



Homeland Security

Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report for 28 December 2009

Current Nationwide Threat Level

ELEVATED



Significant Risk of Terrorist Attacks

For information, click here:
<http://www.dhs.gov>

Top Stories

- The Associated Press reports that a man who held three people for more than eight hours December 23 inside a Wytheville, Virginia post office surrendered to police after freeing the hostages unharmed. Dozens of SWAT members surrounding the building did not have to fire a shot. (See item [25](#))
- According to the Wall Street Journal, multiple Internet sites were temporarily disrupted for some Web users after Neustar Inc., the company that provides them directory service with UltraDNS, suffered a “denial of service” attack before Christmas. Sites included those run by Amazon.com Inc. (See item [45](#))

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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 24, Galveston Daily News* – (Texas) **Oil leak closes state Highway 87.** A crude oil pipeline leaked Wednesday, forcing the temporary closure of state Highway 87 on Bolivar Peninsula. Firefighters in Crystal Beach, Texas, received a report about 7:20

a.m. and found an oil sheen on the highway. Firefighters began slowing traffic and diverting the two-lane highway onto one lane, but traffic eventually was detoured for the cleanup near Boyt Road, authorities said. The leak was stopped about an hour later by Enterprise Products, which operates the pipeline. A valve's mechanical failure on a 1-inch service pipe sprayed the oil into the air and a strong Gulf wind carried the oil north across the highway, an Enterprise Products spokesman said. Officials at the scene of the leak said as much as 15 barrels of crude oil sprayed across the ground. Although the company will calculate the volume of the spill, the spokesman did not have an immediate estimate Wednesday, he said. The pipe valve that leaked is part of a system that pumps offshore oil to Texas City refineries.

Source: <http://galvestondailynews.com/story.lasso?ewcd=83d3c57c42cf3ed3>

2. *December 24, Associated Press* – (Texas) **2 fires at Valero refinery in Texas City.** Two small fires broke out at a Valero Energy Corp. refinery in Texas City. A Valero spokesman told the Associated Press that nobody was hurt in either blaze Thursday. The spokesman says the initial fire was reported around 5 a.m. Thursday at a crude unit and was quickly put out. He says a small secondary fire in a gas line had been contained several hours after the initial fire. He added that there was no environmental impact to the community and the impact to refinery production “is unknown at this time.” He provided no cause for the fires.
Source: <http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/APStories/stories/D9CPNM784.html>
3. *December 23, Minneapolis City Pages* – (Minnesota) **Suspected power substation copper thief darkens chunk of Egan.** One man was hospitalized with burns, and two others were questioned by police after 7,100 Egan residents found themselves without power overnight following an explosion at a Dakota Electric substation. KARE 11 reported that police converged on the Taconite Trail electrical substation at about 12:30 a.m. following reports of an explosion. When they got there, they found the three men and some bolt cutters. The power company believes the men were trying to steal copper.
Source: http://blogs.citypages.com/blotter/2009/12/suspected_power.php
4. *December 23, Associated Press* – (National) **Gasoline shortages ease from Va. to Conn.** Scattered gasoline shortages caused by a record-breaking winter storm eased Wednesday as fuel trucks sidelined by up to 2 1/2 feet of snow re-supplied gas stations from Virginia to Connecticut, industry workers said. Some stations, including at least two in Frederick, Maryland, were out of gas as recently as Tuesday, reflecting a combination of delayed deliveries, low dealer inventories, panic buying before the storm and heavy demand afterward, said the executive director of the Gasoline & Automotive Service Dealers of America, a trade group based in Manchester, Connecticut. He said no more than 15 percent of East Coast dealers went dry. Those that did were often clustered as consumers panicked by “No gas” signs at one station made runs on others nearby, he said.
Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory?id=9411375>

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Chemical Industry Sector

5. *December 23, KUSA 9 Denver* – (Colorado) **I-70 partially closed after semi, snow plow crash.** The Colorado State Patrol (CSP) says at least one person was seriously hurt when a semi crashed into a snow plow on Wednesday afternoon. The CSP says the accident closed the left lane of Interstate 70 east of Watkins when it happened around 1:30 p.m. The semi has lost diesel fuel into the surrounding area and the truck with the Colorado State Patrol has leaked magnesium chloride. The driver of the snow plow was injured and is in serious condition. The driver of the semi hit the snow plow from behind. He admitted to the Colorado State Patrol that he was not paying attention and he was cited for careless driving.

Source: <http://www.9news.com/news/local/article.aspx?storyid=129475&catid=346>

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Nuclear Reactors, Materials, and Waste Sector

6. *December 24, Huntsville Times* – (Alabama) **TVA cited in 2 incidents of retaliation against workers.** Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) violated rules designed to allow workers to express safety concerns without fear of retaliation in two separate incidents at its Browns Ferry Nuclear plant near Athens, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) said Wednesday. The incidents occurred in 2005 and 2007. In the first incident a contractor working on quality assurance programs during the Browns Ferry Unit 1 restart was removed from his position at Browns Ferry. The NRC determined he was terminated, at least in part, for raising safety concerns to management. The worker accused his manager of being “too close to the line organization” to do his job properly, the NRC said. The worker was removed from the TVA project, but did not lose his job with his employer, a TVA spokesman said Wednesday. In the second incident, a temporary maintenance foreman was demoted after raising questions about the utility’s handling of its “fit to work” program, which tries to screen out workers who may be using drugs or alcohol or have other problems that can affect performance.

Source:

<http://www.al.com/news/huntsvilletimes/local.ssf?/base/news/1261649758316800.xml&coll=1>

7. *December 23, United Press International* – (International) **Toronto-area nuclear plant spills water.** Nuclear officials were monitoring water supplies east of Toronto Wednesday after a nuclear plant leaked 52,000 gallons of tritium-laced water into Lake Ontario. Ontario Power Generation (OPG) officials said samples taken continuously in and around the Darlington nuclear plant since the December 21 leak were showing no hazards in the drinking water, the Toronto Star reported. An OPG spokesman said the spill contained 0.1 per cent of the plant’s allowable monthly release of tritium, the radioactive isotope of hydrogen. The OPG spokesman said the leak happened the afternoon of December 21 when staff tried filling two underground emergency cooling tanks that were already full, causing the overflow onto the ground, most of which flowed into Lake Ontario, the Star said.

Source: http://www.upi.com/Top_News/International/2009/12/23/Toronto-area-nuclear-plant-spills-water/UPI-39401261586312/

8. *December 23, York Daily Record* – (Pennsylvania) **Peach Bottom returns to full power.** Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station’s Unit 2 reactor returned to full power shortly after 5 p.m. Tuesday after maintenance crews and plant engineers repaired an electrical switch, said the site communications manager at Peach Bottom. Plant officials reduced the reactor’s power by 49 percent around midnight Tuesday in an effort to address the instrumentation problem, she said.

