Military Readiness and Homeland Security, Disaster Preparedness and Aviation
Related (MRHSDP&A) Updates
December 2, 2014-February 2, 2015

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The Pentagon unveiled its fiscal 2016 budget proposal of $585 billion Monday, an increase of about $38 billion over last year, in recognition of the military’s wide-ranging need to respond to global conflicts in places like Liberia and Eastern Europe, buy new equipment and modernize the force.

The Pentagon’s baseline budget proposal is $534 billion – an increase of about $38 billion over last year. The administration’s request for it’s war chest, the military’s separate Overseas Contingency Operations account, which pays for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and now the train-and-equip program for Syrian rebels and other operations, is less than it was last year. The $51 billion request for the so-called “OCO” budget is about 21 percent less than the enacted operations budget last year.
Even as new operations begin in Iraq and across the Middle East as a train-and-equip program for Syria gets underway, the Pentagon will enjoy a peace dividend that reflects downsized operations of the 13-year war in Afghanistan. But the budget still ignores Congressionally-mandated budget caps.  

Read full article »

USAF Names F-35 Integration Office Head  

Lawmaker, an A-10 vet, aims to protect Warthog  
(Air Force Times) One of the newest lawmakers on Capitol Hill is a former A-10 driver, and she is wasting no time protecting her former aircraft.

New Budget Will Feature 6th Gen Fighter  
(Defense News) More pieces of next Monday's fiscal 2016 defense budget request are beginning to fall into place.

Again, Pentagon leaders lament sequestration cuts  
(Military Times) Military leaders have already repeatedly warned Congress that looming spending cuts could jeopardize weapons buying, force readiness, battlefield capabilities and worldwide military dominance.

The Pentagon's new fiscal cliff  
(Politico) The administration and the new Republican-controlled Congress are creating another budgetary cliff on defense spending, forcing the military to face across-the-board cuts if Pentagon spending busts the caps that are already law.

Joint Chiefs Warn Against Sequestration, Again  
(DefenseOne) The U.S. military's top officers testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Wednesday that the mandatory spending caps known as sequestration are threatening national security - although Congress is unlikely to do anything about it.

Allyn: Sequestration creates an 'unacceptable risk' to soldiers  
(Army Times) The Army will bear "unacceptable risk" if it's called to respond to new threats while struggling with budget cuts brought on by the return of sequestration, the service's No. 2 officer said Wednesday.

MUM-T Is The Word For AH-64E: Helos Fly, Use Drones  
(Breaking Defense) The drone revolution, it appears, came along just in time for the Army.

Army Corps releases coastal flood risk management framework  
(Associated Press) The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Wednesday issued a report saying that managing the flooding risk along the North Atlantic coast from events like Superstorm Sandy is something that has to be done collaboratively by all levels of government and the private sector.
Dunford: Budget cuts could lead to moldy barracks, tight dwell time
(Marine Corps Times) The commandant of the Marine Corps presented a Senate committee Tuesday morning with a grim picture: Marine barracks complexes with old lead pipes and puddles of raw sewage on the floor, and a disaffected generation of Marines looking for a way out.

Marines Receive First F-35C
(USNI News) The fighter is the first of five planned Marine F-35Cs that will be assigned to the VFA-101 squadron - the training group for the carrier variant JSFs at Eglin.

CNO warns budget cuts will hurt morale, readiness
(Navy Times) The Navy's top officer cautioned legislators Wednesday about falling retention among the Navy's most skilled and highly trained sailors, and he pointed the finger at budget cuts that are again looming.

DoD Business Panel Proposes $125B in Savings
(Defense News) The Pentagon's Defense Business Board (DBB) issued a series of recommendations on Jan. 22 calling on the Defense Department to slash $125 billion in spending over the next five years by reducing services from contractors, implementing early retirements, reworking contracts and reducing administrative costs.

Spending marathon without end: military buffer zones
January 25, 2015
By Rob Johnson
Pensacola News Journal

Buying up land around military bases has become an economic strategy all on its own in recent years, with millions being spent from Northwest Florida to California in a competition that's heating up.

The main goal: win the Pentagon's favor in case there's another round of installation closures and transferring of lucrative military operations and their payrolls similar to the last big downsizing in 2005. But vying for the approval of Washington's military brain trust, by creating so-called buffer zones to insulate such posts as Eglin Air Force Base and Pensacola Naval Air Station from commercial and residential encroachment just outside their fences, may not work.

"I think it's a misguided competition," said Todd Harrison, a consultant at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, funded by the Department of Defense, among others. "A buffer zone may reduce noise complaints, but I don't think it's going to make a big difference to the DOD."

In agreement is retired Army Gen. James T. Hill, who was a presidentially-appointed member of the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission in 2005. "I think spending on land for a buffer around bases is not a good expenditure of taxpayer money."
Hill asserted that insulating bases with acreage just outside their fences probably isn't a priority with Pentagon planners considering where to make trims and possibly close installations. And he considers local efforts to win favor in Washington by spending big bucks on buffer zones to be virtually futile...

