bomb from the car with a robot and it was handled remotely with a 357 pan disrupter. Investigators found the pipe contained black powder and a fuse, which had been ignited, but not detonated. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms was notified, and KSP will be assisting with the investigation.

Source: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/28326931/>

22. *December 21, Radio New Zealand International* – (American Samoa) **American Samoa officials send white powder offshore for testing.** A white powdery substance which was found in an envelope received in the mail at the American Samoa governor's office has been sent off island for testing. The acting commissioner of public safety says a secretary in the governor's office opened the suspect envelope. All offices in the three story executive office building were evacuated while hazardous material response crews entered the third floor and removed the envelope. The acting commissioner says information received from the FBI office in Honolulu indicates that tests of white powder contained in letters received by governors in other states are corn starch.
Source: <http://www.rnzi.com/pages/news.php?op=read&id=43813>
23. *December 20, Register-Guard* – (Oregon) **Suspicious powder spurs lockdowns of 2 post offices.** Two post offices in Eugene, Oregon, were locked down briefly December 19 after postal workers discovered a suspicious-looking white powder packaged with New Yorker magazines. Eugene police and fire officials were notified of the scare but did not investigate after they learned that post office workers had tested the white substance on their own and determined it was not harmful.
Source: <http://www.registerguard.com/csp/cms/sites/web/news/4511268-35/story.csp>

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Agriculture and Food Sector

24. *December 22, News Inferno* – (International) **Another melamine recall: three cocoa products.** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) just announced another recall of a food product over melamine contamination. This time, Dorsey Marketing Inc. (DMI) of Ville St. Laurent, Quebec, Canada, has voluntarily recalled three of its G&J Gourmet Market Cocoa Products. Although no injuries have been reported, to date, a few samples have been found to contain melamine, and DMI is proceeding with its recall. The recalled products were imported into the United States by DMI and distributed nationwide to Big Lots during the weeks of September 22, 2008 and September 29, 2008 and to Shopko during the week of October 10, 2008.
Source: <http://www.newsinferno.com/archives/4406>
25. *December 21, Coosa Valley News* – (Georgia) **USDA declares Georgia a disaster area.** The U.S. Department of Agriculture has declared 146 of 159 Georgia counties a primary disaster area because of production losses due to prolonged drought. The governor says Georgia farmers have significant economic losses due to the dry conditions in Georgia, and he is pleased that financial relief will be made available. Twelve counties were named as contiguous disaster areas: Appling, Atkinson, Bacon, Bulloch, Camden, Coffee, Glynn, Liberty, Long, Terrell, Ware, and Wayne. The only county not covered by either designation is McIntosh.
Source: <http://www.coosavalleynews.com/np78732.htm>
26. *December 21, Tampa Tribune* – (Florida) **Citrus greening.** In an orange grove, rows of tree stumps mark the hard reality of an endemic disease that growers fear could cripple

Florida's \$9.3 billion citrus industry. One individual, who oversees 1,600 acres of citrus trees for Peace River Packing Co. in Fort Meade in Polk County, has cut down and removed nearly 1,700 trees since August 2007, when citrus greening disease was detected in one of his groves. He is doing all he can to keep the disease from spreading, but he continues to find more infected trees. The symptoms of greening are obvious: yellowing leaves, lopsided and greening fruit, and dark seeds. Discovered in South Florida three years ago, greening has spread to all 32 citrus-producing counties in Florida, the leading citrus-producing state, with nearly 600,000 acres devoted to commercial production. As the industry commits millions of dollars to new research to find a cure, growers' costs are soaring because they are spending more on fertilizer, insecticides, and inspection to limit the spread. Greening, also known as yellow dragon disease, attacks the tree's circulatory system and eventually kills the tree.
Source: <http://www2.tbo.com/content/2008/dec/21/bz-citrus-greening/>

