



# Department of Homeland Security Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report for 15 December 2006

Current  
Nationwide  
Threat Level is  
**ELEVATED**  
SIGNIFICANT RISK OF  
TERRORIST ATTACKS  
[For info click here](http://www.dhs.gov/)  
<http://www.dhs.gov/>

## Daily Highlights

- The Department of Energy reports that the country's network of transmission lines has not been maintained and expanded enough to meet growing demand, a problem that already affects 40 million people from New York to Virginia and 18 million in Southern California. (See item [3](#))
- The Associated Press reports health officials have zeroed in on lettuce as the likely suspect in the E. coli outbreak linked to Taco Bell restaurants, though tracing the vegetable's source may prove difficult. (See item [23](#))
- The Associated Press reports employees at Troy Cleaners and Launderers in Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin, discovered a homemade explosive device on Monday, December 11; the Milwaukee County bomb squad dismantled the device. (See item [41](#))

### DHS Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report *Fast Jump*

**Production Industries:** [Energy](#); [Chemical Industry and Hazardous Materials](#); [Defense Industrial Base](#)

**Service Industries:** [Banking and Finance](#); [Transportation and Border Security](#); [Postal and Shipping](#)

**Sustenance and Health:** [Agriculture](#); [Food](#); [Water](#); [Public Health](#)

**Federal and State:** [Government](#); [Emergency Services](#)

**IT and Cyber:** [Information Technology and Telecommunications](#); [Internet Alert Dashboard](#)

**Other:** [Commercial Facilities/Real Estate, Monument & Icons](#); [General](#); [DHS Daily Report Contact Information](#)

## Energy Sector

**Current Electricity Sector Threat Alert Levels: Physical: ELEVATED, Cyber: ELEVATED**

Scale: LOW, GUARDED, ELEVATED, HIGH, SEVERE [Source: ISAC for the Electricity Sector (ES-ISAC) – <http://www.esisac.com>]

1. *December 14, Reuters* — OPEC to cut oil output by 500,000 bpd from February 1, 2007. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has agreed an oil output cut of 500,000 barrels per day (bpd), or two percent, delayed until February 1 when the northern

winter is ending, Qatar's oil minister said on Thursday, December 14, sending oil prices more than a dollar higher. By postponing a further reduction until peak demand has passed, OPEC is responding to importer nations' concern that a cut now will drive prices higher and hurt their economies. OPEC has already curbed output this year — by 1.2 million bpd to 26.3 million in October to halt a 10–week, 25 percent price slump. Before Thursday's meeting OPEC ministers were in agreement the market is oversupplied — stocks in top consumer the United States are the highest since 1998 for the time of year — but they wanted to get their timing right. Cut too soon and prices could spike. Delay, and prices could fall sharply in the second quarter as demand slackens.

Source: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/14/AR2006121400193.html>

2. *December 13, Union County Advocate (KY)* — **Department of Labor's MSHA makes new emergency mine evacuation rules permanent.** The Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) issued a final rule on December 8, 2006 that requires mine operators to increase the availability of emergency breathing devices, provide improved training on the use of the devices, improve emergency evacuation and drill training, install lifelines for emergency evacuation, and require notification of MSHA in the event of an accident. Other requirements of the new rule include: additional self-contained self-rescue (SCSR) devices for persons in underground coal mines—in working places, on mantrips, in escapeways, and where outby crews work or travel; submission of a revised training plan and a revised program of instruction for improved training on SCSRs; improved quarterly emergency mine evacuation training, including a drill; and additional multi-gas detectors to alert miners as to when to don SCSRs. One of the more significant results of the new rule is the establishment of only one phone number for use in reporting mine accidents within 15 minutes after it is known an accident occurred. All mine operators, including operators of metal and non-metal mines, must call 1–800–746–1553 to report mining accidents within the required time limit.  
Source: [http://www.ucadvocate.com/articles/stories/public/200612/13/04gZ\\_local\\_news.html](http://www.ucadvocate.com/articles/stories/public/200612/13/04gZ_local_news.html)

3. *December 13, New York Times* — **Grid limitations increase prices for electricity.** The network of transmission lines has not been maintained and expanded enough to meet growing demand, the Department of Energy (DOE) says. In areas where there are not enough lines to transmit electricity from the most efficient generating stations, utilities must find other sources or buy from costlier power plants nearby. The problem already affects 40 million people from New York to Virginia and 18 million in Southern California. Similar but smaller price increases will hit New England, the San Francisco Bay Area and the Seattle–Portland and Phoenix–Tucson corridors until new transmission lines are built. DOE estimates congestion charges in 2008 will add \$8 billion to electricity costs on the Eastern grid, which serves 200 million people east of the Rockies except for Texas. Investment in the network has been falling for three decades. For each dollar spent on the network in the 1970s, spending, adjusted for inflation, is only 75 cents today. Another sign of worsening congestion is a sharp increase in requests by network operators to prevent overloads that could disrupt transmission on the PJM Interconnection, which serves 51 million people from New Jersey to Illinois. There were 2,397 requests last year, up from 50 in 2004.  
Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/13/business/13power.html? r=1 &oref=slogin&pagewanted=print>