Source: http://ydr.inyork.com/ci_14055865

For another story, see item [12](#)

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Critical Manufacturing Sector

9. *December 24, BBC News* – (International) **Venezuela’s Chavez threatens to kick out carmakers.** Venezuela’s president has told car companies they must share their technology with local businesses or leave the country. He gave the ultimatum to Toyota, Ford, General Motors, and Fiat during a public address. If the demand is not met, he said: “I invite you to pack up your belongings and leave. I’ll bring in the Russians, the Belarusians, the Chinese.” He attacked Toyota in particular, saying it was not producing enough four-wheel drive vehicles, which are used for public transport, and ordered an investigation. So far, the carmakers have not responded. Last year, car plants in Venezuela produced 135,042 cars and trucks.

Source: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/8429427.stm>

10. *December 24, Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* – (Pennsylvania) **Fire quickly doused at Dormont Manufacturing in Penn Township.** Firefighters from 10 companies Wednesday night quickly gained control of a fire at Dormont Manufacturing in Penn Township. Westmoreland Department of Public Safety received an initial report of a fire at 10:12 p.m. at the plant along Enterprise Drive. Firefighters reported gaining control of the blaze within about 20 minutes. According to the company’s Web site, Dormont is the world’s leading provider of flexible stainless-steel connectors for natural/LP gas and fluid conveyance applications. Information regarding the extent of damage was unavailable late Wednesday night.

Source: http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/s_659269.html

11. *December 23, Beloit Daily News* – (Illinois) **EPA seeks action after plant blast.** The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Director has asked the Illinois Attorney General’s office to proceed with an enforcement action against NDK Crystal Inc. in Belvidere for polluting the soil, air and water after an explosion on December 7. The plant produces synthetic quartz crystals for computers, phones, liquid crystal displays and other electronics. Approximately 800 to 850 gallons of sodium hydroxide solution, as well as quartz crystals, were released into the atmosphere during the incident, according to a press release from the Illinois EPA. In addition, wastewater containing

process chemicals may have been discharged through the facility's flood drains, and by way of runoff from surface areas. A man was killed by flying debris from the explosion. The Illinois EPA is requesting that the Attorney General require NDK Crystal to conduct a thorough analysis of the cause of the explosion and release, to submit a written report of the findings and recommendations for corrective and preventive actions to minimize the potential for similar future incidents. NDK has been operating the Belvidere facility since 2003.

Source:

http://www.beloitdailynews.com/articles/2009/12/24/news/local_news/news122409.txt

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Defense Industrial Base Sector

12. *December 23, U.S. Government Accountability Office* – (National) **Managing sensitive information: Actions needed to prevent unintended public disclosures of U.S. nuclear sites and activities.** On May 7, 2009, the Government Printing Office (GPO) published a 266-page document on its Web site that provided detailed information on civilian nuclear sites, locations, facilities, and activities in the United States. The GAO report was published on December 15, 2009 and posted for review on December 23. At the request of the Speaker of the House, this report determines (1) which U.S. agencies were responsible for the public release of this information and why the disclosure occurred, and (2) what impact, if any, the release of the information has had on U.S. national security. In performing this work, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) analyzed policies, procedures, and guidance for safeguarding sensitive information and met with officials from four executive branch agencies involved in preparing the document, the White House, the House of Representatives, and GPO. Source: <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-10-251>

13. *December 23, Aviation Week* – (National) **USAF appears to shelve C-130 upgrade.** The U.S. Air Force appears to have halted the forthcoming competition to build C-130 Avionics Modernization Program (AMP) kits, a sign that this program could be terminating in the coming budget request for 2011. On December 16, the Air Force program office overseeing the C-130 AMP program issued a statement noting that the “government is finalizing the way forward on the C-130 AMP program” and the solicitation is “cancelled.” The statement adds that “the government will readdress the [issue] once a way forward for the AMP program has been determined.” This is the latest chapter in the troubled \$5.8 billion program. It began as an effort to standardize the cockpits and avionics of roughly 500 C-130s of about 13 different types, but due to cost and schedule overruns and development problems, the Pentagon scaled the program back in 2005 to 222. The plan now stands at 221 aircraft needing the kit, owing to an aircraft loss, and another 129 C-130s in service also require some kind of upgrade to gain access to preferred air routes. Source: [http://www.aviationweek.com/aw/generic/story.jsp?id=news/C130-122309.xml&headline=USAF Appears To Shelve C-130 Upgrade &channel=defense](http://www.aviationweek.com/aw/generic/story.jsp?id=news/C130-122309.xml&headline=USAF%20Appears%20To%20Shelve%20C-130%20Upgrade%20&channel=defense)

For another story, see item [11](#)

Banking and Finance Sector

14. *December 23, Boston Globe* – (Massachusetts) **Six indicted in latest loan fraud case.** Adding to a growing roster of mortgage fraud charges in the Boston area, three real estate investors, two mortgage brokers, and a former lawyer were indicted in an alleged scheme involving \$12.5 million in loans and at least 26 distressed properties, the state attorney general's office said December 22. In indictments returned by a Suffolk County grand jury, the six defendants face multiple counts of larceny and other charges related to a scheme that prosecutors allege gained them about \$2 million in profits. They say the group used false documents to defraud homeowners and more than a dozen lenders. Authorities said Boston Equity inflated borrowers' incomes and falsely said the properties would be used as primary residences. Many of the buyers lived out of state.
Source: http://www.boston.com/business/articles/2009/12/23/six_indicted_in_latest_loan_fraud_case/
15. *December 23, Aspen Newspapers, Inc.* – (Georgia) **Bank robber uses pipe bomb scare in Johns Creek crime.** Johns Creek, Georgia, police said a bank robber sent a teller what appeared to be a pipe bomb December 11 through the business' drive through lane pneumatic tube system. According to the incident report, the suspect pulled up to the drive through teller lane at the Wachovia at State Bridge and Medlock Bridge roads at about 3:30 p.m. in a gray BMW sports utility vehicle. He sent the teller an apparent pipe bomb with a typed and hand-written note wrapped around it. The note read, "This is a pipe bomb, send me all your 100s and 20s." The teller said she stuffed the canister with around \$3,000 in cash, then sent it back. The suspect left, and his tag was obscured by what looked like white tape, she said. He went north on Medlock Bridge Road, she added. Both FBI agents and Johns Creek detectives are investigating the case.
Source: http://www.northfulton.com/Articles-c-2009-12-23-181295.114126-sub_Bank_robber_uses_pipe_bomb_scare_in_Johns_Creek_crime.html
16. *December 23, Treasure Coast Palm* – (Florida) **Thieves use electronic device to steal credit card information at ATMs in Martin County.** Dozens of Bank of America customers in Martin County the week of December 21 became victims of an automatic teller machine scam which allows the thieves to swipe card information and steal money, the Martin County Sheriff's Office said. At least \$50,000 from customer accounts was stolen through the scam, which law enforcement officials called "skimming." The thieves place a wireless skimmer and micro-camera on the ATM to capture personal information from unsuspecting card holders, the Sheriff's Office said. The thieves retrieve the devices and make duplicate cards using the PIN numbers captured on the cameras, authorities said.
Source: <http://www.tcpalm.com/news/2009/dec/23/thieves-use-electronic-device-to-steal-credit-at/>
17. *December 23, New York Times* – (National) **TARP repayments from Citi and Wells**

