Top Stories

- The Houston Chronicle reports that a large explosion occurred Wednesday at the American Acryl chemical facility in Seabrook, Texas. Area residents were asked to shelter in place after the blast, but that recommendation was lifted by 11 a.m. (See item 6)
- According to the Associated Press, hundreds of Chicago firefighters worked to put out a high-rise fire that left one person dead and 12 people injured on Thursday. More than 200 residents ran out of the condo building into the bitter cold. (See item 36)

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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 10, Colorado Connection** – (Colorado) 13 coal cars derail on private property. Colorado Springs police and fire departments responded just after 6 p.m. on December 9 to the area of 3250 Drennan Industrial Loop on report of a train derailment. Initial investigation revealed that a BNSF train hauling coal southbound had a partial derailment causing 13 cars to derail and stack. There were no injuries and the derailment took place on private property. BNSF recovery personnel arrived at the
scene to handle the incident.

2. December 9, Environment News Service – (Alaska) **Huge Alaska oil spill blamed on ice plugs.** Ice plugged an inactive pipeline, causing it to burst, officials said December 8 in an attempt to explain how 46,000 gallons of crude oil spewed onto the tundra near a BP Exploration processing center at Prudhoe Bay on Alaska’s North Slope. The oil leak near BP’s Lisburne Processing Center was discovered during a routine inspection by a company worker on November 29, say state and company officials, but the ice in the ruptured pipe was not visible until December 7. The spill is one of the North Slope’s largest by volume, officials believe. Separate investigations by BP and the State of Alaska into the cause of the leak are ongoing. According to cleanup officials, the rupture is approximately 24 inches long, located on the bottom of the pipe. As the work-day ended on December 9, 1.1 miles, or approximately 90 percent, of the ice-road was complete. A rolligon, which is a specialized, low-impact, off-road vehicle, will be replaced with flatbed trucks once the ice-road is complete. The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation’s on-scene coordinator, said, “The Unified Command is committed to leading a thorough and efficient cleanup - as long as it takes.” Spill response personnel now number 108, including 75 on the Slope and 33 in Anchorage. Source: http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/dec2009/2009-12-09-094.asp

3. December 9, Smartmeters.com – (National) **Security concerns still an issue.** Security experts have raised an alarm that the two-way communication made possible by smart meters could make smart grids vulnerable to hackers or cyber terrorists. Communities could be at risk to power outages and individuals could have their personal information stolen. A spokeswoman for Defense Support Services (DS2), urged the adoption of appropriate technology to ensure the grids’ security, stressing that the potential risks have not been adequately addressed. “Stringent management and protection of components within these infrastructures must be addressed,” DS2 said. The risk increases exponentially as the smart grid expands and becomes more complex with an increased number of entry points that could be exploited. To address the security issues, DS2 announced it is developing power-line communications for smart-grid applications and is developing state-of-the-art security standards. Its next-generation smart-grid technology has been specifically designed to prevent attacks on the smart-grid’s integrity. The concern over smart meter technology points up the reality that cyber attacks are no longer strictly a computer network phenomenon; nearly any network, local or national, that uses computers are vulnerable to infiltration. Looking to provide communications for smart meter networks and other smart grid systems, AT&T has partnered with Silver Spring Networks, which provides the hardware, software and services that connect every device on the grid, creating a unified Smart Energy Platform. The two companies will offer their mutual services to utilities using Silver Spring for their smart meter communications. Verizon is working with Duke Energy; T-Mobile USA is aligned with smart meter maker Echelon, and Sprint is working with several utilities including Florida Power & Light. Source: http://www.smartmeters.com/the-news/715-security-concerns-still-an-issue.html
Chemical Industry Sector

4. December 10, WHAM 13 Rochester – (New York) Crews battle industrial fire in Ontario. Several emergency crews from Wayne and Monroe Counties were called to a working fire on Dean Parkway, off of Route 104 in Ontario, Wayne County around 7:30 Wednesday night. The fire happened inside Scientific Polymer Products. Hazardous Materials crews from Wayne and Monroe Counties were brought in as a precaution, because of chemicals inside the building. No one was injured in the fire. Because it only took firefighters 20 minutes to put the fire out, the nearby area did not have to be evacuated. Route 104 at Dean Parkway was shut down for a short time while crews battled the fire. A total of four fire departments were called in to help. Source: http://www.13wham.com/mostpopular/story/Crews-Battle-Industrial-Fire-in-Ontario/rXKJPwN_XUOd2xu8X1Ai4Q.cspx

5. December 10, Kansas City Sun Tribune – (Missouri) Fire department first responders to acid spill. A tanker truck accident that spilled hundreds of gallons of hydrochloric acid in Kansas City last week tested the response ability of the North Kansas City fire and police departments. The Fire Chief said North Kansas City firefighters were first on the scene of the accident that involved only the truck hauling the acid. The accident happened on Nov. 30 in the northbound ramp of the Paseo Bridge. Because of early morning traffic and blocked southbound lanes Kansas City response services could not reach the accident quickly, so North Kansas City was called to respond. North Kansas City firefighters pulled the driver from the truck, and the department’s ambulance transported him to the hospital. According to a press release from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, which also responded to the accident, the tanker was carrying an estimated 45,000 pounds of hydrochloric acid and the wreck caused a loss of approximately 500 gallons of the hazardous chemical onto the roadway. Kansas City’s Isle of Capri Casino was locked down during the incident because of its close proximity to the spill and the hazardous cloud of chemicals it released into the air. North Kansas City personnel went to the casino to keep people inside and the area secure. They also had personnel monitoring North Kansas City’s air quality, especially in the nearby Paseo Industrial District. Source: http://suntrib.com/200912107447/news/north-kansas-city/fire-department-first-responders-to-acid-spill.html