Nevertheless, the conventional wisdom endorsing base buffering has created a spending treadmill from which state and local government leaders see no way off. “We have to be ahead, we can’t just be on a level with Arizona” or other states, said Florida State Senator Don Gaetz...

The full text of the article is available at:
http://www.pnj.com/story/

Army leaders now hope to slow the drawdown
(Army Times) The Army is considering taking measures to slow the drawdown, though the service still plans to eventually reach an end-strength of 450,000 active-duty troops.

Pentagon Gearing Up Once Again To Fight Sequestration
(Defense Industry Daily) Pentagon leaders are preparing to mount an assault on the possible full return of draconian spending cuts known as sequestration as they near plans to unveil the defense budget request for fiscal 2016, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said Thursday.

Chief: Sequestration could create ‘hollow Army’
(Army Times) The Army is in danger of becoming a “hollow Army” if sequestration returns in 2016, the service’s top officer said Thursday.

Air Force wants a round of BRAC to make up for deflated budget

SPECIAL REPORT: State of Defense 2015
Defense One Staff
In this year’s “State of Defense,” Defense One explores how the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines are planning on moving beyond sequestration and uncertainty and into the era of constant combat in surprise conflicts. Last year was supposed to be the time for the military to reset, but world events had something else in mind, demanding U.S. intervention and attention at a faster pace and in more hotspots than ever. Here’s a look at how the services are expecting to face the unexpected.
This is the State of Defense. Read full article »

Air Force Doubles Bonus Pay for Drone Pilots
Kellie Lunney

Eligible personnel will receive monthly incentive pay of $1,500 -- up from the current rate of $650.

Governors to keep fighting plans to strip Guard of aircraft
(Army Times) The nation’s governors plan to continually press Army leadership to let the National Guard keep its assets after a bitter battle last year when the service said it would move helicopters out of the Guard.
'Unrelenting' need for drones will prompt changes in Air Force
(Washington Post) To relieve stressed drone pilots, the Air Force plans to use the National Guard and reserve, bringing some of those willing and able to work with unmanned aircraft on active-duty.

Officials remain confident in F-35A schedule
(Air Force Times) Top Air Force leaders still expect the F-35A to reach its initial operating capability on time, despite Congress blocking the service’s move to retire older aircraft - the primary source of manpower to maintain the new stealth jet.

Marine Corps Set to Deploy Next-Generation Unmanned Aircraft
(National Defense) The Marine Corps and Navy will launch their newest unmanned aerial system, the RQ-21A Blackjack, from a ship this spring for the first time, and are looking into developing pocket-sized reconnaissance drones, a service aviation official said.

Massive new Air Force bombing range won’t hurt UTTR
January 16, 2015
By Mitch Shaw
Standard-Examiner
HILL AIR FORCE BASE — The Air Force’s approval of an enormous bombing range over the Northern Plains will reduce the number of sorties sent to the Utah Test and Training Range, but will have little impact beyond that, defense officials said Friday.

The Air Force approved a proposal earlier this week to expand the Powder River Training Complex over the Dakotas, Montana and Wyoming. The plan will now be forwarded to the Federal Aviation Administration and if the FAA approves the proposal, it would more than triple the training range’s airspace, making it the largest over the continental United States — a title currently held by the UTTR... Hill Air Force Base spokesman Rich Essary said the approval of the new expansion would not impact any UTTR personnel or the overall scope of the mission currently being performed at the Utah range... The Air Force is looking to expand the UTTR in eight select areas, which total about 700,000 acres in the rural areas of Box Elder, Juab and Tooele counties and sit just outside of the current range boundary. The lands would ultimately be acquired by the Air Force and the Department of Defense.

Proponents say the areas would work as buffer zones to guard against encroachment from communities through natural expansion and allow the DoD to better test the F-22 Raptor, which receives all of its maintenance at Hill Air Force Base, and the F-35 Lightning, which is scheduled to begin operation at Hill in September... The full text of the article is available at: http://www.standard.net/Military/2015/01/16/Air-Force-approval-of-massive-bombing-range-won-t-hurt-UTTR-officials-say.html

USAF Launches Slate of New Acquisition Initiatives
(Defense News) The US Air Force is launching a wave of new initiatives aimed at bringing down the cost and time associated with acquiring new technologies, service secretary Deborah Lee James announced Wednesday.
Hagel Visits Navy's Newest Warship That Will Carry the F-35
(DefenseOne) Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel visited the Navy's newest warship Wednesday, a massive amphibious assault ship that could carry more than 3,000 sailors and Marines.

Armed Services chief: No 'appetite' for new round of base closures
(The Hill) The chairman of the House Armed Services Committee says there is little support on his panel among Republicans or Democrats for a new round of military base closures.