completed. The Treasury Department announced it had received repayments on its Troubled Asset Relief Program investments in Wells Fargo and Citigroup. The total came to \$45 billion, bringing the entire amount of repaid funds to \$164 billion. According to the Treasury, Wells Fargo repaid \$25 billion under the Capital Purchase Program and Citigroup repaid \$20 billion under the Targeted Investment Program, both of which will wind down at the end of this year. The Treasury now estimates that total bank repayments should exceed \$175 billion by the end of 2010, cutting total taxpayer exposure to the banks by three-quarters. In addition, the Treasury, the Federal Reserve, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and Citigroup terminated the agreement under which the United States government agreed to share losses on a pool of originally \$300 billion of Citigroup assets.

Source: <http://dealbook.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/12/23/citi-wells-tarp-repayments-completed-today/>

18. *December 23, Anchorage Daily News* – (Alaska) **Victim count in store credit card hacking could hit 1,000.** Computer hackers apparently infiltrated a local retailer’s data and stole the debit and credit card information of at least 150 Anchorage residents, possibly hundreds more, according to Anchorage police. Though about 150 victims have been confirmed, police estimate the number of local victims could range as high as 1,000 or more in what looks to be an organized nationwide scheme to steal account information and use it to buy thousands of dollars in goods to be sold for cash, just in time for the holidays. “There’s a reason why they do this at this particular time: because of all the transactions, it’s easy in all the noise to hide and to be less likely to be caught and be able to use the stolen goods longer, for larger amounts,” said an APD cyber crimes detective. Reports of card fraud began trickling in about a month ago and soon began to snowball, according to police. The victims did not seem connected to each other, so police had to painstakingly go through their financial records to narrow down the source of the breach, which investigators say was at least one local business. Police would not release the name of the business, saying the retailer, too, is a victim in the case. Police say consumers should check their bank and credit accounts often and report unexpected charges to the bank or issuing business.

Source: <http://www.adn.com/news/alaska/story/1067651.html>

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Transportation Sector

19. *December 24, Press Association* – (International) **Watchdog urges improvements after Eurostar snow chaos.** The Channel Tunnel travel chaos in London and Folkestone on December 18 showed that the set-up of Eurostar and Eurotunnel “does not meet the information needs of passengers,” the tunnel’s Anglo-French supervisory body has said. Both companies must jointly develop “satisfactory solutions in this matter,” added the Channel Tunnel Intergovernmental Commission (IGC). The commission said “passenger comfort should be understood in the broadest sense.” This included “material transport conditions, evacuation conditions and information,” with the commission saying that “providing this comfort is an obligation for railway undertakings and for Eurotunnel.” Hundreds of passengers were trapped in the tunnel for

hours when five high-speed trains became immobilized after extremely cold conditions in northern France led to snow affecting their electronics. Passengers later spoke of nightmare conditions of cold and hunger. Channel Tunnel Folkestone to Calais shuttle train company Eurotunnel suffered from the knock-on effect of the chaos. The ICG said that it had held an extraordinary meeting on December 23 to analyze that weekend's events. This was attended by a former Eurotunnel commercial director and by the French rail official, who are conducting an independent inquiry into the debacle.

Source: <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ukpress/article/ALeqM5jw-ODIALUxMzW9i8ZOefjH3s5AyA>

20. *December 24, KXTV 10 Sacramento* – (California) **Copper thieves shut down portion of Light Rail system.** Service on a portion of the Sacramento Regional Transit Light Rail system was disrupted Thursday morning after thieves stole copper wire that carried power to the system. According to an R.T. spokeswoman, the wire was stolen from the area of Kilgore Road and Folsom Boulevard in Rancho Cordova. She says Light Rail service between the Hazel station and the Mather Field/Mill station was shut down. R.T. is using buses to carry Light Rail passengers past the closure. She says crews hope to have the stolen wire replaced within a few hours. No information on the suspects who stole the wire has been released.

Source: <http://www.news10.net/news/story.aspx?storyid=72291&catid=2>

21. *December 23, United Press International* – (National) **Air marshal weapon details made public.** Details of the gun type U.S. air marshals will soon be carrying have been made public, a move marshals say could put them and air passengers at risk. With the approval of the Transportation Security Administration, manufacturer Sig Sauer released specifics of the weapons in a press release, ABC News reported December 22. Sig Sauer has a contract to equip air marshals with its .357 SIG caliber P250 Compact pistol, ABC said. Current and former Air Marshals called the release part of “an alarming pattern of disclosures” by the TSA. “This is the last thing you want to give to anyone who wants to carry out an act of terror,” said the president of a trade group representing the marshals. “Anyone who wants to take over a plane can be proactive and research that type of weapon, basically know everything about that weapon before going on the plane,” he said. “You really don’t want to give that playbook out to your enemy.” The air marshals approved the information released, a Sig Sauer spokesman said. “They changed it slightly, but there was no sensitive information in it,” said the vice president for marketing at Sig Sauer.

Source: http://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2009/12/23/Air-marshals-weapon-details-made-public/UPI-25251261617255/

22. *December 23, Associated Press* – (Tennessee) **Man accused of bomb threat gets court date; overbooked flight cited.** A man who police say threatened to “blow up” an airplane after getting bumped from an overbooked flight at the Nashville airport is scheduled to appear in court December 23. He was charged with making a felony false report and was arrested December 19 at the Nashville International Airport. According to a police affidavit, the 26-year-old became irate with a Continental Airline employee when she told him he would have to be put on another flight. The affidavit said he told

her, “If I don’t get a seat, I’m going to blow up the airplane.” He continued to be angry and threatened to “blow up” the airport, according to the affidavit. He was being held at the Davidson County jail on a \$10,000 bond.