6. December 9, Houston Chronicle – (Texas) No serious injuries reported in Seabrook explosion. A large chemical plant explosion near Seabrook early Wednesday morning sent a gigantic plume of smoke billowing into the air, but there were no serious injuries. The explosion occurred at an American Acryl facility about 8:50 a.m., according to the Seabrook Police Department. A short section of Texas 146 near the blast site was closed in both directions, as is Port Road. An hour later, firefighters appeared to have the fire out, and no smoke was visible from the charred wreckage at the plant. Two
people went to Memorial Hermann Hospital Southeast complaining of discomfort, said a Seabrook police lieutenant. A Memorial Hermann spokeswoman said both were in good condition. Area residents were asked to shelter in place after the blast, but that recommendation was lifted by 11 a.m. Officials said the blast involved toluene, a toxic substance that can cause nausea and tiredness in low to moderate levels. However, in a recorded message the company said the explosion did not cause a release of the chemical. A Shoreacres police officer, who was in the La Porte area at the time, said he heard the blast and turned in time to see “a ball of fire going up into the air.” Reports indicate the blast was heard or felt as far away as Baytown and Pearland.


For another story, see item 21

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**Nuclear Reactors, Materials and Waste Sector**

7. *December 10, Reuters* – (Virginia) **Dominion Va. North Anna 2 reactor shut.** Dominion Resources Inc’s (D.N) 903-megawatt Unit 2 at the North Anna nuclear power station in Mineral Louisa County, Virginia shut on December 9 from 97 percent due to loss of reserve station service transformer, the company told U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission in a report. The company did not say in the report when the unit would return to service. An electrical supply breaker inadvertently opened causing the reserve station service transformer to de-energize. That resulted in the loss of power to the emergency busses and the automatic start of emergency diesel generators. In Unit 2, the company said, the bus did not automatically transfer to another reserve station transformer in sufficiently short time to prevent the loss of the unit’s circulating water pumps. The loss of the water pumps resulted in a turbine trip that shut the reactor. Operators suspect the problem was caused by maintenance in the switchyard.


8. *December 10, Reuters* – (Georgia) **Southern shuts Ga. Vogtle 1 reactor.** Southern Co (SO.N) shut the 1,152-megawatt Unit 1 at the Vogtle nuclear power station in Waynesboro, Georgia on December 9 following high turbine vibration, the company told the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission in a report. The company did not say in the report when the unit would return to service, noting workers were investigating the cause of the vibration. At the time of the shutdown, the company said the unit was operating at 24 percent after exiting an outage. The unit shut on December 7 due to an equipment issue that resulted in the loss of condenser vacuum on the non-nuclear turbine side of the plant.


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**Critical Manufacturing Sector**
9. **December 10, Reliable Plant** – (National) **Boeing successfully completes 747-8 Freighter engine runs.** Boeing successfully completed the first engine runs for the 747-8 Freighter. The milestone marks another step in the 747 program’s steady progress in preparing for flight test. “We are very pleased with the engines’ performance during this test,” said the vice president and general manager of the 747 program. “The engines and all the systems performed as expected.” Engine runs began slightly before 10 a.m. (PST) Tuesday. During initial engine runs, the engines are started and operated at various power settings to ensure all systems perform as expected. The engine run test began with the auxiliary power system providing power to start the first of four General Electric GEnx-2B engines. The remaining three engines were started using the cross-bleed function. Basic systems checks continued throughout the test. The engines were powered down and inspected and will be restarted following a technical review. The team completed a vibration check and monitored the shutdown logic to ensure it functioned as expected. “This milestone is an exciting one for the GEnx-2B team and we anticipate the engines will continue the same high performance that we have experienced in our ground and flight tests,” said the general manager of the GEnx Program at GE Aviation. The GEnx-2B engine is optimized for the 747-8. It helps provide customers with improved fuel efficiency, reductions in emissions and noise and a lower cost of ownership.


10. **December 9, Bloomberg** – (National) **Harley recalls 111,569 motorcycles to fix fuel tank.** Harley-Davidson Inc., the biggest U.S. motorcycle maker, is recalling 111,569 Touring cycles to reinforce front fuel-tank mounts, which can distort in crashes and cause fuel leaks and fires. The voluntary U.S. recall affects certain 2009 and 2010 model-year Touring family motorcycles, including CVO touring and Trike products, Harley said in a letter posted on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s Web site. Harley, based in Milwaukee, said it has not received any reports of fires, injuries or deaths caused by the defect. Harley said it crash-tested a 2010 model bike in May, and found the bike did not meet the company’s requirements for fuel containment. Owners will be notified by next week, the company said in the letter.

Source: [http://www.dailyherald.com/story/?id=342959](http://www.dailyherald.com/story/?id=342959)

**Defense Industrial Base Sector**

11. **December 10, Army Times** – (National) **Camo tested in Afghanistan.** During a 17-day mission, a nine man team team operating out of Forward Operating Base Salerno in Khost province, Afghanistan, took more than 1,000 photographs of camouflage uniforms and equipment in desert, woodland, cropland and mountain settings between Kandahar and Bagram. Each photograph was calibrated to show the correct color despite varying daylight conditions. They evaluated each terrain setting to determine “where in this scenario would we be moving if ambushed or where would the enemy be
coming to us,” one member said. The calibrated photos gathered have been used to create a computerized photo simulation test that involves identifying individuals wearing different patterns at multiple ranges and settings. Several hundred soldiers from bases such as Fort Bragg, N.C., Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and Fort Drum, New York, will take the tests through December. The data from the tests will go into a report, and senior Army leaders will decide by late January whether to select a new camouflage pattern for Afghanistan. The team consisted of individuals from the Asymmetric Warfare Group; Army Special Operations Command; Army G4; the Maneuver Center of Excellence; the Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center; and the Naval Research Laboratory.


