



## HOMELAND SECURITY & DEFENSE BUSINESS COUNCIL

### HOMELAND SECURITY EXPERTS, COMMUNITY LEADERS PREPARE THE NATION'S CAPITAL AREA BUSINESSES FOR DISASTER

Date: September 28, 2007

Washington, D.C. -- In observance of National Preparedness Month, the American Red Cross of the National Capital Area and the Homeland Security & Defense Business Council hosted an interactive discussion to help local businesses in the National Capitol Region prepare for 21st century risks such as natural disasters and terrorist attacks.

Speakers at the 'Partners in Preparedness Symposium' included former Oklahoma Governor, the Honorable Frank Keating, President and CEO of American Council of Life Insurers; Greg Pellegrino, Chairman of the Homeland Security & Defense Business Council and Global Managing Director, Public Sector, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu; Darrell Darnell, Director of the District of Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency; James C. Dinegar, President and CEO, Greater Washington Board of Trade; and Linda C. Mathes, CEO, American Red Cross of the National Capital Area (visit [www.redcrossnca.org](http://www.redcrossnca.org) for a complete list of Symposium panelists and speakers).

Keating, who was in office during the Oklahoma City bombing, the deadliest attack on American soil prior to 9/11, is a key partner to the Red Cross and one of the nation's strongest voices in preparing communities for man-made attacks and natural disasters.

"9/11 and Katrina taught us that bad things will happen," Keating said. "They also taught us that the public will be unforgiving if we are not prepared."

Last year, the American Red Cross responded to 75,000 disasters nationwide ranging from house fires to local floods to life-altering tornadoes and hurricanes. However, a National Preparedness Month survey conducted by the Red Cross discovered that only seven percent of Americans have taken the necessary steps to prepare for such disasters.

"Every month, the American Red Cross here locally and around the country engages families and communities in preparing themselves for natural and man-made disasters," said Linda Mathes, CEO of the American Red Cross of the National Capital Area. "We're trying to make this local community the most prepared, fully engaged and responsive in the nation. We're committed to doing this. We must be."

Today's symposium led the preparedness efforts down a different, less publicized course: 'Preparing Your Business to Survive the Unexpected.' To better prepare businesses, participants were given a Preparedness Toolkit for small to medium-sized businesses, compliments of BearingPoint. For an electronic copy of the toolkit, please visit [www.homelandsecurity.org](http://www.homelandsecurity.org).

"Preparedness is everyone's business," said Darnell. "Government can't do it alone. Business, government, citizens and our partners such as the Red Cross, in the non-profit and volunteer community, must all work together to ensure that all segments of our community are prepared for emergencies of all types."

The Homeland Security & Defense Business Council released the first in a series of planned thought leadership publications today called *Corporate Responsibility: Why Businesses Should Be Prepared in a World of Uncertainty*, which calls on large and small businesses to act to secure the economic engine that all Americans depend upon.

“There are several good reasons why Corporate Responsibility makes good business sense. But until businesses realize that this [Corporate Responsibility] is about businesses building immunity from homeland security threats, our economy, our people, and our freedoms will remain vulnerable,” said Pellegrino.

The Homeland Security & Defense Business Council is hosting a series of national workshops in local communities to provide local, small and medium-sized businesses with ‘Critical Success Factors for Business Survival’ in the event of a man-made or natural disaster. The workshops are designed to educate small businesses and local leaders of inexpensive ways that they can partner and be better prepared to take responsibility as business owners and members of the community.

To download a copy of the whitepaper Corporate Responsibility: Why Businesses Should Be Prepared in a World of Uncertainty, or for more on the Homeland Security & Defense Business Council, visit: [www.homelandcouncil.org/docs/CR\\_paper.pdf](http://www.homelandcouncil.org/docs/CR_paper.pdf) .

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#### ***About the American Red Cross***

The American Red Cross of the National Capital Area, comprised of more than 4,000 volunteers and 130 employees, provides relief to victims of disasters and empowers people in the DC Metropolitan Area to prevent, prepare for and respond to disasters and other life-threatening emergencies. Financially supported by the generosity of the local community, your National Capital Area Chapter responds 2-3 times a day to local disasters – 518 in 2006 alone. The Chapter’s jurisdiction includes the counties of Prince George’s, Montgomery and Fairfax; the District of Columbia; and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church.

#### ***About the Council***

The Homeland Security & Defense Business Council, a non-profit, non-partisan membership organization, has, for over four years, promoted the importance of the private sector in achieving the vision and mission for homeland security. The council sponsors a number of programs and activities designed to foster a “culture of preparedness and partnership” between the public and private sectors to protect and prepare our nation. To learn more about the Homeland Security & Defense Business Council, visit our website at [www.homelandcouncil.org](http://www.homelandcouncil.org).