Source: [http://www.usatoday.com/travel/flights/2009-12-23-bomb-threat-court-date_N.htm?csp=34&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+UsatodaycomTravel-TopStories+\(Travel++Top+Stories](http://www.usatoday.com/travel/flights/2009-12-23-bomb-threat-court-date_N.htm?csp=34&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+UsatodaycomTravel-TopStories+(Travel++Top+Stories)

23. *December 23, San Luis Obispo Tribune* – (California) **Passengers are let back inside Santa Maria airport after evacuation.** The Santa Maria Public Airport was evacuated for about four hours Wednesday afternoon when security screeners reported a suspicious bag. Passengers were allowed back into the airport around 5 p.m. after no threatening devices were found, according to the General Manager. The device was first reported about 1:15 p.m., he said. The manager said two departing flights were delayed — one on United Airlines bound for Los Angeles and an Allegiant Airlines flight bound for Las Vegas. The United plane was on the ground in Santa Maria while ticketed passengers remained in the terminal and adjacent Radisson hotel, he said. The Allegiant plane bound for Santa Maria remained in Las Vegas, he said. The manager said he did not know what item screeners found in the bag. It was the first such evacuation in the past year, he said.

Source: http://www.sanluisobispo.com/news/local/breaking_news/story/967542.html

24. *December 23, Seattle Post-Intelligencer* – (Washington) **No more light rail for operator who caused derailment.** A Sound Transit spokesman says the operator responsible for a light rail derailment on November 16 will not be returning to her job driving trains. The two-car train derailed while leaving Sound Transit’s central operations base in Sodo. The accident happened about 3 p.m. and blocked the southbound track until after midnight. No passengers were on board. According to a preliminary report, the accident happened because the operator ran through a stop signal to enter the main line track. Sound Transit’s control center detected the train in an incorrect position and ordered the operator to stop, according to a news release. Employees in the control center then directed the operator to get out and ensure the track switches were correctly aligned so she could reverse off the mainline and back onto the access tracks. During the investigation, the operator acknowledged that she did not check the switch alignment before backing up, the spokesman said. Typically, trains are crawling along at less than 10 mph when they reach the access point. According to Sound Transit’s procedure before the accident, operators were required to stop and press a button to electronically enter their route, which triggers the switches to direct the train to the appropriate track. In this case, the operator did not enter her route before accessing the tracks, the spokesman said.

Source: <http://blog.seattlepi.com/transportation/archives/189048.asp?source=myspi>

For more stories, see items [1](#), [4](#), [5](#), [30](#), and [33](#)

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Postal and Shipping Sector

25. *December 24, Associated Press* – (Virginia) **Man in wheelchair surrenders after Va. hostage standoff.** A disabled man in a wheelchair who authorities say held three people for more than eight hours inside a small-town Virginia post office surrendered to police after freeing the hostages unharmed. The suspect, from Sullivan County, Tennessee, was being questioned and authorities did not have a motive, a police spokesman said. The suspect was scheduled to appear in federal court in Roanoke at 9:30 a.m. Thursday. The standoff began at about 2:30 p.m. Wednesday after the suspect, who has an artificial leg, pushed the wheelchair into the one-story post office in the mountain town of Wytheville in western Virginia, state police said. Shots were fired soon after the suspect entered the building, but no one was injured and at least two of the hostages were able to call family or friends. About 8 hours later, authorities ordered the suspect to come out. The three hostages walked out first and the suspect followed, this time sitting in the wheelchair. Dozens of SWAT members surrounding the building did not have to fire a shot.
Source: http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2009-12-23-virginia-hostage_N.htm?loc=interstitialskip
26. *December 23, Arkansas Online* – (Arkansas) **Explosive device found in mailbox.** An apparent pipe bomb that turned out to be loaded with explosives from fireworks was detonated by police Tuesday after a North Little Rock, Arkansas, resident discovered it in her mailbox. No one was injured and no arrest has been made. The victim called authorities to her Arbor Oaks Drive home early Tuesday night after finding what appeared to be a cardboard cigar container wrapped in electrical tape and with a fuse sticking out, according to a Pulaski County sheriff's office report. But after conducting a controlled blast to disable the device, officials learned the apparent BBs were actually pyrotechnic pellets from fireworks and not projectiles, the report said. The remains of the device were turned over to a United States Postal Inspector, who took over the investigation because it involved a mailbox.
Source: <http://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2009/dec/23/explosive-device-found-mailbox/>

For another story, see item [38](#)

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Agriculture and Food Sector

27. *December 22, Wall Street Journal* – (Florida) **Incredible disappearing oranges.** Florida is growing its second-smallest orange crop this decade, forcing futures traders to focus on two key elements — fruit size and weather — as the calendar flips to 2010. The U.S. Agriculture Department estimates the current 2009-10 Florida crop at 135 million 90-pound boxes, down 17 percent from last year's crop. Making matters worse, unusual weather conditions have conspired to make the fruit smaller than average this year, so it takes more oranges to fill a box. The USDA in a December crop production report cited below-normal fruit sizes and freezing weather followed by drought in early 2009 as the main culprits. The industry also continues to lose trees to canker and citrus greening.

Source:

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704157304574612491643696808.html?mod=googlenews_wsj

28. *December 22, KCRG 9 Cedar Rapids* – (Iowa) **Council approves emergency demo of Sinclair site.** On December 22, the Cedar Rapids City Council voted to move ahead with an emergency demolition of the Sinclair site, with FEMA paying for most of it. The old Farmstead Foods packing plant there has been burning for a week now. Firefighters are still at the scene, spraying water to put out the fire and limit possible asbestos contamination from the building.

Source: <http://www.kcrg.com/news/local/79958017.html>

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Water Sector

29. *December 24, Ventura County Star* – (California) **Water tank floods Thousand Oaks homes.** A single home, near Sunset Hills Boulevard, bore the brunt of damage when a Thousand Oaks, California-owned water tank overflowed late Tuesday night, sending water, rocks and other debris down a hillside behind the neighborhood. About 6 inches of muddy water flowed through the bottom floor of the house and its garage and along a side yard out to the street. The flood cut a groove down to the bedrock on the hill behind the home and created fissures in their backyard. At neighbors' homes, exterior and yard damage occurred. Thousand Oaks officials were working to determine what caused the spill from the Lang Ranch Water Tank, which has a capacity of 5 million gallons. Officials were still not sure of the cause of the spill on Wednesday. At night, a pump moves water into the tank. During the day, gravity feeds the system. The tank has a number of safety features designed to head off an overflow, including alarms and valves that shut when water reaches a certain level. An investigation into what went wrong is under way. When the pump did not shut off and the tank overflowed, the water flowed into a drainage vault, then overpowered a drain and ran down the hillside with enough force to carry dirt and debris with it. The water overflowed V-shaped ditches that run parallel to the homes along Rutland Place. At points, the V-ditches turn down to pipes that run to the street. The Ventura County Fire Department started getting calls about flooding from residents about 11:15 p.m. They arrived on the scene within five minutes and discovered it was the water tank after a unit hiked up the hill. More resources were summoned as firefighters became concerned about the hill's stability. At 11:28 p.m. firefighters contacted a city on-call employee. The water pump was shut off about 1:20 a.m., but water continued to run down the hill for about an hour afterward. City officials called to the scene determined the hillside was stable shortly after 2 a.m. The fire department had recommended five houses be evacuated.