12. December 9, Knoxville News Sentinel – (Tennessee) This is not a test — Repeat — This is not a test! A federal team evaluating the readiness of the world’s fanciest fortress for bomb-grade uranium got an up-close look at emergency response this week when a forklift started smoking during an inspection. The plant’s general manager and president of B&W Y-12 said the incident occurred Tuesday — the second day of the National Nuclear Security Administration’s “operational readiness review.” A 22-member team is on site to certify the new $549 million Highly Enriched Uranium Materials Facility at the Y-12 nuclear weapons plant. He said he got a page during a meeting he was having with the federal manager at Y-12 notifying him that one of the fork trucks at HEUMF — which is not yet loaded with enriched uranium — had started to smoke during a test exercise known as an “evolution.” In this instance, workers at the high-security warehouse were simulating the unloading of uranium shipments. The general manager said Y-12’s fire department responded to the scene in about six minutes (a spokesman later said it was actually four minutes). That is of interest and importance because during an earlier test exercise at HEUMF it was reported that it took fire fighters 25 minutes to reach the location of a simulated uranium fire within the heavy-duty facility. Ultimately, the situation did not turn out to be too serious, and the smoking fork lift never became a flaming fire.

Source:

Banking and Finance Sector

13. December 9, Connecticut Department of Banking – (Connecticut) Banking commissioner warns of credit card scams. The Department of Banking has recently received several complaints from people who received phone calls claiming to be from their credit card company and requesting that they provide their credit card number. Take note that this is something a financial institution would never do. In one case the caller claimed to be from Bank of America and said they wanted to verify certain activity on the debit card. The caller said they needed the credit card number in order to pull up the account. In another case the caller identified himself as being with Visa Services and stated that he wanted to lower the interest rate to 6 percent. When the
consumer stated that they did not have a Visa card, the caller asked if they had a Master card and requested the credit card number. In both cases, the recipient refused to give their credit card information. “We want to remind Connecticut consumers to NEVER give out your credit card number or personal bank information to an anonymous caller,” advised the Banking Commissioner. “If you are asked to do so it is likely a scam, even if they identify themselves as your bank or financial institution. The only time it is safe is if you initiate the call. The best thing to do in this case is hang up and call your institution directly, using the number provided on your card.” Source: http://www.acorn-online.com/joomla15/thewestonforum/news/local/43891-banking-commissioner-warns-of-credit-card-scams.html

14. December 9, Dow Jones Newswires – (International) **TMX staff back in Toronto office after threat; trading not disrupted.** TMX Group Inc.’s downtown Toronto offices received a bomb threat on December 8, resulting in an evacuation of employees, but everyone has since returned to work after a police investigation. The evacuation came around 12:30 p.m. EST after a switchboard operator received a threat aimed at the Toronto Stock Exchange’s operations, said a TMX spokeswoman. Police were called in to investigate and the “all-clear” was given around 2:30 p.m. EST. At no time was trading affected, said the spokeswoman, noting that the exchange’s primary trading facility is at a separate location. Source: http://online.wsj.com/article/BT-CO-20091209-712302.html

15. December 8, Reuters – (Pennsylvania) **Five accused of preying on distressed homeowners.** A federal grand jury on December 8 accused five people of preying on homeowners faced with foreclosure by providing them with fraudulent new mortgages and pocketing the proceeds. The defendants advertised “Foreclosure Relief Services” for distressed homeowners and falsely promised to find an “investor” who would take out a new mortgage for them with affordable payments so they could remain in their homes. Instead, the defendants arranged for the home to be transferred to a straw purchaser, used false documents to obtain a mortgage in the name of the straw purchaser, and took equity from the sales for themselves, according to the indictment in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. The defendants, two of whom are attorneys, also concealed from mortgage lenders that the distressed homeowners were going to remain in their homes. They are charged with conspiracy to commit wire and mail fraud, and money laundering, and face up to 385 years in prison and $4 million in fines. The scheme obtained at least 35 fraudulent mortgages worth about $14.6 million, the statement said. Source: http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE5B75CH20091208

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**Transportation Sector**

16. December 10, Los Angeles Times – (National) **Snowstorm debilitates the Midwest.** A fierce storm ripped across the Midwest on Wednesday, stranding travelers, closing hundreds of schools, and cutting off power to thousands of people across the country’s
heartland. The National Weather Service warned residents in Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois and Michigan of “extremely dangerous blizzard conditions” with near whiteout driving conditions. The Iowa National Guard rolled out Humvees and nearly four dozen guardsmen to help the State Patrol haul more than 200 stranded motorists out of roadside ditches and empty corn fields. To the east, at least 200 flights were canceled at Chicago O’Hare International Airport, and hundreds more were delayed for hours. That caused a ripple effect across the country, forcing passengers even in Florida to have lengthy waits. In Minnesota, truck stops and gas stations were packed with idling tractor-trailers and frustrated drivers after state officials advised a halt to all travel through the southern part of the state. Whiteout conditions in Wisconsin prompted the governor to declare a state of emergency and close all state offices.


