“Protecting the Public” CD available again

Once again, NICS is making available copies of its popular training program, *Protecting the Public in a Hazardous Materials Emergency*, on a compact disk.

The training focuses on decision making for emergency responders and planners who must decide whether to evacuate an area in a chemical emergency or issue a shelter-in-place advisory.

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“We have a new supply, but we will have to charge a very modest $20 per disk this time to cover our costs,” said Mark Scott, NICS president.

As a contribution to the emergency management community, but at considerable expense to the our organization, NICS paid to distribute copies the first time. We are a nonprofit, and we can no longer afford to do that.”

The training is helpful to those who plan emergency responses to chemical accidents and to those who actually respond to them, said Dr. Jan Taylor, NICS vice president and project director.

Taylor said specific groups who would benefit from the training include government officials with public safety responsibilities, local emergency planning committees, state emergency response commissions, and safety staffs from businesses that make, store or transport chemicals.

See CD, p.2

Air cleaners add safety to shelter-in-place rooms

Portable air cleaners that can filter out toxic gas are making shelter-in-place safe rooms even safer.

At least that’s the case for people in Irrigon, OR, and Anniston, AL. They live and work near U.S. Army chemical weapons storage sites. The nation’s chemical weapons are scheduled to be destroyed by 2007 although the deadline will likely be extended until at least 2012.

Funded by the Army, the Federal Emergency Management Agency operates a Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP) to work with local emergency management agencies and residents during the destruction project. Residents are taught to shelter in place in safe rooms in case of a leak from a site.

“Certain air cleaners provide an additional measure of safety for safe rooms,” said Jan R. Taylor, Ph.D. As part of the CSEPP outreach program, Dr. Taylor visited Irrigon to help tell residents how to use the units.

“If a toxic gas should seep into a safe room, the proper air cleaner can quickly reduce gas concentrations and significantly lower risk,” she said.

Another way to look at it, Dr. Taylor said, is that the filter effect—See Air Cleaners, p.3

NICS and NTTC to help grow shelter business

NICS and the National Technology Transfer Center have teamed up to encourage the growth of a small business that will develop and sell shelter-in-place kits nationwide.

The business will be independently owned and located at the NTTC, said NTTC President Joseph P. Allen. The NTTC and NICS will provide interested start-up companies with marketing ser-
NICS honors Mildred Holt with Wehrle Award

NICS presented community advocate Mildred T. Holt with the Russell S. Wehrle Award.

The award honors the community spirit of the late Russell S. Wehrle, a Charleston businessman and civic leader. He also helped found NICS in 1985.

Ms. Holt is only the third person to receive the award. Previous honorees were William D. Ruckelshaus, first administrator of the U.S. EPA, and U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd.

More than 100 guests attended the June 3 event at the University of Charleston. They honored Holt for many contributions to civic and social organizations. Martha Wehrle presented the award in her husband’s memory.

Ms. Holt was a founding member of Citizens Concerned About MIC, or methyl isocyanate, in 1985. MIC had escaped from a plant in Bhopal, India, and killed or injured thousands of people. Union Carbide made and stored MIC at its Institute, WV, plant in the heart of the Kanawha Valley.

People Concerned and others protested about the chemical companies’ reluctance to talk with the public about potential risks the plants posed.

Thad Epps, then Union Carbide’s local spokesman, defended the industry’s position. “Mildred and I were enemies – or at best coming from totally opposite positions,” Epps said in a tribute to Holt. Some of the protesters were more interested in raising hell than solving problems, Epps said.

“At the other end of the spectrum was Mildred Holt – sincerely concerned about her community’s safety and quality of life.

“I was a slow learner, but as I worked with Mildred, mistrust and animosity changed to respect and on to discipleship. I learned to love Mildred, and I do today,” Epps said.

“Will our legacy reflect that we, indeed, were responsible, caring stewards of the air, land and water which we inherited – which we will pass on to the next generations?”

Mildred T. Holt

“Mildred wanted win/win solutions, not win/lose victories. Mildred proved a person could have a passion without attacking or demeaning an opponent. Mildred could disagree strongly but leave the door open for dialog and problem solving. Mildred could ask tough questions and make tough statements, but she always focused on the big picture.”

Epps said Holt earned the respect of plant managers in the Kanawha Valley. She “positively changed the way chemical plants do business and how they related to the communities. She is a model of constructive activism.”

In reflecting on her activities, Ms. Holt said “each of us must remember that future generations deserve the best from us."
Air Cleaners, continued from p. 1
tively allows people to shelter in
place safely for a longer period of
time.

Since July 2002, the Morrow
County, OR, CSEPP has supplied
Honeywell air cleaners free to 700
homes and public buildings in
Irrigon and surrounding communi-
ties. Another 500 units will be
passed out in August. Residents
had received shelter-in-place kits
earlier.