4. *December 13, Seattle Times* — **Rise in value brings increase in theft of utilities' copper wire.** Global copper prices have more than doubled during the past three years and thieves are looking everywhere for the hot commodity. Increasingly utilities across the nation have been the target of these thieves. For utilities copper theft is a financial issue. While the cost of replacing copper lines increases, the cost of repairing damage to substations and lines is a larger problem. According to the Snohomish County, WA, Public Utility District's senior manager for security and emergency management, David Behar: "In most cases, the damage done during the course of the theft is 10 times the value of the metal stolen...Often, there's so much damage in cutting and hacking that for \$5 worth of copper, we have \$50 in repairs." Officials at the Bonneville Power Administration — which supplies electricity throughout the Northwest — report about \$150,000 in materials and wire has been lost this year to thieves, but the cost of repairs has been nearly \$1 million.

Source: [http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/snohomishcountynews/2003473932\\_pud13n0.html](http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/snohomishcountynews/2003473932_pud13n0.html)

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## **Chemical Industry and Hazardous Materials Sector**

Nothing to report.

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## **Defense Industrial Base Sector**

5. *December 14, Aviation Week* — **Broader unmanned systems road map expected in Summer 2007.** The Pentagon is working on the next update to its unmanned systems road map for release in Summer 2007, which for the first time will focus not just on unmanned aircraft but unmanned ground and sea systems as well. The road map will cover 2007–2032 and should be sent to the services in draft form for their review in late January or early February, according to Dyke Weatherington, head of the Unmanned Aerial Systems Planning Task Force. This time around, the summary of programs will be in the back of the road map rather than the front, Weatherington said. The front will be devoted to issues of greater concern to the Pentagon, including "how we integrate this stuff, how we address policy issues across the broad range of unmanned systems, [and] how we integrate these at the combatant commander level," he said.

Source: [http://www.aviationnow.com/avnow/news/channel\\_netdefense\\_story.jsp?id=news/ROAD12146.xml](http://www.aviationnow.com/avnow/news/channel_netdefense_story.jsp?id=news/ROAD12146.xml)

6. *December 13, Aviation Week* — **AIA: Civil aircraft revenues to overtake military aircraft revenues in 2007.** U.S. aerospace sales will keep rising in 2007 as record orders won by Boeing and business jet manufacturers begin to translate into revenues. The military aircraft, space and missile sectors will likely see flat or declining sales. That's the upshot of the Aerospace Industries Association's (AIA) new annual forecast, which sees civil aircraft overtaking military airplane revenues next year for the first time since 2002. The study, released Wednesday, December 13, predicts civil aircraft will generate revenues of \$54.6 billion in 2007, an increase of 13 percent from this year. Total industry sales are expected to reach \$195 billion, up from \$184 billion from 2006.

Source: [http://www.aviationnow.com/avnow/news/channel\\_awst\\_story.jsp?id=news/AIA12136.xml](http://www.aviationnow.com/avnow/news/channel_awst_story.jsp?id=news/AIA12136.xml)

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## **Banking and Finance Sector**

7. *December 14, USA TODAY* — **New rules outlaw melting pennies, nickels for profit.** People who melt pennies or nickels to profit from the jump in metals prices could face jail time and pay thousands of dollars in fines, according to new rules out Thursday, December 14. Soaring metals prices mean that the value of the metal in pennies and nickels exceeds the face value of the coins. Based on current metals prices, the value of the metal in a nickel is now 6.99 cents, while the penny's metal is worth 1.12 cents, according to the U.S. Mint. That has piqued concern among government officials that people will melt the coins to sell the metal, leading to potential shortages of pennies and nickels. There have been no specific reports of people melting coins for the metal, Mint spokesperson Becky Bailey says. But the agency has received a number of questions in recent months from the public about the legality of melting the coins, and officials have heard some anecdotal reports of companies considering selling the metal from pennies and nickels, she says. Ongoing regulations make it illegal to alter coins with an intent to commit fraud. Before Thursday's new regulations, it was not illegal to melt coins.  
Source: [http://www.usatoday.com/money/2006-12-14-melting-ban-usat\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/money/2006-12-14-melting-ban-usat_x.htm)
  
8. *December 14, Associated Press* — **Personal data hacked at Texas college.** Hackers might have obtained the personal information of 6,000 people who worked for, applied to or attended the University of Texas at Dallas, school officials said Wednesday, December 13. The information includes names and Social Security numbers, the school said. In some cases, addresses, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers also might have been obtained. There is no indication that the information has been distributed or used, school officials said.  
Source: [http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/us/AP-Texas-Data-Theft.html?\\_r=1&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/us/AP-Texas-Data-Theft.html?_r=1&oref=slogin)
  
