The NISC to Champion the Future of Virtual USA®
The NISC Aims to Strengthen Situational Awareness and Interoperability across the Nation

The National Information Sharing Consortium (NISC) is pleased to announce that it will soon take on administration and oversight of the Virtual USA® (vUSA) Library. The NISC is working with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) First Responders Group (FRG) to collaborate on other aspects of the vUSA Program as well. The NISC will transition the Virtual Library from a prototype to an operational system based on needs, requirements, and lessons learned from the vUSA pilots and demonstrations that were held by DHS S&T from February 2009 through the present day. The NISC expects to be fully engaged in its governance role by the end of FY 2013. Over time, the NISC intends to play a key leadership role in establishing national situational awareness and information sharing capabilities that benefit public safety, first responder, and emergency management organizations across the nation. In the coming years, that work will expand to include voice and data communications interoperability via converged IP-based networks (like NextGen 911 and FirstNet).

The NISC also plans to deploy additional platforms and technologies that might offer opportunities to bolster program capacity, and will lead efforts toward validating vUSA's infrastructure, requirements, and value to the field of emergency management on programmatic and operational levels. Such efforts will involve soliciting recommendations from representatives within the homeland security, emergency management, and first responder communities to guarantee that vUSA remains a practitioner-driven program.

The NISC is committed to a transition that will enhance the user experience and increase overall vUSA program participation, and will collaborate with S&T to ensure that the transition is as seamless as possible. Plans and progress updates will be communicated regularly over the course of the transition. In the meantime, please contact the NISC at **virtualusa@nisconsortium.org** with any questions or comments.

"More than thirty-five (35) U.S. states; federal and local government; and Canadian provincial and federal government partners have participated in the Virtual USA Program since the first Virtual USA pilot was conducted in the Southeast region in 2009. For many of us, our participation in the Virtual USA Regional Pilots allowed us to create local, state, regional and national information sharing capabilities and partnerships that would not have been possible without Virtual USA. Virtual USA (and all that it represents) is a vital, national program and the NISC has an inherent interest in partnering with FRG to strengthen and sustain Virtual USA on behalf of the national emergency management, public safety and first responder community it is designed to serve."

-Sean McSpaden

The NISC is an independent consortium of diverse member organizations dedicated to addressing and promoting nationwide shared situational awareness, information sharing capabilities and communications interoperability. Together, they share best practices and determine new information sharing requirements; develop and share innovative approaches to technology, governance, training, and processes; and strengthen agreements and standards available for use by homeland security, emergency management, public safety, and first responder organizations across the country. To learn more about the NISC, visit **www.nisconsortium.org**.

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