Another BRAC round may be in the offing
(The Hill) “I believe that doing another BRAC round is simply good government,” John Conger, acting assistant secretary of Defense for energy, installations and ...

Exclusive: U.S. Drone Fleet at 'Breaking Point,' Air Force Says
(The Daily Beast) The U.S. Air Force's fleet of drones is being strained to the "breaking point," according to senior military officials and an internal service memo acquired by The Daily Beast. And it's happening right when the unmanned aircraft are most needed to fight ISIS.

Report: Payday lenders find loopholes in military loans
(Military Times) Payday lenders with new loan products are again preying on military families and creating headaches for the armed forces, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau said in a new report Monday.

Need to know, 2015: A new sergeant major
(Marine Corps Times) Perhaps one of the most anticipated announcements early in the new year will be the selection of a new sergeant major of the Marine Corps.

The year ahead: What every Marine needs to know
(Marine Corps Times) Here’s a closer look at what’s tracking for the drawdown, changes in aviation, women in combat, marksmanship training, and more in 2015.

Need to know, 2015: Bigger role for reserves
(Air Force Times) The Air Force has a Feb. 2 deadline to tell Congress how it will reshape itself.

Defense Secretary Nominee Forms Circle of Advisers
(Defense One) The Pentagon has already announced the formation of a transition team for Ashton Carter, nominated to replace Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, including Hagel Chief of Staff Rexon Ryu and an Assistant Secretary of Defense, Michael Lumpkin. But Defense One's The D Brief has been told that Carter has designated his own small team of advisers, three people who will assist him from outside of the building through a confirmation process that is expected to run through at least the third or fourth week of January.

The year ahead: What sailors need to know for 2015
(Navy Times) 2015 is set to be a big year for sailors. Four new uniforms will be decided upon. Physical Fitness Assessment changes are on the table. And advancement rates are projected to rise. Sailors will start
moving aboard the future aircraft carrier Gerald R. Ford, while fleet flattops sail on 10-month deployments. Navy leaders hope to bring the standard deployment down to seven months by 2016, unless massive sequestration cuts derail that plan later in 2015.

**In 2015, Army will lose nearly 20,000 soldiers in drawdown**

(Army Times) The Army stands to lose 18,200 soldiers in the drawdown plan for 2015, through attrition and reduced accessions, but also with retention screening boards that may lead to soldiers being forced out.

**Need to know, 2015: Major changes in aviation**

(Marine Corps Times) One of the biggest changes in Marine Corps aviation in years will happen in 2015, and it promises to not only change the way that anyone in a flight suit operates, but how anyone with boots on the ground receives support from the air.

**Aviation milestones for 2015**

(Navy Times) Naval aviation's manned and unmanned planes are set for a number of milestones in the next year.

**Guard chief: NDAA will upgrade C-130 avionics, avoid grounding**

(Air Force Times) The new defense authorization will give the Air Force enough flexibility to make what the head of the Air National Guard calls the most important update to his mobility fleet.

**McCain: I think A-10s will be part of fighter jet fleet for a long time**

(Associated Press) The two Republican U.S. senators from Arizona visited four military installations in the state on Thursday and offered assurances that the installations will play a key role in national defense in the future.

**Army Details Future Controversial Helicopter Swap With the National Guard**

Marcus Weisgerber

Apache, Blackhawk, Kiowa and Lakota helicopters are all on the block for major realignment. By Marcus Weisgerber

**Pentagon launches blended training initiative**

C4ISR & Networks

Frank DiGiovanni, the acting deputy assistant secretary for defense in charge of readiness, discusses a cross-service initiative to develop guidelines

**What the new budget bill means for defense, VA**

(Military Times) The $1.1 trillion spending bill approved by the Senate over the weekend gives the Pentagon $554 billion for fiscal 2015, gives the Veterans Affairs Department $160 billion, and gives much needed predictability to the federal budget.
Pawlikowski On Air Force Offset Strategy: F-35s Flying Drone Fleets
(Breaking Defense) Ellen Pawlikowski helps decide what weapons the Air Force buys and manages the buying process, so when the lieutenant general says she likes autonomy and 3-D printing as the most promising capabilities for her service to develop as part of the new offset strategy, it's worth listening.

Analysis: Congress Reworks 10 Percent of DoD Procurement Budget
(Defense News) Congressional committees tweaked nearly 10 percent of the money that the Pentagon requested for its fiscal year 2015 appropriations accounts before the "cromnibus" spending bill was passed on Dec. 11 - resulting in $4.4 billion in additional procurement and research

State purchases land for Cannon
Staff report
Portales News-Tribune (NM)
December 10, 2014

The state has purchased 600 acres adjacent to Cannon Air Force Base and given it to the Air Force, the Committee of 50 announced Wednesday in a press release.

The land, purchased from area farmers, is on the base’s western boundary and is now available to be used by Cannon to further its vital national defense mission, the release said.

