



Division of Emergency Management/Homeland Security
2478 Fairview Drive, Carson City, Nevada 89701 <http://dem.nv.gov>
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Gail Powell
Public Information Officer
Nevada Department of Public Safety
Emergency Management/Homeland Security
775-687-0325 or gpowell@dps.state.nv.us

Media Advisory

February's Nevada Commission on Homeland Security Meeting

Carson City, NV - Governor Brian Sandoval, Chairman of the Nevada Commission on Homeland Security (NCHS), opened the meeting by acknowledging new members appointed due to recent retirements and elections.

Chief Chris Smith from the Nevada Division of Emergency Management/Homeland Security provided an overview to the commission on the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP), the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2014 commission priorities and the FFY 2014 HSGP funding initiatives. Smith presented pertinent information for developing the NCHS priorities for FFY 2015 HSGP using the results from the State Preparedness Report (SPR), the Threat and Hazard Identification Risk Assessment (THIRA) for Nevada and the Nevada State Homeland Security Strategy.

The THIRA, a requirement of Homeland Security and FEMA prior to applying for federal funds, is a comprehensive report identifying all threats, hazards, and risks for each state. The THIRA lays the groundwork for all potential events and is a resource the commission members use to vote on the top five priorities Nevada will focus on for the year. The approved priorities are then disseminated statewide along with a grants application guide for public safety agencies to present a detailed plan and funds needed to support one of the top ten priorities. The grant applicant has the opportunity to present his/her investment justification proposal to the Nevada Homeland Security Working Group in support of one of the state initiatives.

Chief Smith gave an overview of the State Preparedness Report, Nevada State Homeland Security Strategy, and the Enhanced Hazard Mitigation Plan emphasizing that each document be used when each commission member identifies the state's top priorities. Governor Sandoval requested a presentation on the measles outbreak to assist the Commission with identifying its top priorities. The Commissioners will be voting on their top ten categories in the March 6, 2015, NCHS meeting.

Assistant Secretary Dr. Andy Ozment, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Cybersecurity and Communications, briefed the Commission on cybersecurity threats statewide and nationally. Dr. Ozment emphasized the importance of public and private sectors working closely and coordinating efforts at the federal level to address counter measures for cybersecurity protection. Ozment spoke to the programs available for private, local, state and federal entities and tribal nations to fight cyber-attacks.

Dr. Ozment identified the three areas of focus:

- Best practices
- Information sharing
- Incident response

Don Ritzman, Chief Executive Officer, and Antonio Rucci, Chief Security Officer with Ghost Systems, LLC, briefed the Commission on cybersecurity protection risks, trends and private sector concerns in network environments.

Ritzman said the top reported industry targets are:

- Education
- Energy/Utilities
- High Tech
- Government: Federal
- Government: State

Additionally, Ritzman identified the top five security risks:

1. Ransomware
2. Internet of Things
3. Computer Espionage
4. Cyber Theft
5. Insecure Passwords

Ritzman concluded his presentation with industry predictions and the importance of identifying the state's threats and implementing a cybersecurity protection plan.

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