Source: <http://www.vcstar.com/news/2009/dec/23/water-tank-floods-thousand-oaks-homes/>

30. *December 23, Cape Cod Times* – (Massachusetts) **Rules would stop ferries dumping sewage in Sound.** While towns along the shores of Nantucket Sound in Massachusetts are preparing to spend hundreds of millions of dollars apiece to keep residential

wastewater from flowing into fragile coastal bays and rivers, the federal and state program to stop boats from dumping raw or minimally treated sewage into the water has stalled. The primary hang-up, according to both state officials and the ferry companies, is a lack of progress on installing pumps and other equipment on shore to empty boat tanks, and retrofitting ferry vessels so they flush with fresh water instead of salt water. The secretary of the state Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs wants to see the pace quicken and could force the issue in the coming year by nominating Nantucket Sound as a federal No Discharge Area, according to a spokesman. If the nomination were approved by the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), dumping of sewage would end in the state waters of Nantucket Sound. The discharge restriction in Nantucket Sound would force ferry companies to come up with a timetable for compliance or face a state-imposed plan.

Source:

<http://www.capecodonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20091223/NEWS/912230330/-1/NEWSMAP>

31. *December 23, Associated Press* – (National) **Feds mull regulating drugs in water.**

Federal regulators have sharply shifted course on long-standing policy toward pharmaceutical residues in the nation's drinking water, taking a critical first step toward regulating some of the contaminants while acknowledging they could threaten human health. A burst of significant announcements in recent weeks reflects an expanded government effort to deal with pharmaceuticals as environmental pollutants: For the first time, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has listed some pharmaceuticals as candidates for regulation in drinking water and has launched a survey to check for scores of drugs at water treatment plants across the nation; The Food and Drug Administration has updated its list of waste drugs that should be flushed down the toilet; The National Toxicology Program is conducting research to clarify how human health may be harmed by drugs at low environmental levels. An Illinois law goes into effect January 1 banning health care institutions from flushing unused medicine into wastewater systems. The EPA's new study will look for 200 chemical and microbial contaminants at 50 plants that treat drinking water. The list includes 125 pharmaceuticals or related chemicals. This research will help federal water officials decide if regulations are needed.

Source:

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5gPAO8ZyrcKTtZipY00Pm6kjRoVQD9COHC000>

32. *December 23, Ocala Star-Banner* – (Florida) **Sanitation company's operators**

arrested. The heads of a local sanitation company in Florida have been arrested on various criminal counts for allegedly authorizing the dumping of thousands of gallons of toxic human waste in both Marion and Lake counties during the last two years. Officials claim that the company failed to treat the waste with the proper pH levels at its treatment center and authorized the removal of the hazardous waste at unlicensed facilities around the area. The first man, 49, the owner of American Sanitation of Ocala, and the second man, 69, the company's manager, were booked into the Marion County Jail on Saturday and Monday, respectively. Both men have posted bail — the first for \$74,000 and the

second, for \$16,000, jail records show. American Sanitation, which also went by the name Central Florida Processing SMF, came under investigation by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection earlier this year on suspicion of violating agency regulations concerning the proper treatment and disposal of human waste. The two suspects are also listed as officer and registered agent for Go Green Renewable Energy Group Inc., headquartered in Texas.

Source:

<http://www.ocala.com/article/20091223/ARTICLES/912231007/1402/NEWS?Title=Sanitation-company-s-operators-arrested>

33. *December 22, USA Today* – (National) **New approach to snow, ice removal reduces harm.** Communities in cold climates around the U.S. are changing their approach to snow and ice removal from highways in an effort to reduce potential harm to wildlife and vegetation caused by road salt runoff. Melting snow and ice and rain cause salt to run off roads onto vegetation and soil and into ditches, eventually seeping into streams, lakes and rivers. Runoff from road salt has been found in residential drinking wells in some Northeastern and Midwestern states. “There really aren’t tremendous alternatives to sodium chloride, which is what road salt is, when you want to keep ice from freezing to the road,” says a senior scientist at the non-profit Cary Institute for Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, New York. “What we can do is be more selective in how the salt is applied to the road.” The large-scale use of salt began in the 1950s, he says. Today, about 15 million tons of de-icing salt are used in the USA each year, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Here is what some cities and states are doing: Instead of just salt, they are turning to brine, a cheaper mixture of rock salt and water that is applied to roads before precipitation forms on them and prevents ice from bonding to the surface; Maryland is testing a fluid made from sugar beets, which is mixed with salt brine and sprayed onto highways; New Hampshire is considering legislation that would require state certification for anyone who puts down salt on public and private roads and parking lots; Nevada’s sophisticated snow-and-ice removal procedure includes a road weather information system comprised of hockey puck-sized pavement sensors that let highway officials know when they need to pre-treat roads with brine or a sand-and-salt mixture before precipitation falls; Massachusetts has reduced by 35 percent the amount of salt applied in environmentally sensitive areas by pre-treating with brine.

Source: http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/environment/2009-12-21-snow-ice-removal_N.htm

For another story, see item [7](#)

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Public Health and Healthcare Sector

34. *December 24, Associated Press* – (Georgia) **Ga. hospital unit evacuated after spill.** Officials in Baldwin County, Georgia, say patients and employees were evacuated from Central State Hospital’s Craig Nursing Center after a chemical spill. The Telegraph newspaper says patients and employees were treated for possible injuries from inhaling chemicals following the spill late Wednesday afternoon. The hospital says firefighters

determined the chemical spilled was sodium hydrochloride, a bleaching agent. Firefighters secured the scene and turned it over to the hospital's administration for clean-up.