17. December 9, Fredricksburg Standard – (Texas) FAA restricts night landings at airport. With instrument flight rule (IFR) approaches for the Gillespie County Airport having recently been restricted by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Fredericksburg mayor and a Gillespie County judge are expected to meet one-on-one next week to continue negotiations over aviation rights for the Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Golf Course that adjoins the airport. “On the city side, we’re not happy to hear that,” said the mayor. “We believe that is a consequence for the fact that this has taken too long to work out.” The anticipated meeting comes on the heels of a November 23 FAA ruling removing authorization for all IFR approaches between sunset and sunrise at the county airport. The airport manager said Tuesday that he had been informed of the FAA decision via a phone call from the aviation division of the Texas Department of Transportation. The decision is on a temporary, yet-indefinite status, he explained. Air traffic into Gillespie County has already been impacted by the decision, the manager added.


18. December 9, NBC Bay Area – (California) BART wheels go off track in Oakland tunnel. Emergency crews had to evacuate passengers from a BART train that derailed between the 12th Street and Lake Merritt stations in Oakland Wednesday morning. BART declared the incident minor. About 75 riders were on the train, according to updated estimates from BART. The five-car train, which was headed to Richmond, remained stuck in a tunnel about 200 feet from the 12th Street station platform, a BART spokesman said. Investigators were examining the train, trying to determine what went wrong. He said a set of wheels on the lead car went off the rails. A BART spokesman said at noon that there was no estimate yet for when the train would be removed from the tunnel. Fire crews helped evacuate passengers from the tunnel. One passenger reported some back pain. One man suffered a seizure and received treatment at the station. The spokesman did not have details on his condition but said he believes the man was a passenger on the derailed train. The incident caused only minor service disruptions, the spokesman said. BART has numerous trackways and tunnels in the area, and there are many options for routing trains, he said.
Postal and Shipping Sector

Nothing to report

Agriculture and Food Sector

Nothing to report

Water Sector

19. December 9, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – (Oklahoma) EPA orders Thomas Exploration Company to stop discharging. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued a cease and desist administrative order to the Thomas Exploration Company of Tulsa, Oklahoma, for violations of the federal Clean Water Act. An October 13, 2009, EPA inspection of the company’s oil field production and brine disposal facility in Okmulgee County, Oklahoma, found an unauthorized discharge of oil field brine generated by production activities into a tributary of the Deep Fork River. The inspection also revealed that water located at the discharge point of entry into the tributary of the Deep Fork River was contaminated from brine discharges and salts. Based on these findings, the Thomas Exploration Company has been ordered to cease all discharges of pollutants from the facility and remove all brine and contaminated soils from the flow path located between the facility and the tributary of the Deep Fork River. The company has also been ordered to remove all brine from the tributary and within 30 days provide written certification that these activities have been completed.


20. December 9, Tulsa World – (Oklahoma) Man detained following six-hour standoff in Nowata County. A joint effort from Nowata County and Tulsa County sheriff’s offices successfully brought an end to a six-hour standoff Wednesday near Lenapah, Oklahoma, after an armed man cleared out and locked down the town’s water plant, officials said. The Nowata County sheriff said a man, 77, walked across the street from his home to the water plant at about noon, pointed a shotgun at an employee and chased him off. The man then padlocked the entrance to the water plant with his own lock and
went back to his house where he told officials he would shoot anyone who approached the water plant or his house, the sheriff said. The sheriff requested help from Tulsa County Sheriff’s Office, which sent a SWAT team and negotiator to the scene, he said. About 6:45 p.m., in the seventh hour of the standoff, law enforcement officials decided to enter the man’s home and end the standoff. No one was injured. The man is being detained in Nowata County, where he was undergoing a mental evaluation, the sheriff said. Lenapah is about 60 miles north of Tulsa.


21. December 9, Homeland Security News Wire – (Texas) **Chemical facility security bills would limit local control.** A water industry insider says that a new bill that creates new chemical security requirements for drinking water utilities, the Drinking Water System Security Act of 2009, would shift control over security and emergency measures in water treatment facilities from local authorities to the federal government; he is not sure this is a good idea. For utilities in the highest risk-based tiers, as determined by the Environmental Protection Agency, the bill essentially moves the ultimate decision-making authority for which disinfection technology is employed at these plants to the federal authority. The American Water Works Association fought to keep such authority at a local level but lost the battle. With this new legislation, water and wastewater facilities will get lumped into existing Homeland Security standards established in 2007 to assess and reduce risk of terrorism at chemical plants, the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards. “Certainly, the interests and concerns for local communities have to be at the forefront of decisions made by the local utilities,” says the past chairman of WWEMA and currently vice president of Severn Trent Services, a supplier of water and wastewater treatment solutions. “Is the federal government better equipped to balance the risk of terrorism against the risk associated with selecting the best, most effective treatment technology — more so than those who built and operate these facilities?”

Source: http://homelandsecuritynewswire.com/chemical-facility-security-bills-would-limit-local-control?page=0,0

22. December 8, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – (National) **EPA releases guidance to help federal facilities better manage stormwater.** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued guidance to help federal agencies minimize the impact of federal development projects on nearby water bodies. The guidance is being issued in response to a change in law and an Executive Order signed by the President, which calls upon all federal agencies to lead by example to address a wide range of environmental issues, including stormwater runoff. EPA worked closely with other federal agencies to develop this document, which provides background information, key definitions, case studies and guidance on meeting the new requirements of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. Under the new requirements, federal agencies must minimize stormwater runoff from federal development projects to protect water resources. Federal agencies can comply using a variety of stormwater management practices often referred to as “green infrastructure”
or “low impact development” practices, including reducing impervious surfaces, using vegetative practices, using porous pavements and installing green roofs. EPA is using sustainable techniques for reducing the effects of stormwater runoff at its facilities, such as installing a 3,000 square foot green roof as well as using rain gardens and cisterns to capture and reuse stormwater. Stormwater runoff in urban and suburban areas is one of the leading sources of water pollution in the United States. Runoff can cause increased flooding and erosion and more pollution to surface waters.