9. *December 14, Reuters* — **Hacker sentenced for 'logic bomb' attack.** A former UBS PaineWebber employee was sentenced to eight years in prison on Wednesday, December 13, for planting a computer "logic bomb" on company networks and betting its stock would go down. The investment scheme backfired when UBS stock remained stable after the computer attack and Roger Duronio lost more than \$23,000. Duronio quit his job as a systems administrator in February 2002 after repeatedly expressing dissatisfaction about his salary and bonuses, according to a U.S. attorney's office statement. He then planted malicious computer code known as a "logic bomb" in about 1,000 of PaineWebber's approximately 1,500 networked computers in branch offices. On March 4, 2002, the "bomb" detonated and began deleting files. Duronio bought more than \$23,000 in put option contracts for UBS AG stock, betting the stock's price would go down after his "logic bomb" went off. But, according to testimony at his trial, the stock remained stable after the computer attack and Duronio lost all of his investment.  
Source: [http://today.reuters.com/news/articlenews.aspx?type=technologyNews&storyID=2006-12-14T114554Z\\_01\\_N13128631\\_RTRUKOC\\_0\\_US-USA-CRIME-HACKER.xml&WTmodLoc=Home-C5-technologyNews-3](http://today.reuters.com/news/articlenews.aspx?type=technologyNews&storyID=2006-12-14T114554Z_01_N13128631_RTRUKOC_0_US-USA-CRIME-HACKER.xml&WTmodLoc=Home-C5-technologyNews-3)

**10. *December 14, Finextra (UK)* — Phishing figures worry UK's Financial Services Authority.**

The UK financial services sector has experienced an 8,000 percent increase in online phishing scams in the past two years, according to figures presented by the Financial Services Authority (FSA). According to a BBC report, the FSA's financial crime team told the Lords science and technology committee on Wednesday, December 13, that incidents of phishing are set to rise by 90 percent for the second year running. Between January and June 2005 the number of recorded phishing incidents was 312, the Lords committee was informed. But this rose to 5,059 for the same period this year, according to stats released by Apacs. Around \$45.5 million was plundered in scams in the first half of 2006, the committee heard, and this figure is expected to be \$44.1 million for the second half of the year. Philip Whitaker, Apacs security chief, told the committee that the increase was down to better detection methods, but also said scammers were adopting an increasingly "industrialized" approach. Philip Robinson, the FSA's head of financial crime, said he believed Internet banking was generally safe but admitted that banks were reluctant to report incidents to the police.

Source: <http://finextra.com/fullstory.asp?id=16276>

**11. *December 14, Boston Herald* — Five indicted in elaborate ID theft ring after posing as Homeland Security officers.**

Five men were indicted in Queens, NY, on Wednesday, December 13, for allegedly running an identity theft ring that targeted immigrants across the country. The suspects are accused of taking part in an elaborate scheme that coaxed personal information and credit card numbers from Indian or Pakistani immigrants by posing as Homeland Security officers. The victims would receive a call from a man in Queens, NY, purporting to be a Homeland Security agent who had a terrorist in custody who had used an airline ticket purchased with the target's credit card. The victims were told to call a number to straighten out the problem, and would reach one of the five men in Boston, police said. "They would purposefully target immigrants and scare the hell out of them," said Boston detective Steven Blair. The information allegedly collected was used to obtain cash advances from the victims' credit cards or was used to open new accounts. "This is a million-dollar identity theft ring that posed as federal agents, targeted immigrants, and could very well have ties to organized crime," Blair said. The scheme unraveled in May after one of the suspects allegedly tried to scam a New York police chief.

Source: <http://news.bostonherald.com/localRegional/view.bg?articleid=171970>

**12. *December 13, Chicago Tribune* — Five charged with selling stolen goods on eBay.**

Investigators raided two storefront businesses and four homes in the Chicago, IL, area on Wednesday, December 13, to break up a lucrative fencing operation in which valuable items stolen from major retailers were sold on eBay, authorities said. A spokesperson for the Cook County state's attorney's office said five people were arrested and charged with receiving stolen property, a felony. Investigators said they could face additional charges, including the online sale of stolen merchandise, electronic fencing and computer fraud. Assistant State's Attorney John Mahoney said the accused used the name "buyersdrm" to peddle their wares at the online auction site and raked in about \$600,000 this year alone. Investigators said they believe the operation started in 2000. They had a 100 percent positive rating with hundreds of customers, according to information found on eBay. As of late Wednesday, 11 items remained for sale from "buyersdrm." An eBay representative said they wouldn't close the account until investigators ask them to do so. Authorities said the ring operated out of two pawnshops. Investigators were tipped off to the alleged crime ring when representatives from Macy's and

Target approached them about a large number of items stolen from their Chicago–area stores.  
Source: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/custom/newsroom/chi-061213raid-story.1.553372.story?coll=chi-news-hed>

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## **Transportation and Border Security Sector**

**13. *December 14, Department of Transportation* — FRA and New Jersey Transit begin study to improve capacity and operation of Portal Bridge on Northeast Corridor.** Public comments are being sought for a project to replace, repair, or retain a nearly one–hundred–year–old railroad bridge on the heavily congested Northeast Corridor connecting the Newark, New Jersey, and New York City metropolitan areas, announced Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph H. Boardman. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and New Jersey Transit (NJT) will jointly prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS), in cooperation with Amtrak, to study improvements to enhance capacity and operation of the Amtrak–owned Portal Bridge that spans the Hackensack River. Originally constructed in 1910, the bridge is nearing the end of its projected lifespan. Boardman said that the two–track bridge currently handles 393 NJT and 51 Amtrak trains each weekday. Among the Portal Bridge options under consideration: retaining the existing structure and building a new bridge with two or three additional tracks; modifying the existing bridge to improve its safety and possibly adding a second bridge as well; and removing the Portal Bridge altogether and replacing it. Public comment on the scope of the EIS, including the range of alternatives considered and environmental issues or concerns will be accepted through January 31, 2007.  
Project Website: [www.portalbridgenec.com](http://www.portalbridgenec.com).  
Source: <http://www.dot.gov/affairs/fra2106.htm>