The purchase and transfer of the land has been a long-term goal of the Committee of 50, which cited efforts Gov, Susana Martinez, state Sen. Stuart Ingle of Portales, former Curry County Commission Chairman Caleb Chandler and Curry County Commissioner Wendell Bostwick for helping make the transaction happen. For the entire article, see http://www.pntonline.com/2014/12/10/state-purchases-land-cannon/

The USAF Has To Re-Paint Its Trucks Because The F-35 Can’t Fly On Warm Fuel
Posted By Giuseppe Macri On 10:39 PM 12/08/2014

After a year of several fleet-wide groundings for the F-35, the latest problem to plague the fifth-generation fighter is forcing the U.S. Air Force to revamp an entirely separate fleet to support the military’s most expensive plane.

The F-35 can only fly on jet fuel under a certain temperature due to the high heat output of the F-35B variant’s short takeoff and vertical landing engine and other powerful subsystems. According to the USAF, the dark-green trucks that carry fuel absorb too much heat from the sun to keep the planes in the sky.

That presents a serious logistical problem for an advanced multi-role fleet expected to maintain U.S. air superiority in areas of potential conflict such as the Middle East and South Pacific — areas with no shortage of sunlight.
For the time being the Air Force is addressing the issue by painting the tanker trailers of the trucks a bright reflective white to repel sunlight absorption. That presents a whole new problem for the safety of the trucks, which will be necessary to support the Joint Strike Fighter on forward deployments where large white tankers full of highly flammable fuel could make easy targets.

“We painted the refuelers white to reduce the temperature of fuel being delivered to the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter,” Senior Airman Jacob Hartman of the 56th Logistics Readiness Squadron at Luke Air Force Base in Arizona said in an Air Force news report. “The F-35 has a fuel temperature threshold and may not function properly if the fuel temperature is too high, so after collaborating with other bases and receiving waiver approval from [the Air Education Training Command], we painted the tanks white.”

Luke AFB reportedly got the idea from Edwards AFB in California, where Air Force personnel first discovered the problem some time ago.

“It ensures the F-35 is able to meet its sortie requirements,” Chief Master Sgt. Ralph Resch, fuels manager of the 56th LRS, said in the report. “We are taking proactive measures to mitigate any possible aircraft shutdowns due to high fuel temperatures in the future.”

“This is the short-term goal to cool the fuel for the F-35; however, the long-term fix is to have parking shades for the refuelers.”

The Air Force also plans to try incorporating reflective paint into the trucks' standard green to reduce the heat absorption and maintain cover. Though the cost of the paint is $3,900 per-truck, it’s undoubtedly cheaper than another costly fix to the entire fleet, which uses the fuel as a coolant to absorb heat from the JSF’s powerful subsystems before passing into the engine. URL to article: http://dailycaller.com/2014/12/08/the-usaf-has-to-re-paint-its-trucks-because-the-f-35-cant-fly-on-warm-fuel/

Defense bill hits snag over land swaps, wilderness
(Associated Press) Quick passage of a sweeping defense policy bill hit a snag on Wednesday over public lands, dividing Senate Republicans.

McCain Ready To Tackle Cyber Threats, Cost-Plus Contracts as SASC Chairman
(Defense News) Sen. John McCain is 78 years old. But that doesn’t mean cyberspace escapes him.

Compromise Defense authorization bill rejects 2017 BRAC round

NDAA: US Army Apache Consolidation Blocked Until 2016
(Defense News) Congress would authorize the active-duty Army to begin absorbing the Army National Guard AH-64 Apaches as part of the Army's aviation restructuring proposal, but not until 2016, according to compromise National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) language revealed Tuesday evening.
Congress Pushes to Keep an 11 Carrier Navy in Budget Agreement

(DoDBuzz) The House and Senate armed services committees included a measure in the National Defense Authorization Act to transfer up to $650 million from shipbuilding accounts for the refueling and complex overhaul of the USS George Washington.

NDAA Limits Air Force Retirements, Offers C-130 Compromise

(Defense News) The compromise National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) language, revealed Tuesday evening, limits the US Air Force’s ability to retire any aircraft in what is a clear message from Congress that the service has not earned its trust on major issues, such as the retirement of the A-10 or U-2.

White Sands commanding general addresses chamber luncheon

December 4, 2014
By Kelly Brooks

Gratitude for community cooperation and an eye to the future was the message delivered by Brig. Gen. Timothy Coffin, commanding general of White Sands Missile Range, at a military/civilian luncheon hosted by the Ruidoso Valley Chamber of Commerce Wednesday.

The luncheon, held at the Ruidoso Convention Center, was arranged at the request of the White Sands administration, a first for Ruidoso, but an event that has taken place in Alamagordo and Las Cruces in the past.

Coffin cited The Southern New Mexico/El Paso, Texas Joint Land Use Study as a great beginning to open communication and cooperation between military and civilian entities.