Source:
http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/0/70e60dc84b4712dd8525768600686449?OpenDocument

For another story, see item 37

Public Health and Healthcare Sector

23. December 9, WRAL 5 Raleigh – (North Carolina) Fire damages room at Raeford nursing home. Investigators were trying to determine the cause of a fire at a Raeford, North Carolina, nursing home Wednesday. Firefighters responded to the blaze at the Raeford Manor on Campus Ave., at about 2 p.m. The fire was quickly contained to a resident’s room. Paramedics transported some residents to nearby hospitals for treatment of minor smoke inhalation. “There were about 11 people or so transported to various hospitals for some first aid, some smoke inhalation, things of that nature. But basically, there were no injuries, which was great. The staff was great in getting them out,” the Raeford fire marshall said. The facility suffered smoke and water damage. About 50 displaced residents were relocated to other adult care facilities in the area. The State Bureau of Investigation was assisting with the investigation.


24. December 9, Minnesota Post – (Oklahoma) Animal rights vs. research: OSU halts anthrax study. Worried about stepped up activity by militant animal-rights groups, administrators at Oklahoma State University (OSU) in Stillwater abruptly canceled an anthrax vaccine study that would have killed dozens of baboons. “There are regrettably some violent acts committed by animal-rights groups, and the president felt we should take our breath here and not do this project just yet,” the OSU vice-president of research told the journal Nature. A different face of the heightened tension over animal research has dominated billboards and cable TV commercials in the Twin Cities recently. Stressing medical benefits from animal research, a consortium of scientists sponsored the national campaign to defend their work. The “ResearchSaves” campaign stresses that animal studies have helped find better treatments for breast cancer, heart disease, and a wide range of other ailments — including diseases that threaten animal health. The campaign is sponsored by the Foundation for Biomedical Research and the National Association for Biomedical Research. In Oklahoma, the project, funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) had been approved by the OSU animal-care committee in September and was awaiting review by the biosafety committee when the
OSU President vetoed it, calling the study “controversial,” Nature reported.
Source: http://www.minnpost.com/scientificagenda/2009/12/09/14126/animal_rights_vs_research_osu_halts_anthrax_study

25. December 9, Michigan Morning Sun – (Michigan) Spectacular fire destroys clinic. A fire destroyed the Rodnick Chiropractic Clinic south of Clare, Michigan, on Wednesday. Firefighters from four departments battled the fire at the clinic at N. Mission Road for hours, but most of their efforts were focused on keeping the fire from spreading to other buildings. The roof of the building already was on fire when the blaze was reported about 4:30 p.m. Winds were clocked gusting past 30 mph in mid-Michigan as crews from the Clare Fire Department, the Surrey and Garfield townships fire departments, and the Isabella Northeast Fire District tried to bring the fire under control. By 6 p.m., the building’s roof and at least one wall had caved in. The building appeared to be a total loss. Clare Police and other law enforcement blocked off traffic on Mission Road from the roundabout at the U.S. 127 entrance and exit ramps south to Herrick Road. The Pamida discount store, across Mission Road from the clinic, was closed as heavy smoke rolled in that direction. Firefighters at the scene said it was not clear if the smoke contained any hazardous chemicals, but fire crews were treating it as if it did. The Rodnick clinic in Clare is one of three clinics owned by a private doctor of Midland.

26. December 9, Bio Prep Watch – (National) Warning issued to synthetic DNA manufacturers. The Department of Health and Human Services has warned U.S. businesses trading in DNA to be on guard against abuses leading to bioterrorism. Guidelines for trading in customized DNA that can potentially lead to bioterrorism have been issued by the department. DNA sequencing, which consists of methods used to determine the order of the nucleotide bases in a DNA molecule, can lead to abuses used to terrorize and harm populations. Some security experts have said that a lone terrorist or a terrorist group can now use DNA sequencing to develop biological weapons from materials readily distributed by synthetic DNA companies. DNA sequencing has become a critical component in biological research and is applied in numerous fields, including diagnostic, biotechnology and forensic biology. DNA sequencing has also aided in accelerating biological research and discovery as well as in the sequencing of the human genome by the Human Genome Project. Synthetic DNA manufacturers, analysts worry, are not diligent enough in vetting their customers, which could allow bioterrorists access to DNA sequences. It is not known if a specific customer had raised this cause for concern, but the companies were told to be on the lookout for customers who purchased the same product repeatedly, insisted on paying cash or asked suppliers to mislabel supplies.
27. December 7, Technology Marketing Corporation – (National) **Bio espionage: They’re after the data.** Biotechnology is one of the fastest growing new sectors in the U.S. economy. Billions of dollars has been poured into biotech research and these investments will continue. The product of biotech research is really information that is turned into products, treatments and insights that drive value and revenues. This massive investment is at risk. International espionage activities have targeted the biotech industry with their eyes on data from later stages of research. Security experts estimate that theft of intellectual property from U.S. companies exceeds $200 billion a year. However, the figure could be significantly higher since most organization do not publically disclose security breaches that result in the theft of research data or other sensitive information. A comprehensive data breach analysis and report, based on a four-year history of data breaches in the U.S., suggests that incidents may be under-reported by a factor of 100 times. One recent report stated that more than half the companies analyzed did not have appropriate internal and external controls and the required policies in place to stop employees, contractors or partners from taking intellectual property and trade secrets. In January of 2008 an unclassified paper written by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence stated that foreign competitors and everyday criminals are stealing trade secrets from American pharmaceutical and biotech companies. Strong protection for intellectual property assets is as essential in biotech as it is the most leading-edge scientific endeavor today. In January, The Department of Homeland Security warned of an increased cyber attack threat by activists/hacktivists and extremist groups. These groups are known to target life sciences and biotech companies. Life sciences sector, pharmaceutical sector and biotech sector are areas that a consultant and advisor with Technolytics Institute expects information security challenges to increase exponentially for the foreseeable future.