**14. *December 14, Associated Press* — Dragonair joins global airline alliance.** Hong Kong Dragon Airlines Ltd. has said it will join the Oneworld global alliance — a move that will give the flight network much–needed access to over a dozen additional cities in China's booming market. The airline said its frequent fliers would be able to earn and redeem mileage awards on all Oneworld member airlines. Oneworld's alliance also includes American Airlines, British Airways PLC, Qantas Airways and Finnair PLC. Japan Airlines Corp. and Royal Jordanian Airlines are expected to join next year. Star Alliance includes United Airlines and Deutsche Lufthansa AG. The third major global alliance, Skyteam, includes Air France–KLM SA and Northwest Airlines Corp. China Southern Airlines Co., one of China's top three carriers, has agreed to join the group.  
Source: [http://biz.yahoo.com/ap/061214/hong\\_kong\\_dragonair.html?.v=1](http://biz.yahoo.com/ap/061214/hong_kong_dragonair.html?.v=1)

**15. *December 14, Herald Sun (Australia)* — Qantas accepts takeover offer.** Qantas Airways has accepted an \$11 billion takeover offer from an international consortium, Airline Partners Australia, led by Macquarie Bank and U.S. private equity firm Texas Pacific Group. The proposal means Australia's national carrier will become a privately owned company and delist from the Australian Stock Exchange after 11 years as a listed group.  
Source: <http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0.21985.20926170-661.00.html>

**16. *December 13, CNNMoney* — Airline mergers could lead to fewer choices, higher fares.**

Airline passengers could soon face far fewer choices booking flights, and that could mean higher fares in many markets. The six major airlines could be reduced to just three or four after US Airways' bid for Delta last month and amid reports Wednesday, December 13, that UAL, the parent of United, the nation's second-biggest airline, was in talks to buy No. 4 Continental Airlines. Meanwhile, discount airlines could see their own round of deals after AirTran, one of the smaller low-fare carriers, made a hostile bid to buy rival Midwest Express Wednesday. Some analysts and industry executives say the carriers need to merge to keep costs under control in an industry long plagued by excess capacity — one that only recently climbed out of a five-year slump that led to \$42 billion in losses. But critics argue that the traveling public will be hurt by fewer choices, and that reduced capacity can do nothing but put upward pressure on fares "Any merger that takes out a brand takes out an option," said airline consultant Michael Boyd. "Whenever a consumer has less options, you're going to have higher fares."

Source: [http://money.cnn.com/2006/12/13/news/companies/airlines\\_mergers/index.htm?postversion=2006121310](http://money.cnn.com/2006/12/13/news/companies/airlines_mergers/index.htm?postversion=2006121310)

**17. *December 12, USA TODAY* — Airport screeners' injury rate declines but still exceeds rates of other workers.**

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) dramatically cut the injury rate for airport screeners in the past year, though it remains among the highest in the nation. On-the-job injuries, which have forced screeners to miss hundreds of thousands of workdays, fell to 16 per 100 employees in the fiscal year that ended September 30, TSA data show. "There's been a phenomenal focus placed on safety," said Earl Morris, TSA general manager for field operations. "The benefits are enormous" because fewer injuries mean more screeners at checkpoints and faster security lines. Screeners among a workforce of 47,000 are injured more often than workers in all but five of the roughly 600 jobs tracked by the Department of Labor. Morris said screeners have to lift heavy bags, often in awkward positions that cause strains. Injuries add to absenteeism that has forced the TSA to shut security lanes and violate a law requiring checked luggage to go through bomb detectors, according to congressional investigators. The TSA has installed rollers and bag hoisters to relieve screeners from lifting, brought screeners back to work on light duty and attacked fraud with an inspections office that has prosecuted employees who allegedly falsified injury claims.

Source: [http://www.usatoday.com/travel/flights/2006-12-12-tsa-injuries\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/travel/flights/2006-12-12-tsa-injuries_x.htm)

**18. *December 06, Government Accountability Office* — GAO-07-248: Border Security: US-VISIT Program Faces Strategic, Operational, and Technological Challenges at Land Ports of Entry (Report).**

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) established the U.S. Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology (US-VISIT) program to collect, maintain, and share data on selected foreign nationals entering and exiting the United States at air, sea and land ports of entry (POEs). These data, including biometric identifiers like digital fingerprints, are to be used to screen persons against watch lists, verify visitors' identities, and record arrival and departure. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) was asked to review implementation at land POE facilities and in doing so GAO analyzed: (1) efforts to implement US-VISIT entry capability; (2) efforts to implement US-VISIT exit capability; and (3) DHS's efforts to define how US-VISIT fits with other emerging border security initiatives. GAO reviewed DHS and US-VISIT program documents, interviewed program officials, and visited 21 land POEs with varied traffic levels on both borders. GAO recommends that DHS improve existing management controls for US-VISIT; develop performance measures to assess

the impact of US–VISIT at land POEs; and ensure that a statutorily mandated report describes how DHS will move to a biometric entry/exit capability and align US–VISIT with emerging land border security initiatives. DHS generally agreed and said that it has begun to or plans to implement GAO’s recommendations.