The CSEPP program for
Anniston initially is distributing
20,000 air cleaners made by Austin
Air. At the same time, residents
receive shelter-in-place kits and a
clear plastic hood that protects
 wearers from contact with chemi-
cal vapors. A battery powered fan
in the hood filters air through an
activated carbon filter, much like a
gas mask. Residents are being
trained to use the protective gear.

After tests on nationally dis-
tributed portable air cleaners, the
Army reported that units made by
Honeywell, Austin Air, AllerAir
and Dust Free were the most effec-
tive in removing simulated toxins.
They removed 90 percent of a va-
por concentration in less than 36
minutes.

In later tests of Honeywell
units only, one model removed 90
percent of a gas similar to mustard
gas in 15 minutes. Mustard gas
and nerve agents are stored at the
CSEPP sites.

The Honeywell unit being
passed out at Irrigon, has three
filters for everyday use — a
prefilter, a HEPA filter that re-
moves dust particles and a 6-pound
carbon filter to remove gas, odors
and volatile organic compounds. It
is designed for places such as res-

taurants, bars and hospitals.

If a chemical were to escape
from the Umatilla site, residents
have been told to replace the
HEPA particle and carbon filters
with a single emergency module.
The 18-pound module is made of
activated carbon and other chemi-
cals to absorb toxic gasses.

The emergency module comes
sealed separately in a plastic bag
for storage. It has a five year shelf
life and can be put in the unit in
two to three minutes in an emer-
gency.

“We have had nothing but
positive comments about the pro-
gram,” said Casey Beard, director
of Morrow County Emergency
Services.

“We learned from a recent drill
that owners mentally went through
the steps of replacing the normal
filter with the emergency module
when they heard the siren,” Beard
said. People have also reported a
great reduction in allergy symp-
toms in everyday use, he said.

Honeywell states that the unit cir-
culates air at the rate of 300 cubic
feet per minute.

The units Morrow County
CSEPP passed out cost $325 each.
The Army, through FEMA, is foot-
ing the bill.

The Morrow County CSEPP is
also providing commercial-size,
ceiling mounted air filters for pub-
lic buildings that have safe rooms.

Units have been or will be in-
stalled in the Morrow County
Courthouse Annex, Irrigon (OR)
Medical Clinic, a Union 76 gas
station and food mart, the Bank of
Eastern Oregon, a Kegger’s super-
market, Gregg’s Tavern and the
Irrigon post office.

For references to more infor-
mation about portable air cleaners,
the Army’s tests of air cleaners and
the CSEPP programs, visit the
Shelter in Place Information Cen-
ter on the NICS website at www.
nicsinfo.org.

U.S. EPA awards brownfield grant
for WV land study

The US EPA has selected the
Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metro-
politan Planning Commission for a
$200,000 brownfield assessment
grant.

The grant will be used to iden-
tify, inventory and prioritize some
30 brownfield sites in Brooke and
Hancock counties in West
Virginia’s Northern Panhandle.

Deanna Stone, brownfields
coordinator at NICS, helped the
commission identify potential
sites, identify resources available
through the state’s Voluntary Re-
mediation and Redevelopment Pro-
gram, hone grant writing tech-
niques, and provide liaison with
state and federal environmental
agencies.

Steel and other industries once
were located on the properties.
The commission hopes to attract
new businesses to the revitalized
properties.
Kits, continued from  p. 1

vices, business support, training and facilities.

Congress established the NTTC in 1989 to provide U.S. businesses with access to federally funded research. It is located on the Wheeling (WV) Jesuit University campus.

NICS is a well known source of information about sheltering in place.

The kits are to contain quality products a homeowner can use to keep chemicals from seeping into safe rooms. The kits will also contain emergency information and instructions.

The Emergency Response Technology Program at NTTC identified the need for shelter-in-place kits.

“This is an opportunity for our organization to continue to play a key role in keeping our families, our communities, our first responders safe, while at the same time generating economic development opportunities in the region,” said NICS President and CEO Mark Scott.

NICS will provide training for the accreditation of companies that will perform shelter-in-place site surveys and coordinate mock release scenarios with regional and national emergency responders.

The memorandum of understanding NICS and the NTTC signed does not say when the business will open.

Demand strong for model plan

People looking for a jump start on writing a shelter-in-place plan for offices are flocking to the NICS website.

About 10,000 website visitors have downloaded a model shelter-in-place plan for offices in the last 12 months.

“We can document that number from reports on website activity,” said Dave Dodrill, director of communications.

“In addition, we know other organizations have copied the model plan to their websites to be downloaded. We have no estimate on how many times it has been downloaded from those sites,” Dodrill said.

For example, the Alliance for Chemical Safety, based in Cincinnati, offers the model to their members.

The 14-page model plan is available without charge in the Shelter in Place Information Center section of the NICS website at www.nicsinfo.org.