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**Government Facilities Sector**

28. December 9, United Press International – (California) **Calif. teacher released after bomb scare.** A California college instructor has been released from custody after being arrested on suspicion of making a false bomb threat, authorities say. A University of California-Davis police spokesman said the instructor, 35, was released Tuesday without being charged in connection with an incident at an acting class he teaches as a graduate student, The Sacramento Bee reported. The newspaper said three UC-Davis students told campus police the instructor had made threatening statements that led to his arrest, but neither police nor prosecutors would reveal what it was the instructor allegedly said to his class. The teacher was reportedly booked into the Yolo County, California, jail Friday on suspicion of threatening with the intent to terrorize and making a false bomb threat. “I’m trying to be very cautious and considerate of him as well as the young people that made the complaints,” a UC-Davis Police Chief told the Bee. It reported more than a dozen UC-Davis professors and graduate students
appeared at a court hearing Tuesday to support the instructor. Students described the incident as a harmless bit of dramatic playfulness in which he pretended to have a bomb in his briefcase.

29. December 9, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – (Puerto Rico) EPA fines Puerto Rico Air National Guard for improperly managing underground petroleum storage tanks. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued a complaint to the Puerto Rico Air National Guard, part of the U.S. Air Force, for improperly managing underground tanks used to store diesel fuel and gasoline at its facility in Toa Baja. Leaking underground storage tanks pose significant threats to soil, surface water and ground water. EPA cited the Puerto Rico Air National Guard for failing to properly monitor its storage tanks for leaks and maintain records of release detection for two underground storage tank systems; the Agency is seeking a civil penalty of $154,353. “Out of sight does not mean out of mind when it comes to underground storage tanks, which is why it is critical that facilities monitor their tanks and make sure they are not leaking,” said the EPA Regional Administrator. “Given the close proximity of the Air National Guard facility to the coastline, leaks from its underground petroleum storage systems could have caused a serious environmental problem.”
Source: http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/0/2F0C16DC76986CBE852576870066EDA4

30. December 8, Associated Press – (Colorado; Kentucky) New chemical destruction method weighed. Army officials want to use explosives to eliminate some of the chemical weapons stockpiled in Kentucky and Colorado, a change they say could improve safety and prevent lags in the nation’s weapons destruction schedule. The manager of the Army’s Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives Program met Tuesday with community leaders in Richmond to explain the changes being considered for operations at Blue Grass Army Depot. He scheduled a similar meeting Wednesday in Pueblo, Colorado. At issue is the use of explosive technologies to eliminate some of the most troublesome mustard-filled projectiles — 15,000 of which are stored in Richmond. Although there are several devices under consideration, including some mounted on trailers, they all rely in part on an explosive charge to eliminate or contain the weapons. “We don’t view these as replacing our destruction capabilities, but rather, as augmenting them — another tool in our tool kit,” the program manager said. The Army says the technique is not considered incineration. The two states are using a chemical neutralization process rather than incinerators for destroying their stockpiles to comply with an international treaty. Under the current schedule, Kentucky would be the last weapons site to begin operations in 2018 and the last to finish in 2021.

For another story, see item 24
Emergency Services Sector

31. December 9, Los Angeles Times – (National) FBI asks former chief to lead Ft. Hood review. The FBI director on Tuesday tapped a former CIA and FBI chief to lead an independent review of the bureau’s “policies, practices and actions” before last month’s shooting rampage at Ft. Hood, Texas. “It is essential to determine whether there are improvements to our current practices or other authorities that could make us all safer in the future,” the FBI director said. The FBI has already conducted an internal investigation into the November 5 shootings and sent those findings to the White House, several FBI officials confirmed. Bureau officials, lawmakers, and other sources who requested anonymity when discussing the inquiry said it uncovered gaps in the way the FBI investigates potential terrorist threats and shares that information with other agencies. The internal review also raised questions about whether Justice Department guidelines in place at the time required too much evidence of suspected wrongdoing before agents could launch a criminal investigation; those guidelines were loosened late last year. The decision to conduct an outside review is “not based on any findings,” said one senior FBI official. “It is a logical step in the sequence. The director felt it was important to have someone who is independent “take a look both at our review and anything else he wants to look at.” The former FBI director also will be in a position to make recommendations that go beyond internal FBI policies and into the realm of more significant changes to laws and broader inter-agency guidelines on information sharing and opening investigations into U.S. citizens, according to several FBI officials.

Information Technology Sector

32. December 10, The Register – (International) Attackers hone Twitterific exploit-site concealer. Malware writers have revamped code that uses a popular Twitter command to generate hard-to-predict domain names, a technique that brings stealth to their drive-by exploits. Four weeks ago, when The Register reported Twitter application programming interfaces were being used to generate pseudorandom domain names, none of the addresses checked had actually been registered. The Russian researcher who discovered the technique, speculates the creators abandoned it because it was buggy and required too much effort. Now, the researcher has identified a new version of the algorithm that refines the process. What’s more, at least some of the names are now being registered and the sites are being used to push malware. “The new incarnation of this attack uses new algorithm and it is active right now,” he told The Register on December 9. The technique gives the exploit writers a limitless list of fly-by-night domain names to cycle through in an attempt to complicate the job of white
hat hackers trying to thwart the attack. Rather than there being a single address to block or disconnect, the site hosting the malware changes every 12 hours. The domain names are generated by an algorithm that looks at the top topics being discussed on Twitter at particular times. Because the trending topics, as they’re known, can’t be predicted in advance, the method prevents white hats from being able to snap up the addresses weeks or months in advance, as researchers combating the Conficker worm have done.