Highlights: <http://www.gao.gov/highlights/d07248high.pdf>

Source: <http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-248>

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## **Postal and Shipping Sector**

Nothing to report.

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## **Agriculture Sector**

### **19. *December 13, Associated Press* — **Fallout from Swift raids could hit cattle markets.****

According to a beef marketing specialist, the raids on six Swift & Co. plants across the country could disrupt cattle markets and local economies, the Grand Island Independent, in Nebraska, reported. Losing a significant portion of its staff will cut into each plant's daily slaughter, said Darrell Mark, a beef marketing specialist at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Neither Swift nor Immigration and Customs Enforcement have said publicly how many workers were detained during the raids Tuesday, December 12, at the Grand Island plant and the five others across the country. The company had gone to court to forestall the raids, estimating that they would remove up to 40 percent of its 13,000 workers. The longer any slowdown, the bigger the financial hit on Swift, its other plant workers, and the communities where the plants are situated, said Mike Fitzgerald, spokesperson for the Nebraska Cattlemen. Also, any slowdown in production will back up cattle supplies.

Source: <http://www.agriculture.com/ag/futuresource/FutureSourceStoryIndex.jhtml?storyId=75700380>

### **20. *December 13, USAgNet* — **NOAA 10–year aquaculture plan available for public comment.****

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has released a draft 10–Year Plan for the NOAA Aquaculture Program. Through adoption of this plan, NOAA seeks to establish an improved system for regulating and monitoring U.S. marine aquaculture, develop new seafood farming technology, improve public education about aquaculture, and influence development and adoption of global sustainable aquaculture practices and standards.

Source: <http://www.usagnet.com/story-national.php?Id=2603&yr=2006>

### **21. *December 13, Reuters* — **Thousands of ducks mysteriously dying in Idaho.**** Officials scrambled on Wednesday, December 13, to determine what has caused the deaths of thousands of mallard ducks in south–central Idaho near the Utah border. Although wildlife experts are downplaying any links to bird flu, they have sent samples to government labs to test for the deadly H5N1 flu strain, among other pathogens. Wildlife officials are calling the massive die–off alarming, with the number of dead mallards rising from 1,000 on Tuesday, December 12, to more than 2,000 by Wednesday afternoon. Preliminary findings by state veterinarians



suggest the mallards succumbed to a bacterial infection, officials said. They said it was unclear why a similar outbreak had never before occurred in Idaho.

Source: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/N13162572.htm>

22. *December 12, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service* — **USDA proposes standards for permanent, privately owned horse quarantine facilities.** The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is proposing to amend its regulations regarding the importation of horses in order to establish standards for the approval of permanent, privately owned quarantine facilities. The need for quarantine facilities for imported horses has increased in recent years as the amount of trade between the United States and other countries has risen. This action is being proposed because, in some cases, the demand for quarantine services for horses has exceeded the space available at existing federal facilities. In addition, the geographic distribution of the currently operating horse quarantine facilities can make it difficult or costly to import horses to some areas. Under the proposal, permanent, private facilities would have to be approved by APHIS and maintain the same level of biological security standards as other permanent quarantine facilities operated by APHIS. In addition, at least one APHIS representative would be required to be onsite to oversee the care of all horses in quarantine during normal working hours.

Source: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/content/2006/12/horsefaci1.shtml>

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## **Food Sector**

23. *December 13, Associated Press* — **Lettuce suspected in Taco Bell E. coli outbreak.** Health officials on Wednesday, December 13, zeroed in on lettuce as the likely suspect in the E. coli outbreak linked to Taco Bell, though tracing the vegetable's source may prove difficult. The outbreak apparently has run its course after 71 confirmed cases of the disease in five states, primarily New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania, officials said. Investigators considered cheddar cheese and ground beef as possible contaminated ingredients before settling on lettuce. The company first believed green onions were responsible, but follow-up testing by the government failed to confirm that. "That I would say is the most likely vehicle. I would warn we are not done with the investigation," Dr. Christopher Braden, a medical epidemiologist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told reporters. Dr. David Acheson, chief medical officer at the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, discussed plans to trace the lettuce to its source. But because the shredded lettuce was processed in bulk — probably multiple heads of lettuce from multiple sources — that could turn out to be a hard task.

Source: [http://cbs2.com/local/local\\_story\\_347224448.html](http://cbs2.com/local/local_story_347224448.html)

24. *December 13, Associated Press* — **Taco John drops vendor over E. coli fear.** Taco John's International Inc. has dropped a produce supplier amid reports of possible E. coli contamination at three of its restaurants in the Midwest. Brian Dixon, vice president of marketing at Taco John's headquarters in Cheyenne, WY, said Wednesday, December 13, that about 40 people have fallen ill in Iowa and another 14 in southern Minnesota. Dixon said the sickened people reported that they have eaten at one of three Taco John's restaurants, among other places. While tests are still being done, he said nothing so far indicates that the bacteria necessarily came from

the firm's restaurants. Dixon said the restaurant chain has dropped St. Paul, MN–based Bix Produce Co. LLC as an "urgent and precautionary measure." He said the company provided produce for restaurants in Iowa and Minnesota.

