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2012 APEX Talks Budgets, Disasters

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2012 APEX Talks Budgets, Disasters

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With more than 120 alumni present, the 2012 CHDS Alumni Professional Exchange Education Conference (APEX) at the Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS) held Feb. 22-23 was the most well-attended in the history of the event.

The conference theme of "Terrorism, Disaster and Budgets" rang throughout two days of discussion and presentations in the Barbara McNitt Ballroom on the campus of the Naval Postgraduate School.

The first day of the conference centered on natural disasters and terrorism threats, two of the most prominent issues in the homeland security enterprise.

FEMA Deputy Administrator Rich Serino, the opening speaker, urged attendees to engage their creativity when mitigating anticipated loss of resources and revenue during the budget process. A graduate of CHDS' Executive Leaders program, Serino noted that 2011 was a costly year for disasters with 14 of them costing at least \$1 billion, which poses a challenge as the agency grapples with declining funds.

Serino saluted alumni for the roles they play each day.

"Everybody in this room has made a difference," he said. "You have made a difference in people's lives. Not many people get to do that. For that I say thank you."

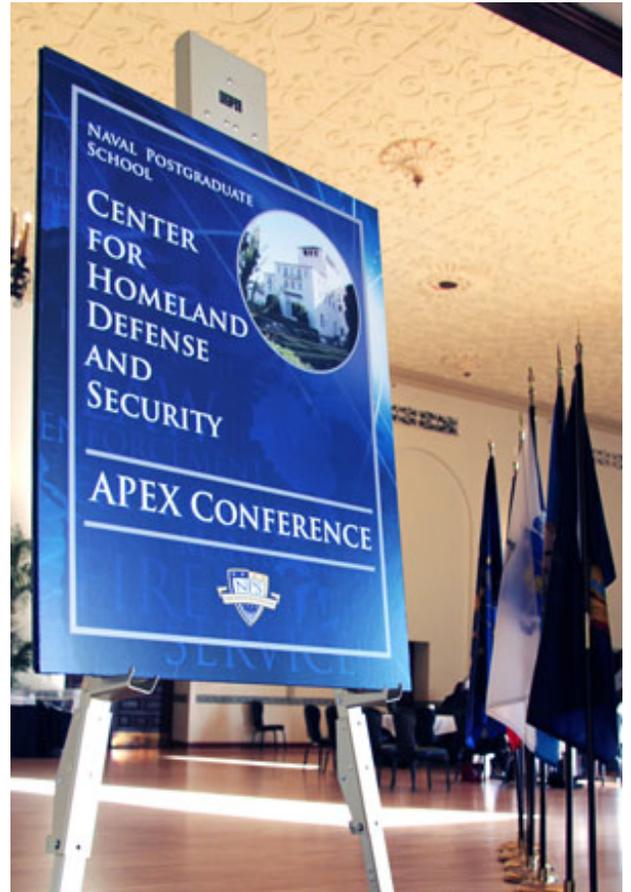
And the troubling weather trends are expected to continue, said Dr. Gerald Galloway of the University of Maryland. Galloway called for building and municipal planners to take a role in the homeland security enterprise as the nation plans for climate change. MaryAnn Tierney, administrator of FEMA Region III, concurred that with uncertain funding the homeland security and emergency management professionals should look to incorporate other disciplines into their discussions.

Mike Walker, former Acting Secretary of the Army, delivered a sobering review of terrorist threats during his keynote address. Ten years after 9/11, the U.S. finds al-Qaida weakened, but still active and enlisting affiliates as it regroups. The address further discussed perils in Pakistan as well as domestic concerns from the left and right ends of the ideological spectrum.

"I've never before seen the diversity of threats such as we face today," Walker concluded.

Following Walker, David Brannan and Anders Strindberg of the CHDS faculty analyzed the threats and nuances of the Islamic world. The discussion touched on Western influence in the Middle East after World War II in the name of stability, Arab and Islamic related non-government movements and the rise of the Arab Spring.

The conference concluded on Feb. 23 with an Alumni Town Hall Discussion facilitated by CHDS Director Glen Woodbury on the new budget realities facing homeland security and emergency management professionals.



The climax of the conference was a two-hour long presentation titled "Alumni Innovators." Alumni Michael Biasotti, Nancy Casper, Brady Downs and Harry Mayer shared projects they have worked on at their agencies in which innovation was the key to success.

For comprehensive coverage of the 2012 CHDS Alumni Professional Exchange Education Conference (APEX) , check back on this site in the coming days and be sure to get your copy of the spring 2012 edition of Watermark, the alumni magazine of CHDS, to be distributed in March.

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