

Regional Partnership-Pacific NorthWest Economic Region

Summary

The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER) is a public/private non-profit created by statute in 1991 by the states of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Montana and Washington, the Canadian provinces and territories of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Northwest Territories and the Yukon.

Background

PNWER operates under a statutory board of public elected legislators, private sector representatives, and representatives of governors and premiers. PNWER launched the Partnership for Regional Infrastructure Security and the PNWER Disaster Resilience and Homeland Security Program in November, 2001 with the goal of improving the ability of the Pacific Northwest to protect its critical infrastructures and withstand and recover from all-hazards disasters. PNWER, through its Pacific Northwest Center for Regional Disaster Resilience, works with key public and private stakeholders to create and implement workable solutions to local and regional infrastructure vulnerability and other related needs. PNWER accomplishes this by raising awareness of infrastructure interdependencies, providing training and education, and developing tools, technologies, and approaches that build on existing capabilities and can be utilized across the United States, Canada, and the international community. The RDR Center's mission is continuing and building upon a long legacy of PNWER's work with states, municipalities, and other regions to secure interdependent infrastructures and develop disaster resilience. In 2009, the National Infrastructure Protection Plan referenced PNWER as the model process to address critical infrastructure interdependencies. PNWER is listed as a best practice for working with the other states and provinces to address critical infrastructure security issues in the NGA's Governor's Guide to Homeland Security, March 2007

Goals and Objectives

- Creating and fostering cross-sector partnerships focused on infrastructure security and disaster resilience;
- Developing and conducting regional infrastructure interdependencies initiatives focused on various threat scenarios that include regional cross-sector/cross discipline workshops and exercises to better understand threats, vulnerabilities, and develop strategies for action to address them;
- Developing requirements for stakeholder-validated projects and activities to address readiness gaps and improve regional resilience;
- Seeking funding and other resources to support regional pilot projects and other activities and to enable state and local agencies to address regional preparedness needs;
- Overseeing the implementation of priority projects and activities in a cost-effective, timely and ethical manner;
- Conducting outreach and develop and facilitate seminars, workshops, and targeted exercises to raise awareness and test the level of preparedness.
- Communicating stakeholder validated regional disaster resilience recommendations to state and provincial governments and policymakers

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Description

Regional Critical Infrastructure Protection Workgroup

PNWER conducts quarterly conference calls with the CIP managers from the PNWER Member jurisdiction states and provinces. This interstate, cross-border forum has generated an open forum to discuss key issues that impact the region.

North West Warning Alert and Response (NWWARN)

NWWARN is a regional communication tool available for cross sector critical infrastructure communications. The web-based system provides information from trusted sources to protect critical infrastructure systems and ultimately the public. The platform is capable of providing early warning messaging and two-way situational awareness before and during a disaster. Please visit www.nwwarn.org to learn more about what the system can provide to critical infrastructures. PNWER has led this effort for over 8 years in cooperation with DHS, FBI, FEMA, Washington State Fusion Center and private sector infrastructure partners.

Puget Sound Partnership for Regional Security Program

The Puget Sound Partnership for Regional Security with PNWER to conduct a Seminar with regional critical infrastructure owners and operators. The Seminar focused on transportation, supply chain and freight resiliency; developing a regional information sharing and analysis capability; pandemic and biological event resilience. In 2010 the focus will be on a workshop and seminars for critical infrastructure owners and operators in the Puget Sound area. The outcomes from these events will be shared with the region's CIP managers.

Blue Cascades Interdependencies Exercises

PNWER has organized six critical infrastructure interdependencies exercises over the past eight years. Each exercise was designed by the stakeholders and reflected regional concerns (terrorism, cyber security, natural disaster, pandemic flu, supply chain resilience, public health and flooding). An integrated Action Plan was created based on the findings and recommendations of the exercises. Numerous projects from the Action Plan are currently underway.

Comprehensive Community Bio-Event Resilience (CCBER) Project

The Pacific Northwest Economic Region's Center for Regional Disaster Resilience and Puget Sound stakeholder organizations are working with the Office of Health Affairs, U.S. Department of Homeland Security/Science and Technology Division to develop a Comprehensive Community Bio-Event Resilience (CCBER) Project. The Pilot Project assists in the development of a national bio-defense architecture by serving as a model for communities and broader regions nation-wide to integrate the private sector, non-profits, and public institutions into preparedness planning for pandemics, bio-attacks, and other major health hazards.

North West Alliance for Cyber Security (NWACS)

PNWER serves as the Secretariat for NWACS, which was formed after Blue Cascades II (September 2004). The mission of NWACS is to improve and maximize the cyber resilience of

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the Puget Sound region by maximizing opportunities and communications between local, regional and federal organizations, and enterprises.

WashingtonFIRST

PNWER assists regional stakeholders from the financial sector that participate in the WashingtonFIRST consortium. PNWER provides support and input for the quarterly meetings. With over 75 organizations, WashingtonFIRST is engaged with several financial organizations across the region.

Current Committee Involvement

- FEMA Region X - Regional Advisory Council (RAC)
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security - Regional Consortium Coordination Council (RCCC)
- Washington State Infrastructure Protection Subcommittee (IPSC)
- Washington Region 6 Critical Infrastructure Protection Workgroup
- Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Program
- Puget Sound Partnership for Regional Infrastructure Security
- NorthWest Warning, Alert and Response Network (NWWARN)
- 2010 Olympic Security Taskforce
- NorthWest Alliance for Cyber Security (NWACS)
- Statewide Preparedness for Philanthropic Sector Taskforce

Requirements for Success

PNWER is a public-private partnership that facilitates regional resilience collaboration between all levels of government and the private sector with a focus on regional economic development

Resources

PNWER posts best practices, summaries and after action plans from events on <http://www.regionalresilience.org/>.

Training and Exercises

PNWER has organized six critical infrastructure interdependencies exercises over the past eight years. Each exercise was designed by the stakeholders and reflected regional concerns (terrorism, cyber security, natural disaster, pandemic flu, supply chain resilience, public health and flooding). An integrated Action Plan was created based on the findings and recommendations of the exercises. Numerous projects from the Action Plan are currently underway. PNWER has also supported or partnered with regional stakeholders on Seminars, Workshops, and Exercises.

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Communication Tools

PNWER communicates with public/private partners via Email, meetings, newsletters, teleconferences, and our website, and via NWWARN

Links

<http://www.pnwer.org/>

<http://www.regionalesilience.org/>

<http://www.nwwarn.org/>

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