Source: <http://www.myfoxatlanta.com/dpp/news/ga.-hospital-unit-evacuated-after-spill-122409>

35. *December 24, Wall Street Journal* – (International) **Ranbaxy unit gets FDA warning.** The U.S. health regulator has warned a unit of Ranbaxy Laboratories Ltd. for violating certain manufacturing practices, a development that could hurt the Indian generic-drug maker's sales in its main foreign market. Ranbaxy said in a statement after market close Thursday that the Food and Drug Administration's warning to unit Ohm Laboratories Inc. followed an inspection of one of its facilities at Gloversville, New York, in July and August. The statement did not provide details about the warning. FDA's good manufacturing practices require companies to assure proper design, monitoring and control of processes and facilities to ensure drug quality. Ranbaxy said the regulator had inspected Ohm Laboratories's other two U.S. facilities as well but "did not observe any material deviation." These two plants manufacture most of the products supplied in the U.S. market, the statement added. Ranbaxy, a unit of Japan's Daiichi Sankyo Co., said it will cooperate with the FDA to resolve the matter.

Source:

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704039704574615821521017690.html?mod=googlenews_wsj

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Government Facilities Sector

36. *December 24, Oroville Mercury Register* – (California) **Inmate accused of false bomb threat — again.** A Chico, California, man in custody and awaiting sentencing for several false bomb threats allegedly struck again Tuesday with a phone call from Butte County Jail claiming a bomb was inside a Butte County office on Table Mountain Boulevard, according to Oroville police. It is the second time the inmate made a false telephone bomb threat to Butte County Children's Services while incarcerated, authorities said Wednesday. The first time was June 5. Police arrested the 29 year-old suspect early Tuesday night at Butte County Jail. He was again booked on suspicion of maliciously reporting a false bomb threat. The suspect has been in custody since late February. He pleaded no contest last September to four counts of making false bomb threats and one count of assault with a deadly weapon.
- Source: http://www.chicoer.com/news/ci_14062588?source=rss
37. *December 23, Associated Press* – (International) **Gunmen fire at Mexican eatery with U.S. mayor inside.** On December 22, gunmen sprayed bullets at a restaurant in Piedras Negras, Mexico, where the mayor of the Texas border town of Eagle Pass was eating with a Mexican state attorney general and other officials, police said. A woman leaving the building was killed. The two officials were unharmed, according to police officers at the scene. Mexico's drug cartels have staged increasingly bold attacks on Mexican officials and security forces since the Mexican president deployed soldiers across the

country to step up the fight against drug trafficking. Eagle Pass is across the border from Piedras Negras.

Source:

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5gHWLUM1UtoG95H7QyRg - GiMC4HQD9COMGH00>

38. *December 23, Associated Press* – (Wyoming) **White powder forces Sheridan courthouse evacuation.** The delivery of an envelope holding white powder has forced the evacuation of parts of the courthouse in Sheridan. An official with the Sheridan County Sheriff’s Office says an envelope holding white powder was mailed to the circuit court on Tuesday. Officials say they have identified a “person of interest” but no one has been arrested yet in the incident. Officials say preliminary tests show the powder was a food product, and not toxic. All areas of the courthouse were open again on Wednesday.

Source: <http://www.localnews8.com/Global/story.asp?S=11725055>

39. *December 23, Associated Press* – (Hawaii) **Mental exam ordered in First Lady threatening case.** A mental competency examination has been ordered for a woman accused of threatening to kill the First Lady. The exam for the suspect was ordered Wednesday by a U.S. Magistrate at the request of prosecutors. The motion was not opposed by the federal deputy public defender. The 35-year-old suspect will remain in custody. The judge scheduled another hearing in the case for February 9. Wednesday’s hearing came one day before the President and his family was expected to arrive in Hawaii for a Christmas vacation. The suspect was arrested December 19 and charged with threatening a family member of the President. The Secret Service says the suspect threatened to kill the First Lady in a call last month to its Boston office.

Source: <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5g5IO15mYs9-Drhygaxle6eM94kKgD9CPARNG0>

For another story, see item [12](#)

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Emergency Services Sector

40. *December 24, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* – (Pennsylvania) **Vehicle can serve as emergency hub in South Fayette.** South Fayette police are ready to hit the road with a new van that can serve as a self-sufficient mobile command center in a catastrophe. The vehicle, a 2010 Ford E-350 van, includes communications facilities, computers and a generator to recharge batteries. Because the van can move directly to the scene, information can be taken and relayed more quickly and accurately to improve the township’s critical incident capabilities over its nearly 21-square-mile territory. It also could prove useful at fire scenes. Portable police radios generally fade after two to three hours, but the van’s generator can keep them operating for a longer time. The new van can transport up to three officers, and it holds emergency police equipment such as protective shields.

Source: <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/09358/1023184-57.stm>

41. *December 24, Tuscaloosa News* – (Alabama) **Centralized 911 system badly needed.** On the city of Tuscaloosa's wish list, shared with local legislators earlier the week of December 21, is a centralized E-911 system. It will not come in time for Christmas this year, or even — more than likely — for Christmas 2010, but it cannot come soon enough. Until then, too many emergency calls will be delayed as they bounce from one agency to another. A delay of a few minutes can be the difference between life and death. That is exactly what happened in June 2008. A call from a teenager's parents in the Four Winds subdivision outside the city limits of Tuscaloosa was received by Tuscaloosa Police Department dispatchers. They routed it to an ambulance service — American Medical Response (AMR) — that should have contacted the Tuscaloosa Sheriff's dispatchers, who would then have contacted the nearest volunteer fire service. AMR did not contact the Sheriff's Office, but instead contacted the Tuscaloosa Fire and Rescue Service. It took responders 10 minutes to arrive, even though a volunteer with Carroll's Creek Volunteer Fire Department was only about a mile away from the boy's home. The 15-year-old died.
Source: <http://www.tuscaloosanews.com/article/20091224/NEWS/912239976/1012>
42. *December 24, Longview News-Journal* – (Texas) **Site makes emergency info readily available.** A new Web site compiled by the Northeast Texas Public Health District seeks to make emergency preparedness information accessible to residents with special needs, a Longview city spokesman said. The site, accessibleemergencyinfo.com, includes videos with American Sign Language interpreters advising how to prepare for 18 topics, ranging from anthrax and botulism to pandemic flu and plagues, according to the district's Anderson County coordinator. The videos also have voice audio and text appearing alongside the interpreter, she said. The site includes emergency preparedness guides formatted in Braille, large print and regular font for download. All of the information is free for public use, and any group may link to the site, she said. Preparedness information for deaf populations is limited, she said. In less than one month, the site's home page has received nearly 7,000 visits, and the coordinator has gotten responses from public health officials in several states from Washington to South Carolina, she said. The Federal Emergency Management Administration has asked the coordinator to host a Webinar to tell other officials how to compile such a site.
Source: http://www.news-journal.com/news/content/news/stories/2009/12/24/12242009_special_needs_site.html
43. *December 22, IDG News Service* – (Massachusetts) **Inmate gets 18 months for hacking prison computer.** A former Massachusetts prison inmate has been given an 18-month prison sentence for hacking prison computers while he was incarcerated. He was sentenced December 22 in federal court in Boston for abusing a computer provided by the Plymouth County Correctional Facility. The computer had been set up to help inmates with their legal research. In 2006, he managed to circumvent computer controls and use the machine to send e-mail and cull data on more than 1,100 Plymouth County prison employees. He gained access to sensitive information such as their dates of birth, Social Security Numbers, telephone numbers, home addresses, and employment records. The computer he used was a so-called thin client computer that simply connected to