"This is an invaluable opportunity to help us in understanding the value that each of us possess, understanding our unique needs, how to interface together and leverage our resources," Coffin said... The framework for the study is in place, Coffin explained. "Next, we move into the implementation phase." Coffin expressed gratitude for the support of surrounding communities, particularly when inconveniences affect the daily lives of the civilian community...

Coffin said White Sands holds a unique position for developing defense systems for the future.

"My job is to set conditions for the future," he said. "To set a vision that goes 30 to 40 years in the future. There is no other place on Earth where we have this same kind of capability. This is the only place to test the new systems, technologies and abilities we have."... The full text of the article is available at: http://www.ruidosonews.com/ruidoso-news/ci_27069738/white-sands-commanding-general-addresses-chamber-luncheon

Op-ed: Hatch: Air Force’s Utah test range needs to expand

December 4, 2014
By Orrin G. Hatch
When Americans think about the West, they don’t just think about rugged individualism and the pioneer spirit, but also the vast expanse of land that has made those qualities so important to our national character. Land is central to our western way of life...

For decades our state has also been home to one of the most important training ranges for pilots in the United States Air Force. Our massive desert provides the perfect conditions to test, evaluate, and train the world’s best military.

The Utah Test and Training Range at Hill Air Force Base (UTTR) provides essential resources and capabilities for the United States Air Force. Here, our service members prepare and learn to adapt to constantly evolving foreign threats by training with the latest “fifth-generation” weapons systems. The F-22 Raptor and the new F-35 Joint Strike Fighter are among the critical systems that utilize the UTTR. But these new weapons, which are more sophisticated and are steadily entering into operational use, require greater capacity than what the UTTR has provided over the last 60 years.

To retain these important weapons systems in Utah, we need an expansion that maintains public access and upgrades the UTTR. The long-term viability of the UTTR and Hill Air Force Base — one of Utah’s largest employers — depends on it. I have spent much of the last year working on a proposal that will improve the UTTR’s capabilities with minimal effect on land use and access to the land surrounding the range.

But there’s more here for Utahns than the obvious military and defense benefits: The UTTR improvement proposal will also add additional resources and revenue to our public school system by enabling the transfer of certain federal lands from the Bureau of Land Management into the state-owned school trust lands system...


**Secretary speaks of energy, mission effectiveness**

December 4, 2014
By Jacquelene Van Pool

During the visit Secretary Dennis McGinn recognized base energy managers for their work in reducing the consumption aboard Quantico by 27 percent since 2003. The base achieved gold level in the 2014 Secretary of the Navy Energy and Water Management Awards.

“The reason we are focused on energy is mission effectiveness,” McGinn said. “We paid a tremendous price in the loss of our fellow shipmates and Marines, because of our reliance on energy.”

Fifty-two percent of casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan have come at the cost of keeping supply lines open, said Col. Jim Caley, director of the Expeditionary Energy Office. This included the delivery of fuel and water to sustain operations.
Although recent developments in technology have allowed for an oil boom in the U.S., McGinn emphasized that being less reliant on energy produced by fossil fuels will give Marines freedom of action on the battlefield and in a training environment by reducing their need to refuel...

Energy savings at the bases and stations can also have a significant impact on the Marine Corps’ ability to fight and win, said Aaron Fielder, regional energy advisor for Marine Corps Installations, West. There can be up to a 10 percent reduction in energy usage at bases and stations by behavior changes, like powering down computers each night...

Ultimately McGinn hopes to develop an energy ethos across the Navy and Marine Corps where, “We value energy the same way we value ammo.” The full text of the article is available at: http://www.dvidshub.net/news/149368/secretary-speaks-energy-mission-effectiveness

Interview: Gen. Robin Rand
(Defense News) As budget challenges continue to plague the US Air Force, the service has focused on simulation as a way to keep its personnel up to speed and combat-ready at a lower cost. Gen. Robin Rand, who took over at Air Education and Training Command (AETC) in October 2013, is the man charged with leading the service into the future of simulation.

Homeland Security and Disaster Preparedness Related Updates

The president’s 2016 budget request: Homeland Security Department

Fact Sheet: DHS FY 2016 Budget
February 2, 2015 —
The President’s 2016 Budget is designed to bring middle class economics into the 21st Century. This Budget shows what we can do if we invest in America’s future and commit to an economy that rewards hard work, generates rising incomes, and allows everyone to share in the prosperity of a growing America. It lays out a strategy to strengthen our middle class and help America’s hard-working families get ahead in a time of relentless economic and technological change. And it makes the critical investments needed to accelerate and sustain economic growth in the long run, including in research, education, training, and infrastructure.


House Passes Homeland Security Appropriations Bill
Last week, the House passed the FY 2015 homeland security appropriations bill by a vote of 236-191. The bill provides $39.7 billion in discretionary funds for the Department of Homeland Security and its component agencies, which have been operating under a continuing resolution that expires at the end of February. The bill includes $1.5 billion for state and local grant programs, which is equal to the FY 2014 level. Prior to passage, the House adopted several amendments aimed at undoing the President’s executive actions on immigration. Senate consideration of the bill is unclear at this time but the
immigration-related provisions are expected to be problematic. Text of the bill may be found here and an explanatory statement here.