27. *December 19, Oregonian* – (International) **Imported cookies join melamine recall list.** Cookies have joined the list of products tainted with melamine, a substance used in plastics that can be deadly for people or pets if ingested in big enough quantities. Last week a company based in Vietnam recalled four types of cookies, sold in red metal tins and produced under the Wonderfarm brand. A statement by the Food and Drug Administration said all lots of the cookies were being pulled from shelves by Interfood Shareholding Co. because they could be tainted with melamine. The four varieties of Wonderfarm cookies were listed as: "Successful" Assorted Biscuits, "Royal Flavour" Assorted Biscuits, "Lovely Melody" Assorted Biscuits and "Daily Life" Assorted Biscuits. Melamine-tainted products have been traced to manufacturers of milk, milk products, and wheat gluten in China. No illnesses have associated with the biscuits, the FDA said.
Source:
http://www.oregonlive.com/news/index.ssf/2008/12/imported_cookies_join_list_foo.html

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Water Sector

28. *December 22, Portsmouth Herald* – (New Hampshire) **DPW to reduce pollutants in city wastewater system.** Portsmouth City public works officials recommended three initiatives that will reduce the amount of pollutants the city discharges into the Piscataqua River through its wastewater system. In January, the city entered into a settlement agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) — brought by CLF relative to the city's discharge of wastewater. As part of the settlement, the city must implement interim measures to reduce pollutants prior to the end of the current permit cycle, which is April 2012. At the same time, the city is studying wastewater needs with the long-term goal of relocating the Peirce Island Wastewater Treatment Plant.
Source: <http://www.seacoastonline.com/articles/20081222-NEWS-812220322>

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Public Health and Healthcare Sector

29. *December 20, Torrance Daily Breeze* – (California) **Hospitals under stress.** Torrance Memorial Medical Center is the region’s busiest emergency room. Its front entrance is guarded by metal detectors, and the line to get in sometimes stretches into the parking lot. The average wait is about eight hours, the result of an overburdened hospital network with capacity stretched thin. The recent domino effect of hospital closures and bed reductions — four have closed in the South Bay, 10 emergency rooms in the county have shut down, and at least two other hospitals have reduced bed capacity — has left many worried that the increasingly fragile network will not be able to cope with an event resulting in mass injury, such as a natural disaster, terrorist attack, freeway pile-up, pandemic flu or plane crash. “If Southern California’s hospitals can’t handle patient inflow even during the course of a normal day, I have grave doubts about how the region would do in a disaster scenario,” said the executive director of the Hospital Association of Southern California, a trade group. “Any increase in demand would stretch the system beyond what it could handle.” Los Angeles County as a whole has a meager 1,500 excess beds on any given day, according to a 2007 study by PriceWaterhouseCoopers, a consulting firm. More than half of all hospitals are on diversion — meaning they turn away ambulances due to crowding — at least 20 percent of the time.

Source: http://toplistings.dailybreeze.com/ci_11281522

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Government Facilities Sector

30. *December 20, Bend Bulletin* – (Oregon) **Suspect arrested in Prineville bomb threat.** Prineville, Oregon, police have made an arrest in the bomb threat of the Crook County Mental Health Building. A 24-year old has been charged with disorderly conduct and ten counts of menacing. He has been lodged in the Crook County Jail in lieu of bail. The threat was telephoned into the former offices of the Mental Health Building, which is just a block away from their new quarters. Police then evacuated a citywide block and cordoned off traffic for four blocks. During the daylong investigation, police uncovered evidence that lead them to the accused. He was arrested on a traffic stop at 5:58 p.m. and volunteered to go to the police station for an interview. In the meantime, technicians from the Portland Police Bureau examined items they thought were suspicious in the Crook County Mental Health Building, but it was determined the items were harmless.