another machine on the network and did not store any data itself, prosecutors said in his indictment. The only program it was supposed to run was the prison's legal research application. However, he found a way of "exploiting an idiosyncrasy in the legal research software" so he could access other programs via the terminal. He even found a way of downloading Internet video, prosecutors said. Whether he will face any such restrictions in prison is unclear.

Source:

http://www.computerworld.com/s/article/9142628/Inmate_gets_18_months_for_hacking_prison_computer

44. *December 21, Reuters* – (National) **U.S. crime drops in first half of 2009, FBI says.** Violent crime in the United States dropped 4.4 percent in the first half of 2009 and property crime also dropped, the Federal Bureau of Investigation said on December 21. The latest statistics suggest U.S. violent crime could drop for a third full year in a row, a steady decline despite the harsh economic recession that some policymakers and police groups had feared would lead to an upward spike. The FBI report did not offer an explanation for the declining crime rates. The number of murders fell 10 percent compared to the same six-month period in 2008, while robbery declined 6.5 percent and forcible rape dropped 3.3 percent, according to preliminary statistics released by the FBI. Violent crime in all of 2008 fell 1.9 percent from 2007. But in some cities hit hard by the economy, like Baltimore and Detroit, the murder rate climbed. In Detroit, hurt by the auto industry's woes, there were 163 murders reported in the first six months of 2009 versus 146 during the same period in 2008. But other cities where murder rates had been high, like New York and Los Angeles, saw a drop off. In New York, there was a drop from 252 murders in 2008 to 204 reported during the first half of 2009. The New York mayor credited aggressive policing and efforts to rid the streets of guns. The overall decline was not limited to violent crime. Property crimes dropped 6.1 percent during the first six months of 2009, with vehicle theft plummeting 18.7 percent and burglary falling 2.5 percent. Reported cases of arson fell during the first half of 2009, dropping 8.2 percent from the same period in 2008. Violent crime in all four regions of the country fell. The only region that saw an uptick in property crimes was the southern United States, inching up 0.7 percent during the first half of 2009. There was also a small increase in violent crimes in cities with populations of 10,000 to 24,999, rising 1.7 percent.

Source: <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE5BK2KI20091221>

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Information Technology

45. *December 24, Wall Street Journal* – (National) **Attack disrupts Web sites.** Multiple Internet sites, including those run by Amazon.com Inc., were temporarily disrupted for some Web users after a company that provides them directory services suffered what it called a "denial of service" attack. Neustar Inc., which runs the UltraDNS service that helps process the connections between individual computers and Web sites, says the disruption lasted about an hour and only affected Web users in Northern California. The company said it began to notice an unusual spike in traffic on its servers at about 7:45

p.m. Eastern Time, which led to the outage. “Immediately we identified it and put mitigation measures into effect,” said a Neustar spokesman. The attack caused Web users in Silicon Valley and other parts of Northern California to get either an error message or delayed response when trying to access a site that uses the directory service from UltraDNS. The spokesman said the company is still investigating the source of the attack. He said the attack “was not focused on one particular site or another.” But he declined to name the companies that were affected. Though limited geographically, the disruption came during the final hours of online shopping in the crucial holiday season. Besides affecting sites that serve their customers directly, the attack underscores the risks as companies increasingly outsource computing tasks to be managed by other vendors. A site run by Amazon that tracks availability of its Web services reported that “some customers in the West Coast are experiencing issues with resolving DNS. A spokeswoman for Salesforce.com Inc., which provides online software for businesses, said that the company also experienced an hour-long service interruption.

Source:

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703521904574615032671717354.html?mod=WSJ_hpp_MIDDLETopStories

46. *December 23, DarkReading* – (International) **Facebook hit by clickjacking attack.**

Facebook is cleaning up after a clickjacking attack that infiltrated the social networking site this week — and security experts say this will not be the last such attack.

Clickjacking, in which an attacker slips a malicious link or malware onto a legitimate Web page that appears to contain normal content, is an emerging threat experts have been warning about. The attack on Facebook was in the form of a comment on a user’s account with a photo that lured the victim to click on it. The embedded link took the victim to a Web page that presented like a CAPTCHA or Turing test, and asked the user to click on a blue “Share” button on the Facebook page. Once clicked, the victim is redirected to a YouTube video, and then the same post shows up on the victim’s account and thus tries to infect his or her friends. Security experts say the attack appeared to be more of a prank or trial balloon, and it affects only Firefox and Chrome browsers, according to a security expert who blogged about the attack the week of December 14. Facebook has now blocked the URL to the malicious site, fb.59.to. “This problem isn’t specific to Facebook, but we’re always working to improve our systems and are building additional protections against this type of behavior. We’ve blocked the URL associated with this site, and we’re cleaning up the relatively few cases where it was posted — something email providers, for example, can’t do,” a Facebook spokesperson says.

Source:

<http://www.darkreading.com/insiderthreat/security/attacks/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=222100098>

47. *December 23, IDG News Service* – (International) **Hackers hit OpenX ad server in Adobe attack.**

Hackers have exploited flaws in a popular open-source advertising software to place malicious code on advertisements on several popular Web sites over the past week. The attackers are taking advantage of a pair of bugs in the OpenX advertising software to login to advertising servers and then place malicious code on ads being served on the sites. On December 21, cartoon syndicator King Features said that it

had been hacked the week of December 14, because of the OpenX bugs. The company's Comics Kingdom product, which delivers comics and ads to about 50 Web sites, was affected. Another OpenX user, the Ain't It Cool News Web site, was reportedly hit with a similar attack the week of December 14. OpenX said that it was aware of "no major vulnerabilities associated with the current version of the software – 2.8.2 – in either its downloaded or hosted forms," in an e-mailed statement. At least one OpenX user believes that the current version of the product may be vulnerable to part of this attack, however. In a forum post, a user said that he was hacked while running an older version of the software, but that the current (2.8.2) version is also vulnerable. "If you are running a current, unmodified release of OpenX, it is possible to anonymously log in to the admin site and gain administrator-level control of the system," he wrote. When researchers at Praetorian Security Group looked at the Adobe attack, it did not leverage the unpatched Adobe bug, said a partner with the security consultancy. Instead, the attack marshalled an assortment of three different Adobe exploits, he said. "We're seeing no evidence that it's the Oday that will be patched by Adobe in January."