**White House Announces Cybersecurity Legislative Proposal**

The White House announced a new cybersecurity legislative proposal, which comes amid several other cybersecurity initiatives announced this week. The proposal increases information sharing between the private sector and the federal government and would create a national standard for reporting data breaches. Currently, 46 states have data breach laws. The proposal also includes provisions that would expand federal law enforcement authority related to cyber crime and provide additional identity theft protections to consumers. The White House also announced plans to host a summit on cybersecurity and consumer protection on February 13 at Stanford University with key public and private sector stakeholders. The announcement can be found here.

**US gov’t issues cybersecurity guidance to help energy sector protect critical infrastructure**

By Dibya Sarkar

The Energy Department last week published guidance to help electricity, oil, natural gas and other energy companies assess and improve their cybersecurity systems to withstand attacks while maintaining critical functions.

The new guidance issued Jan. 8 is designed to help companies meet the goals of the [Cybersecurity Framework](#) that was released about a year ago by the National Institute of Standards and Technology. That framework contains voluntary standards, guidelines and practices to help improve protection of critical infrastructure.

The Energy Sector Cybersecurity Framework Implementation Guidance (pdf) provides companies with information on how to assess their current and their targeted posture, find gaps in their current programs, and identify current practices that might surpass the NIST framework's baseline, among other things. The new guidance can also help companies measure their progress toward desired goals, identify and prioritize opportunities for improvement, and ensure that internal and external stakeholders are aware of the progress and other risk management information.

Whether organizations have mature cybersecurity and risk management programs or not, the guidance provides information that can continue to strengthen their posture.

"Organizations with less-developed cybersecurity risk management programs can use the framework to define and establish a program that successfully addresses cybersecurity risk and communications, commensurate with the organization's business and critical infrastructure security objectives," the document said.

The guidance was developed in collaboration with the energy sector, including the electricity, oil and natural gas subsector coordinating councils, among other stakeholders, writes Patricia Hoffman, assistant
secretary for Energy's office of electricity delivery and energy reliability, in an article announcing the new guidelines.

Hoffman writes that the guidance also discusses in detail how the Cybersecurity Capability Maturity Models, which help organizations assess, prioritize and strengthen their own cybersecurity capabilities, align with NIST's framework.

The new guidance also identifies other risk management tools, processes, standards and guidelines that are being used now across the energy sector that align well with NIST's Cybersecurity Framework, she adds.

"Since 2010, the department has invested more than $150 million in cybersecurity research, development and commercialization projects led by industry, universities and national labs, including new technologies that strengthen the security of energy delivery system computers against unexpected activity and of communications between field devices and control centers," writes Hoffman. For more:

- download the Energy Sector Cybersecurity Framework Implementation Guidance (.pdf)
- read the article from Patricia Hoffman about the new guidance

Preparing for Wildfires
March 10-12, 2015 - Tucson, AZ. A workshop for Cooperative Extension Educators and Community Leaders.

GAO: Feds have done little to address potential cyber threats to federal facilities

HUD National Disaster Resilience Competition – $1 Billion
Applications Due: March 16, 2015
Eligible Applicants: All states with counties that experienced a Presidentially Declared Major Disaster in 2011, 2012, or 2013 are eligible to submit applications that address unmet needs as well as vulnerabilities to future extreme events, stresses, threats, hazards, or other shocks in areas that were most impacted and distressed as a result of the effects of the qualified disaster. This includes 48 of 50 states plus Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C. In addition, 17 local governments that have received funding under the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, 2013 (PL 113-2) are eligible. See the complete list of eligible applicants.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) National Disaster Resilience Competition makes $1 billion available to communities that have been struck by natural disasters in recent years. The competition promotes risk assessment and planning and will fund the implementation of innovative resilience projects to better prepare communities for future storms and other extreme events. Funding for the competition is from the disaster recovery Community Development Block Grant (CDBG-DR) appropriation provided by PL 113-2. This competition responds to requests from state, local, and tribal leaders who have asked the federal government to help them prepare their communities for the
impacts of climate change and support investments in more resilient infrastructure. Read more about the competition on the HUD website.

**Informational Webinars**
HUD is hosting a webinar series to foster awareness about the National Disaster Resilience Competition. The webinars will answer questions about the competition, cover requirements, and talk about climate resilience. Save the dates for the following webinars:

- Jan. 15, 2015 — Q&A Session: Available Resources on the HUD Exchange
- Feb. 12, 2015 — Q&A Session: Walk through FAQs
- Feb. 26, 2015 — Q&A Session: Review Completeness Requirements

**DHS Releases End of Year Statistics**

**State and Local Fusion Centers: What Is Their Impact on Homeland Security?**
The post-9/11 era has seen the rise of a network of 78 state and locally owned and operated fusion centers that enhance awareness of terrorist and other criminal threats by pooling information streams, personnel, and other resources. With centers dispersed across the United States and run by state and local authorities, how can the federal government track the centers’ performance and the impact of the federal dollars invested in them?

The DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis State and Local Program Office (SLPO) has been addressing this question since 2011 through its Fusion Center Performance Program, which conducts an annual assessment. In 2012, SLPO asked the Homeland Security Studies and Analysis Institute to help develop a comprehensive set of performance measures for the national network of fusion centers.

In this article HSSAI analyst Matthew Phillips relates how a logic model was used to graphically display the key components of the national network of fusion centers and illustrate the causal relationship between available resources and intended outcomes. The model also provided success indicators and the key resources and activities that drive those indicators. Learn more...

**Aviation Related Updates**

**FAA finds research partner, seeks perps**
By Ben Sclair
The FAA is behind the power curve – big time – when it comes to the nascent (and rapidly growing) remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) industry. On Jan. 12 CNN announced a research agreement with the FAA to “to advance efforts to integrate Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) into newsgathering and reporting.” As a distant cousin to Read in browser »

**FAA issues permits for agriculture, real estate companies to use UAVs**
The Federal Aviation Administration issued permits to allow Advanced Aviation Solutions in Star, Idaho, and Douglas Trudeau of Tierra Antigua Realty in Tucson, Ariz., to use unmanned aerial vehicles. AAS will use UAVs to determine the health of crops and search for pests, as well as determine which fields need to
US firms gear up for commercial use of drones

By Fred Donovan, Fierce Mobile IT

While small consumer-oriented drones were on display at the Consumer Electronics Show held last week, larger drones will be the future for business uses, explains a MIT Technology Review article.

Some of the business use cases for larger drones include building inspections, security patrols and, if Amazon has its way, package delivery. Since all communications with drones takes place wirelessly, IT managers will have a whole new IT avenue to manage and secure.

The Federal Aviation Administration still has not issued rules for commercial use of drones. Yet, the FAA has issued recommendations for drone use, such as fly below 400 feet and don't carry anything that weighs more than 55 pounds, the report notes.

Last month, the FAA granted four companies regulatory exemptions so that they can use drones for commercial purposes, the agency said in a release. The companies--Trimble Navigation, VDOS Global, Clayco and Woolpert--want to use drones to conduct aerial surveys, monitor construction sites and inspect oil flare stacks, explains a USA Today article.

"The FAA's first priority is the safety of our nation's aviation system. Today's exemptions are a step toward integrating UAS [unmanned aerial system] operations safely," says FAA Administrator Michael Huerta.

Adds U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx: "We want to foster commercial uses of this exciting technology while taking a responsible approach to the safety of America's airspace."

The agency estimates that 7,500 commercials drones will be flying in U.S. skies by 2018.

For more:
- read the MIT Technology Review article
- see the USA Today article
- check out the FAA release

California Leads Nation in Drone Close Calls

January 12, 2015
By Stephen Stock, Julie Putnam and Jeremy Carroll
It's not a bird, not a plane: it's a drone.

Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), often called “drones”, are becoming increasingly controversial, as the federal government has not yet completed regulations for them. While discussions continue, commercial use of drones is banned, but hobbyists continue to fly. New data from the FAA shows some are flying in or near airspace used by commercial planes, including some in the Bay Area.
Pilots report sightings of objects while in the cockpit to air traffic control facilities, and the FAA tracks the data. According to the FAA Data, there were 193 UAV sightings by pilots in the US between January and November of 2014. California lead the country with 25 sightings in that time period, followed by New York and Florida.

"Close Calls" with Drones
California pilots had the most "close calls" with drones between January and November of 2014.

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<th>State</th>
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"That’s the main issue, you have seconds to react," Fred Robinson, a commercial airline pilot, told NBC Bay Area. He and other pilots told the Investigative Unit they worry a drone could cause a serious accident with a commercial jet just like the flock of birds that brought down US Airways Flight 1549 over the Hudson River in 2009... The full text of the article is available at: http://www.nbcbayarea.com/investigations/California-Leads-Nation-in-Drone-Close-Calls-288110521.html

**FAA has no firm deadline for UAV rules**
Congress wants the Federal Aviation Administration to publish rules for unmanned aerial vehicles by September, but an FAA spokeswoman said the agency has no firm deadline. "We are continuing to work with our administration colleagues to finish the rule. I am sorry to say I do not have a date for you," Elizabeth Cory wrote in an e-mail to an Indianapolis television station. [AVweb](1/4)

**Huerta looks back on FAA's 2014 accomplishments**
Federal Aviation Administration Administrator Michael Huerta looks back on 2014, noting three of the agency’s top accomplishments for the year: progress on the NextGen flight control system, stricter flight rules and procedures for helicopter pilots and the start of testing that will ultimately lead to the integration of unmanned aircraft into commercial airspace. [DOT.gov/Fast Lane blog](1/2)