Source:

<http://www.bendbulletin.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20081220/NEWS0107/812200402/1001/FRONTPAGE>

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Emergency Services Sector

31. *December 21, Middletown Journal* – (Ohio) **Emergency radio system passes first tests.** Butler County, Ohio’s, new emergency communications radio system has been

successfully tested at more than 2,000 locations across the county, according to the project manager, who said the county will be ready to flip the switch on the \$35 million system early next year after delays early in the project. First, emergency responders will be trained on the new system in January and roughly 2,200 handsets will be distributed. In addition to operating in remote parts of the county, the system's 800 megahertz signal strength will allow emergency responders to communicate from inside thick-walled buildings — a shortcoming that proved fatal to New York firefighters on September 11, 2001.

Source:

<http://www.middletonjournal.com/hp/content/oh/story/news/local/2008/12/21/hjn122208Radio.html>

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Information Technology

32. *December 20, PC World* – (International) **Opera plugs ‘severe’ browser hole.** Opera has released a security fix for seven flaws in its Web browser, Opera 9.6. Opera says the fix, which only applies to machines running Windows, covers two flaws categorized as “extremely severe” and three listed as “highly severe.” The “extremely severe” flaws could allow a hacker to take control of a PC, while those rated as “highly severe” leave PCs open to attack if users open Web sites hosting malicious software. In an advisory, Opera said the patch was a “recommended security upgrade.”

Source:

http://www.pcworld.com/article/155854/opera_plugs_severe_browser_hole.html

33. *December 19, Reuters* – (National) **U.S. not ready for cyber attack.** The United States is unprepared for a major hostile attack against vital computer networks, government and industry officials said on December 18 after participating in a two-day “cyberwar” simulation. The game involved 230 representatives of government defense and security agencies, private companies, and civil groups. It revealed flaws in leadership, planning, communications, and other issues, participants said. “There isn’t a response or a game plan,” said senior vice president of the Booz Allen Hamilton consulting service, which ran the simulation. “There isn’t really anybody in charge,” he told reporters afterward. Officials cited attacks by Russia sympathizers on Estonia and Georgia as examples of modern cyberwarfare, and said U.S. businesses and government offices have faced intrusions and attacks.

Source:

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/technologyNewsMolt/idUKTRE4BI00520081219?sp=true>

Internet Alert Dashboard

To report cyber infrastructure incidents or to request information, please contact US-CERT at soc@us-cert.gov or visit their Website: <http://www.us-cert.gov>.

Information on IT information sharing and analysis can be found at the IT ISAC (Information Sharing and Analysis Center) Website: <https://www.it-isac.org/>.

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Communications Sector

34. *December 22, Media Line* – (International) **Plan for \$400m undersea Mideast Internet cable.** Several telecom companies in the Middle East are planning to invest in a joint undersea cable to prevent cable cuts, such as the one that disrupted Internet services last week. Saudi Telecom, Telecom Egypt, Lebanon’s Ogero, and the United Arab Emirates’ Etisalat will spend \$400 million over the next two years on a link between India and Europe. The project will also involve Indian and European operators and is intended to avoid Internet disruptions when cables are severed, the Middle East economic magazine MEED reported. Lines running under the Mediterranean Sea were damaged on Friday, causing Internet and telephone disruptions throughout the region. The exact cause of the damage was unclear. A French repair crew has begun repairing the damaged lines.

Source: <http://www.allheadlinenews.com/articles/7013490230>

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Commercial Facilities Sector

Nothing to report

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National Monuments & Icons Sector

Nothing to report

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Dams Sector

35. *December 22, USA Today* – (National) **Most levee repairs lagging.** Communities nationwide have repaired fewer than half of the 122 levees identified by the government almost two years ago as too poorly maintained to be reliable in major floods, according to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers data. State and local governments were given a year to fix levees cited by the Corps for “unacceptable” maintenance deficiencies in a February 2007 review that was part of a post-Hurricane Katrina crackdown. Only 45 have had necessary repairs, according to data provided in response to a USA Today request. The remaining unrepaired levees are spread across 18 states and Puerto Rico — most in California and Washington. In an effort to put pressure on state and local governments, the Corps has removed many of the unacceptable levees from the Corps’ inspection program, making them ineligible for federal rehabilitation funding if they are damaged by floodwaters. Property owners behind those levees also could be required to buy flood insurance if the Federal Emergency Management Agency finds that the maintenance problems leave them unprotected against a 100-year flood. If communities with

unrepaired levees are in the process of fixing them, they can apply for readmission to the Corps' inspection program once the work is done. Only a fraction of the nation's levees are inspected by the Corps. Levees in the inspection program typically were built by the Corps and turned over to local governments for maintenance.