Source: <http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/ap/fn/4400508.html>

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## **Water Sector**

25. *December 15, Local Government Environmental Network* — **EPA expands Water Contaminant Information Tool.** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has expanded the Water Contaminant Information Tool (WCIT) to assist water utilities, public health officials and federal, state and local agencies to better plan for and respond to intentional or accidental contamination events. Launched in November 2005, WCIT is a secure, online database profiling chemical, biological, and radiological contaminants of concern for drinking water and wastewater utilities. WCIT includes both regulated and non–regulated contaminants and provides current, reliable data from peer–reviewed reports and research. The system includes general information for 93 contaminants and now includes additional information in four new data categories: drinking water treatment; wastewater treatment; environmental impacts; and infrastructure decontamination. Access to WCIT data is password protected and qualified individuals must apply to EPA and undergo screening before being granted access. Database: <http://www.epa.gov/wcit/>  
Source: <http://www.lgean.org/html/whatsnew.cfm?id=1131>

26. *December 13, Pasadena Star–News (CA)* — **San Gabriel Valley area water treatment plant to shut for five days.** The major water supplier in the San Gabriel Valley is temporarily closing its La Verne, CA, treatment plant Saturday, December 16, and residents are being asked to decrease water usage. More than 100,000 San Gabriel Valley residents will be affected by the five–day closure of the F.E. Weymouth Treatment Plant, according to the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) of Southern California. Water supply at the plant, which treats 520 million gallons a day, will be completely shut down from Saturday to Wednesday, December 20. Residents and businesses in the Walnut Valley and Rowland water districts, which include Diamond Bar, Walnut, Industry, Rowland Heights, Hacienda Heights, La Puente and West Covina, are asked to turn off sprinklers. Walnut and Rowland districts will use their stored water supplies for customers and have also coordinated with other local water agencies to secure additional water supplies, officials said. The MWD is shutting down the plant to prepare for a \$185 million improvement project scheduled to be completed by 2009, plant manager Jim Kostelecky said.  
Source: [http://www.pasadenastarnews.com/news/ci\\_4836520](http://www.pasadenastarnews.com/news/ci_4836520)

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## **Public Health Sector**

27. *December 14, Reuters* — **China to crack down on fake rabies vaccines.** China will severely punish companies that produce fake and poor quality rabies vaccines, the country's food and

drug watchdog said on Thursday, December 14, after several people reportedly died from substandard vaccines. The food and drug body said local authorities had to report their findings on fake vaccines to the central government by July next year. Rabies has killed more people in China than either tuberculosis or AIDS in each of the preceding seven months, the Health Ministry said on Monday, prompting a crackdown in the capital and several provinces to control unregistered dogs. The Chinese government has also previously expressed concern about fake or poor quality bird flu vaccines used on domestic poultry. Fake or poor quality drugs have killed dozens of people in China in recent years and raised questions about drug safety.

Source: <http://health.yahoo.com/news/169941; ylt=Aire3265SHBQ0YZOF3W 6YtamxbAB>

**28. *December 14, Reuters* — More needed to prepare for flu pandemic, experts say.** Experts urged governments on Thursday, December 14, to do more to prepare for a possible influenza pandemic and beef up surveillance on the spread of bird flu in all animals and humans. "There has got to be an increase in [vaccine] manufacturing facilities. In a pandemic, there would be a lot of difficulty in securing vaccines from producers," said Peter Palese, a microbiology professor at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York. The world's total flu vaccine production capacity is only about 350 million doses per year, a mere fraction compared to a world population of more than six billion people. The shortfall becomes even starker with a few drugmakers now promoting "multiple doses" for each person for better protection. Drugmakers told the conference they were trying to get around simple but daunting logistical problems in developing H5N1 vaccines for humans. "Syringes and needles will be in short supply in the event of a pandemic," said James Young, president of research and development at MedImmune Inc. "We are looking at changeable tips — after spraying into the nose of one person, you can change the tip and go to the next person," he said.

Source: <http://health.yahoo.com/news/169940; ylt=AsNDPaV3uYlkz6bJ0Yp uuB2mxbAB>

**29. *December 14, New York Times* — Blood banks get new test to reveal fatal parasite.** After years of delays, the Food and Drug Administration Wednesday, December 13, approved a test for a fatal parasitic infection that is common in Latin America and increasingly prevalent in the United States blood supply. The nation's major blood banks said they would quickly adopt the test for the ailment, Chagas disease, which in Latin America is usually transmitted by the bite of a parasite-carrying insect called the kissing bug, but can also be passed from mother to child or through blood transfusion or organ donation. About 100,000 people in the United States are thought to be infected with Chagas disease, and the American Red Cross estimated that in the Los Angeles area, the chance of getting a unit of potentially infected blood is one in 2,000, compared to the one in 10,000 estimated a decade ago. In addition to protecting the blood supply, the tests will also give a more accurate idea of the extent of Chagas disease in the United States.

Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/14/health/policy/14parasite.html? r=1&oref=slogin>

**30. *December 13, Reuters* — Flu shot doesn't need perfect virus match.** The annual influenza vaccine can protect against illness even if it isn't perfectly attuned to the flu strain going around, researchers said in a finding that may have implications for protecting people against bird flu. Flu viruses mutate over time, a process called "drift." So viruses that sweep across the country may not always be those selected each February as the basis for the annual vaccine. The study found that the flu vaccine works even when drift has occurred. Suzanne Ohmit of the

University of Michigan School of Public Health and her colleagues found that in the fall of 2004, Sanofi–Pasteur's FluZone vaccine was 77 percent effective and MedImmune Inc.'s Flumist worked in 57 percent of the cases even though the flu strain making the rounds that year was not selected for the vaccine.

Study: <http://content.nejm.org/cgi/reprint/355/24/2513.pdf>

Source: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/B841896.htm>

31. *December 13, Union (CA)* — **Whooping cough outbreak in California county.** In the past two weeks, four cases of pertussis, or whooping cough, have been confirmed in Nevada County, CA, school–aged children who were not immunized or did not complete their immunization shots. According to the Nevada County Public Health Department, the highly infectious disease is a bacteria, which is spread through the air when people cough.  
Source: <http://www.theunion.com/article/20061213/BREAKINGNEWS/612130.01/-1/NEWS>
32. *December 13, Salem News (MA)* — **Nine high school students contract whooping cough in Massachusetts.** An outbreak of whooping cough at Salem High School in Salem, MA, has prompted the Health Department to send warning letters to parents. There have been nine confirmed cases of pertussis, or whooping cough, at Salem High this fall, including four this month, according to Tracy Giarla, the city's public health nurse. There have been several outbreaks at schools across Massachusetts, according to state health officials. There also have been incidents at hospitals, most recently at Children's Hospital Boston, where more than 30 staff members were diagnosed with the disease last month.  
Source: [http://www.salemnews.com/local/local\\_story\\_347064616?keyword=topstory](http://www.salemnews.com/local/local_story_347064616?keyword=topstory)
33. *December 13, Gazette (Canada)* — **C. difficile, Norwalk virus hit nursing home patients in Canada.** A Rosemont, Canada, nursing home has been hit with two outbreaks at the same time, one involving the deadly C. difficile bacterium and the other the Norwalk virus, public–health officials said Wednesday, December 13. Four patients have been infected with the Clostridium difficile superbug. Eight other patients are suffering from gastrointestinal symptoms commonly associated with the Norwalk virus, said Blaise Lefebvre of the Montreal Public Health Department. Since Saturday, the Centre d'hébergement Robert–Cliche has barred all visitors until further notice. A total of 18 residents have been quarantined because they all have abnormal stools.  
Source: <http://www.canada.com/montrealgazette/news/story.html?id=d2a5bf63-df36-427d-b273-1e83369796ae&k=69774>
34. *November 16, Government Accountability Office* — **GAO–07–54: Prescription Drugs: Improvements Needed in FDA's Oversight of Direct–to–Consumer Advertising (Report).** The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is responsible for overseeing direct–to–consumer (DTC) advertising of prescription drugs. If FDA identifies a violation of laws or regulations in a DTC advertising material, the agency may issue a regulatory letter asking the drug company to take specific actions. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) was asked to discuss (1) trends in drug company spending on DTC advertising and other activities; (2) what is known about the relationship between DTC advertising and drug spending and utilization; (3) the DTC advertising materials FDA reviews; (4) the number of regulatory letters that cited DTC materials and FDA's process for issuing those letters; and (5) the effectiveness of these letters at limiting the dissemination of violative DTC advertising. GAO reviewed research literature,

analyzed FDA's processes, and examined FDA documentation. GAO recommends that FDA (1) document criteria for prioritizing DTC materials for review, (2) systematically apply its criteria to materials it receives, and (3) track which materials it reviews. GAO believes that FDA already has most of the information that would be required to establish a systematic process for screening DTC materials.

Highlights: <http://www.gao.gov/highlights/d0754high.pdf>

Source: <http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-54>

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## **Government Sector**

Nothing to report.

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## **Emergency Services Sector**

**35. *December 13, Asheville Citizen-Times (NC)* — Emergency workers unveil new portable hospital.** Mission Hospitals in Asheville, NC, on behalf of mountain hospitals and first responders, received today the first of eight portable hospital units slated for eight of the state's trauma centers. The 50-bed units will be used before, during and after disasters to help responders provide "surge capacity" during emergencies. Each trailer is 53-feet long and is deployable within eight hours. Doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and other health care professionals staff the mobile unit.

Source: [http://www.citizen-times.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=20066\\_1213041](http://www.citizen-times.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=20066_1213041)

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## **Information Technology and Telecommunications Sector**

**36. *December 14, eWeek* — Microsoft releases bug-fix version of Visual Studio 2005.** Microsoft has released to manufacturing Visual Studio 2005 Service Pack 1, which features fixes for user-reported issues. Service Pack 1 of the development platform also includes more than 70 improvements for common development scenarios, including new processor support for code generation and profiling, as well as performance and scale improvements in Microsoft's Team Foundation Server (TFS). Last month, Microsoft confirmed an "extremely critical" vulnerability in Visual Studio.