**FAA releases airport capacity tool**
*By General Aviation News Staff*
The FAA and the MITRE Corporation have released runwaySimulator, a simulation model for conducting rapid analysis of airport capacity. For several years, the FAA has used runwaySimulator and the tool is now being made publically available to those with interests in aviation and airport planning. It can be used to assess an airport's existing capacity, as well [...][Read in browser »]

**Tower-marking rules approved in Okla.**
Ohio’s new rules will require the marking, painting, and flagging of towers that are at least 50 feet high. [AOPA Online](1/2)
First Drone in Nevada Test Program Crashes

Link to AP article

Phoenix council demands FAA change flight paths
The Phoenix City Council demanded that the Federal Aviation Administration reverse changes to flight-path routes and directed city officials to do whatever is necessary to defend that goal. Read more: Arizona Republic

White Sands Regional Airport runway construction begins
It’s the beginning of a new era for the White Sands Regional Airport. The airport hosted a ground breaking ceremony for their runway extension last Monday. Read more: Alamogordo News

FAA funding secured through September 2015
Congress has passed an omnibus spending bill that keeps the FAA, and other government agencies, funded through the end of the fiscal year in September 2015. AOPA Online

FAA Announces Tool to Evaluate Airport Capacity

The economic future of the nation depends on strong aerospace industry, says senator
The nation's economic future depends on a strong aerospace industry, said Sen. Jerry Moran, R-Kan., co-chairman of the Senate Aerospace Caucus, in a recent opinion piece. "By promoting education, workforce and research development, as well as increasing manufacturing within the aerospace industry, we can grow America’s economy and maintain our state's competitive edge," he wrote. The Wichita Eagle (Kan.)

UAV “flyaways” serious problem for civilian industry
The problem of “flyaways,” or unmanned aerial vehicles that fail to respond to operators while in flight, pose a serious issue for makers of the flying devices. UAVs have crashed into buildings due to GPS malfunctions and other glitches. The Wall Street Journal (tiered subscription model) (12/8)

Amazon tells FAA it may move UAV testing abroad
Amazon wants permission for outdoor unmanned aerial vehicle testing in the U.S. to come soon, or it will focus on development efforts in other countries, according to a letter from Amazon to the Federal Aviation Administration. Outdoor tests have already begun in “countries with regulatory environments more supportive of small (unmanned aircraft systems) innovation,” said the letter, written by Paul Misener, vice president of global public policy. Reuters (12/9)

FAA site makes finding notams easier
Finding the notams relevant to your planned flights just got easier. The FAA’s new online search tool streamlines the burdensome and confusing process of wading through scores of safety notices filled with obscure acronyms. AOPA Online.
Frequency Related Updates

AWS-3 Auction Highlights New Approach to Spectrum Policy

02/18/2015 CSMAC Meeting Notice

FCC rakes in $45 billion from wireless spectrum auction
CNET-Jan 29, 2015
The spectrum in this most recent auction is considered mid-band spectrum and sits between 1700MHz and 2100MHz frequencies. James ...

FirstNet begins federal consultation
January 28, 2015 | By Molly Bernhart Walker

The First Responder Network Authority, the board tasked with overseeing the development of a nationwide, wireless broadband public safety network, continued its consultation process by reaching out to federal agencies last week.

The FirstNet board, which is currently in its first phase of state consultations, formally initiated the federal consultations with a "kick off" meeting Jan. 21 in Washington, D.C.

Chris Algiere, FirstNet's federal outreach branch chief, said the meeting was an important next step in planning the network.

"The main objectives of the meeting were to enhance federal agencies' understanding of FirstNet's consultation process and to discuss future outreach and engagement between FirstNet and its federal partners," wrote Algiere in a Jan. 22 blog post.

According to Algiere, FirstNet Acting Executive Director TJ Kennedy encouraged the federal agencies to be proactive in communicating their mission and wireless broadband needs to FirstNet.

The board emphasized that the meeting is simply the beginning of the consultation. The meeting was intended to prepare agencies for the consultation process, and agencies will soon receive an initial consultation checklist, similar to the one used by states and territories.

"Using the information gained from the checklist, FirstNet will schedule one-one-one meetings with the agencies in the coming months to begin discussing their needs and requirements for the network," said Algiere.


Google Says Drones, Balloons Could Use New Spectrum for ...
Wall Street Journal (blog)-Jan 20, 2015
As federal regulators consider opening new radio frequencies to wireless services, Google is already eyeing the frequencies to deliver Internet ...

**NTIA Announces BroadbandUSA Effort to Assist Communities with Broadband Plans**

**Promoting Spectrum Sharing In the Wireless Broadband Era**

**Operational Excellence in Federal Spectrum Management**

**FirstNet begins federal consultation**

**Google floats idea of using ballons, UAVs for wireless mobile broadband in letter to FCC**