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PANEL: "The Role of S&T in Natural Disasters"

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**DHS S&T Command, Control & Interoperability
Division**

**"Communicating in Disasters: The Virtual USA
Partnership"
(by phone link)**

MARY HANSON

Coming up next to our technology serves us it again will be John Hoyt, communicating disasters, the first to U.S. a partnership -- Virtual USA partnership. John, are you there hello.

I hope that you can hear me.

JOHN HOYT

Okay. I am here to give you a quick briefing on an initiative called the Virtual USA and this is something that my boss, David Boyd has started.

The initiative is what we call Virtual USA the challenges are that you have a need for real time actionable information and that is critical during the today and emergency response conditions. We should be on slide number three. Thank you. The information is often trapped in silos and it is not accessible to those that needed the most. The component systems and architectures have limited ability to provide robust information sharing without the benefit of a national strategy. And by national strategy we do not mean a federal strategy. We mean something that is driven by the local and state and federal governments. The information often does not make it into the hands of people who need it most when they need it. Slide number four, please. Thank you. Those of you that are familiar with the SAFECOM program will have seen this slide before. The issues of information sharing are not just technological. That is just one small part of the problem. We need governments, a standard operating procedures, usage and then also you need technology. The way that we are approaching this is to work with the practitioners and that is the most key point of this peak we have some parts under this initiative that are long-term and others that are very, very near term. Can we go to the next slide, please? Thank you. The initiative is to create a cost-effective nationwide capability that significantly improves information sharing in decisionmaking during emergencies and day-to-day operations. The important thing is if you do not use something they thank you you will not be able to use it during an emergency it has to

be something that is part of your integrated system. The other part is it has to be based on current and emerging technologies. The states, localities, and federal government cannot have a lot of extra capacity or money at the present time could what ever you have in place for your city, state, county, travel area or state. And it is critical to about interchange between the different systems. This initiative has a couple of multistate region no sharing initiatives underway in the South East and North West -- regional sharing initiatives underway in the Southeast and Northwest to allow state to state sharing data and we're focused on how to make that portable and actionable now. There are a much longer-term issues that we're working on. If you are sharing sensitive data you care very much with your stream the data with. My group has active programs and network identity management. In other words, who are you? What role do you play? If you are sharing law-enforcement data, for example, it is very important to know who you are sharing data with. The issue there it's even more complex because a very steep to state and if there is eight -- it varies state to state and in some state includes 911 operators and in some states it does not so the issue of sharing sensitivity that is buried importance of that is why we are focused on EOCs, emergency operation centers in for you can share them normally without for percussions and things like road closures, etc..

Virtual USA is intended to support tactical, strategic and planning decisions. Early on the people from Los Alamos talked about the NISAC and the ability that they have to provide simulation. And how can we make that data available to these the EOCs and will need a down to a hand-held device to someone who screen in area in the field and give them the information that the meat when they need it. That is what this is all about and what is focused on. We seek to unify activities that relate to the gathering, analyzing, managing, shearing and protection of information and a week to share this at a national level paid state, county, city, federal. And we wish to do this in a way that this technology agnostic.

Let's go to the next slide. Thank you. Our key principle here is that during almost all emergencies, in fact, the state of Alabama did a study of all of the emergencies in their states. 87% of them were handled at the local agency. 3% were handled or in bulk the state and only 2% involve the federal government. Where this information sharing environment we see the highest usage and highest priority is at the local agency. Going down that inverted pyramid the regional agencies come next and then the state and federal is the lowest usage basically we see the key need here is that these local agencies have to drive the products also appeared and what ever they have, what ever they are using has to be a key part of this whether this is EOCs, law-enforcement and does not matter. It all has to be driven by the local level where possible. We're looking for a comprehensive approach to do this. The state to state sharing pilot that have been undertaken today, the one in the southeast have been a focus on dealing with Hurricane scenarios and how do you share the evaluation data. The data to get things in and out of the state is a key part of that. The initial phase one of that was sharing simple links to data. The data owner controls what the that is shared and with whom so there is no central warehouse. We're doing this through Web technologies where you decide who you share it with and when you share it. This is a key part of this. The work that we are

doing for law enforcement is slightly different people reworking with that MIT artificial Intelligence Laboratory. Where you are sharing state to state without going to federal. You have the ability to query the system and see what is allowed by law for you to share. It turns out that without a system like this, what is done today is a lot of --

John?

-- that may or may not take full advantage.

One minute queue, just letting you know.

Okay. I deal with the knowledge management portion of this technology. And Doug, who some of you know it deals with the SEC for security and Marc Caplan is orchestrating the multistate pilot so please reach out to him or myself or Marc Caplan. Thank you.