Source: <http://www.eweek.com/article2/0.1895.2072587.00.asp>

**37. *December 14, IDG News Service* — Wireless devices to work Europe-wide.** The European Commission is harmonizing radio frequency bands across the European Union (EU) in order to spur use of a wide range of wireless devices such as wireless computer keyboards, headphones and garage door openers, it said Thursday, December 14. Frequency bands will soon be harmonized throughout the EU making life simpler, as anyone in Europe will be able to use the same short-range wireless product anywhere in the EU and manufacturers need only make one product for the whole internal market, the Commission said in a statement. The Commission

hopes the move will decrease the price of wireless devices.

Source: [http://www.infoworld.com/article/06/12/14/HNwirelesskeyboards\\_1.html](http://www.infoworld.com/article/06/12/14/HNwirelesskeyboards_1.html)

38. *December 13, IDG News Service* — **Third exploit for Word released.** Hackers have released attack code that exploits a critical vulnerability in Microsoft's Word software -- the third such bug to be disclosed in the past week. The proof of concept code was posted Tuesday, December 12, on the Milw0rm.com Website, making it widely available to the hacking community. It exploits a previously unreported bug in Word. Like the other recent Word bugs disclosed this past week, it could be used by attackers to run unauthorized software on a victim's computer, said David Marcus, security research and communications manager with McAfee Inc.'s Avert Labs

Source: [http://www.infoworld.com/article/06/12/13/HNthirdword\\_1.html](http://www.infoworld.com/article/06/12/13/HNthirdword_1.html)

39. *December 13, CNET News* — **Symantec plugs trio of NetBackup holes.** Symantec on Wednesday, December 13, released updates for its Veritas NetBackup software to repair a trio of serious security vulnerabilities. The flaws affect Veritas NetBackup Master, Media Servers and clients, the Cupertino, CA-based company said in a security alert. An attacker with access to a vulnerable NetBackup host could gain complete control over the targeted system, it said. Two of the flaws are buffer overflow problems in the NetBackup bpcd communications daemon running on the NetBackup servers and client systems, Symantec said. The third issue is a programming logic error in how the same bpcd daemon handles incoming system commands. This problem was discovered by IBM's Internet Security Systems.

Security Alert: [http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/security/Content/2006.12.13\\_a.html](http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/security/Content/2006.12.13_a.html)

Source: [http://news.com.com/Symantec+plugs+trio+of+NetBackup+holes/2100-1002\\_3-6143551.html](http://news.com.com/Symantec+plugs+trio+of+NetBackup+holes/2100-1002_3-6143551.html)

40. *December 13, CNET News* — **Microsoft pulls Mac security update.** A security update issued Tuesday, December 12, for the Mac version of Microsoft Office was posted in error, the software maker said. The company encouraged consumers to uninstall the patch, which is still being tested.

Microsoft Security Response Center blog posting:

<http://blogs.technet.com/msrc/archive/2006/12/13/information>

[-on-accidental-posting-of-pre-release-security-updates-for-office-for-mac.aspx](http://blogs.technet.com/msrc/archive/2006/12/13/information-on-accidental-posting-of-pre-release-security-updates-for-office-for-mac.aspx)

Source: [http://news.com.com/Microsoft+pulls+Mac+security+update/2100-1002\\_3-6143403.html](http://news.com.com/Microsoft+pulls+Mac+security+update/2100-1002_3-6143403.html)

## Internet Alert Dashboard

Current Port Attacks	
<b>Top 10 Target Ports</b>	44113 (---), 1026 (win-rpc), 21015 (---), 6881 (bittorrent), 1028 (---), 1027 (icq), 4662 (eDonkey2000), 445 (microsoft-ds), 4207 (vrml-multi-use), 4672 (eMule) Source: <a href="http://isc.incidents.org/top10.html">http://isc.incidents.org/top10.html</a> ; Internet Storm Center
To report cyber infrastructure incidents or to request information, please contact US-CERT at <a href="mailto:soc@us-cert.gov">soc@us-cert.gov</a> or visit their Website: <a href="http://www.us-cert.gov">www.us-cert.gov</a> .	
Information on IT information sharing and analysis can be found at the IT ISAC (Information Sharing and Analysis Center)	

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## **Commercial Facilities/Real Estate, Monument & Icons Sector**

### **41. *December 12, Associated Press* — Homemade bomb found at Sheboygan Falls laundry.**

Police in Sheboygan Falls, WI, are trying to figure out how a live bomb got into a load of laundry at a dry cleaner–laundromat business. Employees at Troy Cleaners and Launderers said that they discovered the homemade explosive on Monday, December 11, and called the Milwaukee County bomb squad. Three technicians dismantled the device after taking it to a barricaded area at the Department of Public Works complex. The technicians told police that the explosives could have caused substantial injury or damage to the business.

Source: <http://www.channel3000.com/news/10516617/detail.html>

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## **General Sector**

Nothing to report.

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To report cyber infrastructure incidents or to request information, please contact US–CERT at [soc@us-cert.gov](mailto:soc@us-cert.gov) or visit their Web page at [www.us-cert.gov](http://www.us-cert.gov).

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