Source: [http://www.theregister.co.uk/2009/12/10/twitter_domain_generator/](http://www.theregister.co.uk/2009/12/10/twitter_domain_generator/)

33. **December 9, The Register – (International)** **German ISPs team up with gov agency to clean up malware.** The German government is planning to establish a botnet cleanup helpline for computer users affected by malware infection. ISPs are teaming up with the German Federal Office for Information Security (BSI) to set up an operation geared towards cleansing consumer systems from botnet infestation. ISPs will track down infected machines, before directing users towards a website offering advice and an associated call center, staffed by around 40. The project, due to start in 2010, was announced on December 8 at the German IT summit in Stuttgart. No funding details were provided. A statement by eco (a German Internet Industry Association), explains that the project aims to take Germany out of the top 10 countries harboring the highest number of malware infected systems. Germany currently ranks third on this list. The overall scheme is similar to recently announced draft plans by Australian Internet Industry Association to purge systems of botnet infections. Meanwhile, over in the US, Comcast announced a browser-based virus infection notification service back in October. The service is linked to a security portal offering security software from McAfee and others at no extra charge to customers of Comcast’s broadband services.


34. **December 9, IDG News Services – (International)** **Hackers find a home in Amazon’s EC2 cloud.** Security researchers have spotted the Zeus botnet running an unauthorized command and control center on Amazon’s EC2 cloud computing infrastructure. This marks the first time Amazon Web Services’ cloud infrastructure has been used for this type of illegal activity, according to the director of threat research with HCL Technologies, a contractor that does security research for CA. The hackers didn’t do this with Amazon’s permission, however. They got onto Amazon’s infrastructure by first hacking into a Web site that was hosted on Amazon’s servers and then secretly installing their command and control infrastructure. The director declined to say whose Web site was hacked to get onto Amazon’s cloud, but the Zeus software has now been removed, he said. Zeus is a password-stealing botnet. Variants of this malware have been linked to more than US$100 million in bank fraud in the past year. He thinks the hackers may have just stumbled on a Web site with a security vulnerability — they may have hacked the site’s software or simply stolen an administrative password from a desktop computer to get on the site. “I think it’s more a target of opportunity than a target of choice,” he said.

Source: [http://www.computerworld.com/s/article/9142058/Hackers_find_a_home_in_Amazon_s_EC2_cloud](http://www.computerworld.com/s/article/9142058/Hackers_find_a_home_in_Amazon_s_EC2_cloud)
Communications Sector

35. *December 9, IDG News Services* – (International) **IBM adding data centers, cloud computing lab in Asia.** IBM opened a new data center in South Korea on December 9 and said it is building another one in Auckland, New Zealand, to address a surge in demand for cloud computing and IT services in the Asia-Pacific region. The company also announced the opening of a cloud computing lab in Hong Kong. The total investment by IBM in these three facilities is about US$100 million, said a spokesman for IBM Global Services. The company, which already has over 400 data centers worldwide, will continue to invest in new data centers that offer cloud computing capabilities, while upgrading existing data centers to support cloud computing, the spokesman said. IBM is planning to announce by February next year a new data center in Raleigh, North Carolina, he added. The data center at Auckland will be in operation by 2010 with IBM investing about US$57 million in that center over the next ten years. IBM will locate the data center at Highbrook Business Park in East Tamaki. The 56,000 square-foot facility will include a 16,000 square-foot data center, IBM said. The company can add more stages to expand the data center as demand rises, it added. The center will support IBM’s clients in New Zealand and neighboring countries in the Asia-Pacific region, the spokesman said.

Source:  
[http://www.computerworld.com/s/article/9142059/IBM_adding_data_centers_cloud_computing_lab_in_Asia](http://www.computerworld.com/s/article/9142059/IBM_adding_data_centers_cloud_computing_lab_in_Asia)

For another story, see item 3

Commercial Facilities Sector

36. *December 10, Associated Press* – (Illinois) **1 dead, 12 injured in Chicago high-rise fire.** Hundreds of Chicago firefighters worked to put out a high-rise fire that left one person dead and 12 people injured. The fire broke out shortly after 1 a.m. Thursday, shooting flames out of the condo building. More than 200 residents ran out into the bitter cold. The 12 people injured included five firefighters, but authorities say none of the injuries appeared to be life-threatening. Authorities say the fire started on the 36th floor in the unit of the woman who died. Chicago Fire Commissioner said the victim was found near the front door of the apartment, apparently trying to get out. The cause
of the blaze is under investigation.
Source: http://cbs2chicago.com/wireapnewsil/Fire.in.Chicago.2.1361478.html

37. December 10, Santa Barbara Daily Sound – (California) Sewage spill shuts Arroyo Burro Beach. A 700-gallon sewage spill bubbled up from a manhole at the intersection of Mesa Lane and Cliff Drive in Santa Barbara, California on Monday, flowing to the ocean and shutting Arroyo Burro Beach. The beach closure was the second of its kind this year, and according to city of Santa Barbara officials, was caused by a clogged sewer main, not Monday’s storm. A wastewater superintendent with the city’s Public Works Department said the spill was reported at 8:15 a.m. He said about 100 gallons of sewage was recovered by a vacuum truck, but the remainder flowed into a storm drain, which emptied into Arroyo Burro Creek and made its way into the ocean. The spill was reported to the Santa Barbara County Health Department and, according to an environmental health specialist with the county, a closed sign was posted at the beach at around noon. Source: http://www.thedailysound.com/121009SewageSpill