Source:

http://www.computerworld.com/s/article/9142643/Hackers_hit_OpenX_ad_server_in_Adobe_attack?taxonomyId=17&pageNumber=1

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

48. *December 24, WTOV 9 Steubenville* – (Ohio) **Thieves knock out phone service to hundreds of local residents.** Hundreds of AT&T customers were without landline telephone service after thieves stole 1,200 telephone wires over Wednesday night. The theft happened near Tweed Avenue in Jefferson County. Crews on Thursday were still trying to local a replacement wire but said they do not know if it will arrive in time to fix the lines for Christmas. The theft is the fourth time copper wire has been stolen in the area in the last 1 1/2 years.

Source: <http://www.wtov9.com/news/22053958/detail.html>

For another story, see item [45](#)

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Commercial Facilities Sector

49. *December 23, Associated Press* – (Louisiana) **Baton Rouge office shooting leaves 2 dead and 1 injured.** Authorities say they have arrested a gunman who allegedly shot

and killed two people and wounded a third at a construction company's office in Baton Rouge. A spokeswoman for the East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office says the suspect in Wednesday's shooting is believed to be a former employee of Grady Crawford Construction Co. and the victims are all company employees. The sheriff's spokeswoman says a foreman at the office tackled and disarmed the suspect as he left the building. She says two of the victims were pronounced dead at the scene, while the third had injuries that were considered life-threatening. She would not identify the suspect and said the victims' identities were being withheld pending notification of relatives.

Source: <http://www.wvl.com/Baton-Rouge-office-shooting-leaves-2-dead-and-1-in/5962885>

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National Monuments & Icons Sector

50. *December 22, Los Angeles Times* – (California) **Rep. Schiff to seek inquiry into Station fire response.** A Burbank, California Representative says the U.S. Forest Service's decision to withhold water-dropping aircraft during the critical second day of the Station blaze should be part of the review. A local House member says he will ask Congress to launch an inquiry next month into the U.S. Forest Service's response to the Station fire. The Times reported December 21 that records contradict the Forest Service's position that steep terrain prevented the agency from using helicopters and tanker planes to attack the fire in the hours before it began raging out of control. Citing documents and interviews, the Times had reported earlier that the Forest Service misjudged the threat posed by the flames after the first day, and that the agency might have missed an opportunity to knock the fire down early the following morning.

Source: <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-station-fire22-2009dec22,0,5628110.story>

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Dams Sector

51. *December 24, Associated Press* – (Indiana; Kentucky) **Stolen Indiana floodwall returned by metal recycler.** Seven floodwall panels stolen this month from an Indiana city along the Ohio River have been returned after a scrap metal worker heard about the missing pieces and contacted the city. The aluminum panels were stolen in New Albany on December 11 or 12, and recycling company Freedom Metals of Louisville, Kentucky, returned them four days later after a supervisor saw a news report about the theft. The aluminum panels are 30 to 40 square feet and just under an inch thick. They were intact with only minor damage. Police are continuing to investigate the theft. The panels are used to close the New Albany floodwall during high water emergencies. The Flood Control director says it could have cost thousands of dollars to replace the panels.

Source: <http://www.wndu.com/indiana/headlines/80051747.html>

52. *December 24, Brazoria County Facts* – (Texas) **FEMA levee rules not expected before**

spring. The Velasco Drainage District in Texas will have to wait a few more months to learn how high area levees must be. District members met with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) representatives Monday to discuss guidelines for the 53 miles of federally built levees in southern Brazoria County. Certification of the levees can not proceed without FEMA rules, said the Velasco Drainage District chairman of the board of supervisors. “We meet with them about once a quarter and they told us today the information won’t be out until April or May, and I’m guessing by summer,” he said. “We can’t begin the certification process until that data is given to us because we don’t know how high the levees need to be.” FEMA might not mandate any changes, but for now, local officials are waiting. Once the FEMA certification process begins, the district will have 60 days to file for “Provisional Accredited Levee” status if there are any problems. If FEMA accepts that status, the district will have two years to bring levees up to federal guidelines.

Source: <http://thefacts.com/story.lasso?ewcd=b55ef8c002b14f1a>

53. *December 24, Narrowsburg River Reporter* – (New York) **Reservoir voids would not have prevented flooding.** The record floods in 2004, ‘05 and ‘06 have sparked an ongoing argument about whether the New York City reservoirs could have been used to mitigate the flooding in some degree, by creating voids that could hold back some of the torrential rain waters. On December 15, the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) released a flood-analysis model that showed what the results would have been if the Cannonsville, Neversink, and Pepacton reservoirs had 10 percent or 20 percent voids. According to the director of the DRBC, the results “indicate that operational changes to reservoirs alone will not substantially reduce flooding if we experience storms similar to the three major events in September 2004, April 2005 and June 2006.” She added that “No single approach will eliminate flooding along the Delaware River and that we must continue to focus efforts on implementing a combination of flood-loss reduction strategies.” Still, there are a number of voices pushing for establishing year-round voids in the reservoirs as a way of ensuring flood protection. The executive director of the NorDel Conservancy said, “The preliminary results of the model confirm that our longstanding position that voids do reduce the flood crest, and that the people who live along the Delaware River remain in danger until the DRBC comes up with a plan to create year-round voids.”

Source: <http://www.riverreporter.com/issues/09-12-24/head2-drbc.html>

54. *December 23, WLOX 13 Biloxi* – (Mississippi) **Weakened dam threatens two Harrison Co. subdivisions.** Harrison County, Mississippi, took emergency action the week of December 21 to protect some neighborhoods from potential flooding. Heavy rainfall the week of December 14 caused part of a dam to erode. The dam is located off Canal Road between the Krystal Lake and Summerhaven subdivisions. With more rain expected this week, the county cut a ditch through a section of the dam to lower the water level and ease pressure on the weakened structure. “The amount of water that’s in the lake could have caused some type of a potential flooding, flash flooding situation,” the Harrison County Emergency Management director said. “So we had to relieve that tension immediately for this rain coming forth.” The county engineer said the developer and/or property owners may be responsible for repairing the damaged dam.

Source: <http://www.wlox.com/Global/story.asp?S=11725721>

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