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Media Advisory

December's Nevada Commission on Homeland Security Meeting

Carson City, NV - Governor Brian Sandoval, Chairman of the Nevada Commission on Homeland Security (NCHS), started the meeting by thanking Doug Gillespie, Sheriff for Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, Michael Haley, Sheriff for Washoe County Sheriff's Office and Vice-Chairman for the Commission, and Betral Washington, Chief from the Clark County Fire Department for their time and service on the NCHS. Additionally, he recognized Selby Marks, Homeland Security Administrator for Nevada Division of Emergency Management/Homeland Security (NDEM) on obtaining his Ph.D. in Political Science. Marks completed his dissertation on the structure and collaboration of fusion centers and Governor Sandoval said, "this research will be valuable for Nevada."

Chief Bertal Washington, Clark County Fire Department and Critical Infrastructure Committee chair (CIC), announced the appointment of Rachel Skidmore with the Southern Nevada Counter Terrorism Center as the Chairman of the committee and Dan Dundon the Vice Chair of the committee with the Nevada Threat Analysis Center. Washington presented an update to the Commission, provided by Irene Davis with Clark County Emergency Management and Chairman of the State, Local, Tribal, Territorial, Government Coordinating Council (SLTTGCC). The SLTTGCC is preparing to conduct regional infrastructure resiliency focus groups with private sector partners and critical stakeholders, with the goal to provide regional reports covering identified capability gaps. Additionally, the SLTTGCC conducts monthly webinars covering all aspects of infrastructure resiliency for private sector partners. Chief Washington also discussed a new toolkit from DHS as part of Cyber security month, which is designed to share ideas supporting public and private partnerships using various social media. Two new members were appointed to the SLTTGCC, Jeff Maples with Southwest Gas and Bruce Barnes with NV Energy.

Chris Ipsen, Information Security Officer with the Nevada Department of Administration, addressed the Commission concerning the development of the Cyber Security Committee's goals, structure and key objectives. Membership and the scope of the committee were outlined and five objectives were identified.

Members identified for the committee included:

- Federal Bureau of Investigations
- Department of Homeland Security
- Chair of the Critical Infrastructure Committee
- Public Safety
- County Representatives
- City Representatives
- Nevada National Guard
- University Representatives
- Energy (water & power) Industry
- Private Sector (gaming)

The five objectives identified by the committee include:

- Identify Risk – How each risk could affect the Nevada’s infrastructure?
- Statewide Cyber Security – Outline short and long term goals.
- Enhance Statewide Awareness – Including all levels of government, critical infrastructure and private sector.
- Enhance Communication About the Risks – Actively engage fusion centers
- Recommendations for potential grant availability and programs

Commission members discussed potentially expanding the membership to include local cyber businesses, transportation entities, and representation of rural counties. The discussion also addressed specific issues outlined within each objective.

Gonzalo Cordova, Nevada Protective Security Advisor, Department of Homeland Security provided an overview to the Commission on the Regional Resiliency Assessment Program (RRAP). Cordova spoke to the historical and current resiliency efforts, RRAP process, program benefits and an overview of the southern Nevada RRAP project. Cordova explained that the goal of the program is to identify the opportunities for regional homeland security officials and critical infrastructure partners to strengthen resilience to all hazards. The RRAP project in southern Nevada will address the following major categories:

- Identification and enhanced assurance of infrastructure dependencies
- Mitigation of Physical vulnerabilities
- Closing gaps in the planning, procedures, analysis and training

Nevada’s RRAP project is 1 of 15 in the nation; each program concentrates on the regionally-significant issues identified. The project will be completed in approximately one year and the findings will be disseminated to Nevada Division of Emergency Management/Homeland Security (NDEM) along with local government entities.

Jim Wright, Director for the Department of Public Safety opened the discussion by reporting the success of the commission’s investment into interoperability communication efforts for the state. Wright spoke to the recent demonstration of new equipment installed and tested by several jurisdictions this week. The new equipment and procedures implemented allowed officials from all jurisdictions to communicate at the touch of one button. In the event of a live occurrence this implementation will expedite the execution of the plan and will potentially save lives.

Kevin Schaller, Emergency Manager for the University of Nevada Reno invited the Commission to attend an upcoming Active Assailant Exercise at the campus on March 19, 2015. The exercise will test regional assailant plan, best practices and test capabilities.

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