National Monuments and Icons Sector

Nothing to report

Dams Sector

38. December 10, Associated Press – (Wisconsin) Wis. officials wrestle with decaying dam. Wisconsin environmental officials want to hear the public’s thoughts on what to do with a leaking dam in northwestern Wisconsin. The Rock Falls dam stands on a Chippewa River tributary in the Town of Rock Creek, about 10 miles southwest of Eau Claire. The dam was built in 1864 and rebuilt in 1926. The state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) says the structure is in poor condition and has sprung significant leaks. Ownership of the dam is not clear, but the DNR, the town and Dunn County have working together to figure out what to do. They plan to hold a public meeting on December 17 at the Rock Falls Town Hall. Source: http://www.twincities.com/wisconsin/ci_13967211?nclick_check=1

39. December 10, Morris Daily Herald – (Illinois) Limestone eroding downstream of Dresden Dam. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is concerned about the scouring (or erosion) of limestone bedrock on the downstream side of Dresden Island Lock and Dam in Illinois. As a result, contractors are being sought who can place up to 10,000 cubic yards of fill and concrete under water in the Illinois River. Plans and specifications will be available by Dec. 21, and proposals are due Jan. 4, 2010. Based on current information, cost of the project is estimated at less than $5 million. A spokesman with the Army Corps of Engineers in Rock Island said Dresden Island Dam
is being monitored and has not shown any movement or signs of distress. The dam and the lock continue to operate normally. The work is not expected to have an impact on navigation. He said that, through soundings, the Corps discovered the limestone bedrock on the downstream side of the dam has been eroded by the water going through the dam. “The limestone bedrock is above a relatively weak shale formation that erodes more easily than the limestone,” he explained. Because of the weakness of the shale, it could eventually cause a catastrophic failure of Dresden Island Dam. While a major failure of the dam is very unlikely, he said, the Army Corps wants to get the repairs finished as quickly as possible. How fast the work can be done will depend on the proposals received. Dresden Island Lock and Dam opened in 1933. The lock is 600 feet long and 110 feet wide. The dam includes a fixed spillway and nine gates, 60 feet wide and 17 feet high, and a 500-foot long earth-filled section with a steel sheet pile wall connecting to the Illinois and Michigan Canal embankment.


40. December 9, Associated Press – (Indiana) **Dam repairs delayed at S. Indiana fishing area.** State budget cuts will delay repairs to the dam at a public fishing area in southeastern Indiana. The Greensburg Public Fishing Area near Greensburg has been closed since August, when the Department of Natural Resources lowered the reservoir’s water level to evaluate the dam after it was damaged by heavy rain. The extent of the damage caused officials to completely drain the 23-acre lake. The agency says it had planned to complete the estimated $2.2 million in repairs by next summer, but that budget cuts have forced it to delay all nonessential construction projects.

Source: http://www.examiner.com/a-2362974–Dam_repairs_delayed_at_S__Indiana_fishing_area.html

41. December 9, Wenatchee World – (Washington) **Dam shutdown comes down to human error.** Failure to follow procedures for routine maintenance of a key backup power system caused the equipment failure that shut down Priest Rapids Dam November 30. The sudden failure cost the Grant County Public Utility District (PUD) at least $350,000 in lost generation and repairs to nine of the dam’s 10 generators. The hydro operations manager at Priest Rapids said the shutdown happened during routine maintenance of a battery backup system that powers the dam’s critical controls system during power loss. While the battery backup system was shut off, the work crew also mistakenly switched off the regular power supply. Both power sources should never be off at the same time, he said. The error reduced voltage to nine of the dam’s 10 generators. When the battery power was restored — about 1.5 minutes later — components that protect the generators from voltage loss caused them to “trip” or go offline. Parts that protect the generators from voltage loss burned, emitting a lot of smoke, but no flames during the incident. A PUD spokeswoman said commissioners learned Monday that human error caused the outage. The spokeswoman said procedures are in place for correctly switching equipment off during maintenance, but the crew did not follow them. She said dam officials should finish an investigation into the incident in about two weeks. The investigation will produce recommendations about how to prevent the problem from happening again. The entire dam was offline November 30 from about 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., when crews managed to get one
generator back on line. By late December 2 all the damaged units were again operational. The 10th generator was already offline at the time of the incident for an unrelated repair.

42. December 9, St. Tammany News – (Louisiana) **Heavy rains, broken pump cause flooding in Slidell.** A combination of seven inches of rain in a short period of time, plus problems with two of the city’s pumping stations made for flooded streets and a soggy day for Slidell, Louisiana residents Tuesday. By 10:30 Tuesday morning, the mayor said the Department of Public Operations had closed down 23 streets due to high water. There were no reports of water getting into any houses. However, there were reports of high water getting into parked automobiles. Problems with the pumps started early in the morning. The pumps in the Schneider Canal in south Slidell got clogged up because of the water hyacinths in the canal. However, work crews were able to clean out the vegetation, and all the pumps at the Schneider Canal station are working. This temporary outage of those pumps caused some flooded streets in several of the subdivisions in the southern part of the city, but once the pumps went online again, the waters receded rapidly. Above, the Schneider Canal pumps in Slidell work overtime to clear out flooded streets Tuesday after seven inches of rain fell on the city. Then a part broke in one of the pumps at the City Barn pumping station off Old Bayou Road. That caused a lot of flooding to the north of Gause Boulevard, where most of the street closings occurred. The mayor said that a part was being brought in from New Orleans and that by Tuesday evening, all four pumps at the station will be working. Up until then, only two of the pumps were operating, which made for slow drainage.
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