Source: http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2008-12-21-levees_N.htm

36. *December 22, Associated Press* – (Tennessee) **TVA dike bursts in Tenn.; 15 homes flooded.** A retention pond wall collapsed early Monday morning at a power plant run by the nation's largest public utility, releasing a mixture of water and ash that flooded 15 homes nearby. The 40-acre pond was used by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) as a containment area for ash generated by the coal-burning Kingston Steam Plant in Harriman, Tennessee, said a TVA spokesman. An earthen wall gave way just before 1 a.m., flooding the road and railroad tracks leading to the plant. The Environmental Protection Agency has been notified, the spokesman said. Investigators are still trying to determine exactly what caused the flood, but he said heavy rains and freezing temperatures may be to blame.

Source: <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5gcEdjW1i-XQcEfFGofzAPNA-SWHQD957NUR00>

37. *December 21, USA Today* – (National) **Panel to urge national safety standards for levees.** There is no comprehensive inventory of the nation's levees and no set of national safety standards for how much protection they should provide, the National Committee for Levee Safety says in preliminary findings released this month. Many levees across the country are outdated and "not designed to protect the population they now have living behind them," the panel finds, although no one knows how many people do. Next month, the committee will call for a new national levee safety program in a formal report to Congress, says the panel's chairman and special assistant for dam and levee safety in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Federal Government should catalog all of the nation's levees and determine their adequacy, the report will say. It will also recommend setting safety standards based on "tolerable risk" and creating a federal-state program to ensure that all levees meet those standards, according to the committee.

Source: http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2008-12-21-levees-inside_N.htm

38. *December 21, Associated Press* – (Iowa) **Levees won't be fixed by spring.** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had estimated that flood-damaged levees in Iowa certified by the Corps would be fixed by year's end, but they are not even close. Among the delays are a lack of crews, early winter weather, delayed requests from municipalities and in at least one instance in Oakville, the discovery of American Indian artifacts. The Corps spokesman said only three of the 38 levees and other flood-protection projects requested by Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri are done. A dozen Iowa projects are among those unfinished. There are hundreds of other levees that are not maintained by the Corps, and the administrator of the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division said he is unaware of their status. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has no comprehensive programs to inspect those levees, built by cities, counties, and local levee districts. The DNR director has vowed to seek money to start an inspection program.

Source: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/chi-ap-ia-damagedlevees,0,860173.story>

39. *December 20, Leader Times* – (Pennsylvania) **Despite delay in repair work, Armstrong dam deemed stable.** The dam at Lock 6 is stable, despite high water conditions along the Allegheny River in Pennsylvania that have delayed repair work at the facility since December 11, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officials say. Work began a month ago to repair a serious erosion problem under a 200-foot wide section of the dam; however, weather conditions including rain and melting snow caused river levels to rise to a point where work had to be halted along the structure, according to the project manager. “Before the water levels rose, crews were able to install the sheet piling below the toe of the dam and fill, for the most part, the void under the dam itself, making it stable,” he said. “They used what is known as tremie concrete, which is designed for use underwater, so there is more than enough support for the dam.” The project manager said the concrete was used to fill a void that spread 200 feet across the dam, 20 feet deep, and 29 feet back under the dam structure, leaving nearly two-thirds of the dam perched on nothing more than wooden pilings that were installed when the dam was built.

Source: http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/leadertimes/s_603795.html

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