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THE HSIN ADVOCATE

Message from Rolando Rivero, *Chair of the HSIN Advisory Committee*

As chair of the Homeland Security Information Network Advisory Committee (HSINAC), I make sure that the Department of Homeland Security Secretary's Office gets the advice it needs from state, local, tribal and private sector users to hold HSIN accountable and get the most value added for all homeland security missions. I am pleased to tell you that HSIN is delivering on its commitments and making significant progress for all of its users.

Re-launched in early 2013 after a two-year hiatus, the HSINAC has held two public meetings since February of this year. As we wrote to the Secretary, the HSINAC believes that HSIN Release 3 (R3) represents a quantum leap in technology over the existing HSIN Legacy system. HSIN R3 is not merely an improvement of an existing system; it is a completely new concept on how information can and should be shared.

I'm excited about the enhancements that HSIN R3 is bringing to users. In particular, the new way users are added to a site can overcome some of the roadblocks to HSIN use I've noticed in the past. Today, with HSIN R3's identity verification service, tedious inspection steps have been removed and streamlined so I can easily view users and determine who they are and provide the required access without much extra research.

My interest in and support for HSIN doesn't just come from my role as HSINAC chair. At FEMA, here in Region V, we use HSIN everyday to share and review situational reports with our federal partners. The biggest benefit for me is that HSIN enables me to share relevant information with others, regardless if they work in emergency management. This has reduced the number of emails I send and receive, and my colleagues and I have a single place to collaborate and access situational updates regarding events like the Boston Marathon bombings.

HSIN R3 also offers the ability to push notifications to users so they can see new mission-related information. With this functionality, users are emailed when relevant products are updated or added. It's now possible for users to be notified of a mission-related product being produced by another HSIN user that they don't even know exists.

While HSIN is a valuable tool today, there is still room for improvement, which is why the HSINAC is meeting with the HSIN PMO every other month to provide feedback and recommendations. To help the HSINAC make better recommendations, I encourage you to reach out to me or your HSINAC representative to provide feedback on your HSIN experience. Together, we can make



sure HSIN grows into the platform that helps each of us achieve our homeland security mission.

Rolando Rivero is Regional Continuity Manager of DHS FEMA Region V. He serves as chair of the HSINAC representing Federal emergency managers. He can be reached at rolando.rivero@fema.dhs.gov

Police Chiefs Across the Country Connect via HSIN to Securely Share Fourth of July Information

As people gathered to watch fireworks this Fourth of July, law enforcement officers from all over the country worked together to monitor threats to ensure celebrations were safe. The tool they used to do this was the Department of Homeland Security's Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN). HSIN is a secure system providing real-time collaboration tools, including a virtual meeting space, instant messaging and document sharing.

The Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA) site connected 20 major cities across the country, allowing users to monitor for emerging trends in suspicious incidents and instantly share threat assessments, documents, and images using HSIN Adobe Connect. This is the first time the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA) used a collaborative site to track activities in real-time to monitor potential threats during Fourth of July festivities. The MCCA used HSIN to securely share situational assessments with law enforcement officers, emergency management, and analysts.

"HSIN's tools allowed us to share information and collaborate in real-time with trusted, vetted individuals around the country," said Las Vegas Metro Police Assistant Sheriff Greg McCurdy, the chair of the MCCA Intel Commanders Group. "Before HSIN, we would have to send emails and respond to phone calls in order to update our law enforcement counterparts across the country. The efficiency of sharing information real time



in a secure space significantly improves our prevention and response capabilities."

"The MCCA space on the 4th helped me do my job of providing situational awareness to not only the operational commanders I was supporting, but also to our regional and national partners," said Seattle Police Department Intelligence Lead Analyst Doug Larm, who also hosted the session. When he posted information about a potential threat, not only did it provide immediate situational awareness to other agencies, but an intelligence officer in another state was able to immediately provide information on the issue. Without the MCCA site, officers in Washington would not have received this information in as timely a manner.

"With HSIN, we have a secure space to collaborate with individuals, which is why we support using the site for future events," said McCurdy. "The Fourth of

July HSIN site was a success since we were able to demonstrate that HSIN could work as a simple and secure information sharing space. The next step is to work with our partners, such as the National Fusion Center Association, in the larger Information Sharing Environment to make sure we integrate our efforts to maximize our scarce resources and avoid any information sharing gaps."

HSIN Monthly Top 10

Top 10 Myths About HSIN

1. Stands for Homeland Security Is Neat
2. Most HSIN users are bots created to boost the number of users for government reporting
3. The first rule of HSIN is that you don't talk about HSIN
4. There is a hidden site on HSIN that was created to be deployed if/when a zombie invasion takes place
5. All Mission Advocates are trained in Krav Maga
6. Created to add more steps to getting work done
7. HSIN has been used to repel a vampire invasion
8. HSIN is Jim Lanoue's dog's name
9. HSIN PMO employees rely on a secret handshake to get into important meetings
10. Michael Brody is the official mascot of HSIN

Development Corner: Jabber



HSIN's instant messaging tool, Jabber, allows for users to instantly communicate with other HSIN users one on one or with groups via chat rooms. Currently, users can connect to Jabber via thin client in HSIN R3. To access Jabber, click on the Toolbox menu in the top right-hand corner of HSIN R3, and then click on the Instant Messaging (Jabber) link. You will be asked to re-enter your HSIN username and password in order to launch the application.

HSIN Adobe Connect Saves Users Money

Since 2012, the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security has used HSIN Adobe Connect to train users and conduct mission critical meetings. The change was implemented to save on travel costs for mandatory meetings. This has resulted in approximately \$357,530.08 in savings for the department for fiscal year 2013, which was based on a calculation of

lodging, per diem, mileage, parking, and travel time saved per person.

As a reminder, the URL to access HSIN Adobe Connect in HSIN R3 is <https://share.dhs.gov>.



HSIN PMO Team Member Spotlight: Michael Brody

Title: Manager for Outreach, Communications and Policy



Michael Brody has been working in homeland security policy development at the state and federal levels since 2004, and has been supporting HSIN since 2012. Brody manages policy, outreach and communications for HSIN—ensuring that HSIN’s users have the trust, support and guidelines they need to get the most out of their network. A lawyer and graduate of the Naval Post Graduate School’s Center for Homeland Defense and Security, he also recently became a DHS Fellow, a rigorous 10-month management development program for high-potential GS-15s.

Brody is a third generation Bears season ticket holder—which means that he does not like Green Bay or cheese from Wisconsin. Brody also loves the Chicago Blackhawks—this means he does not like the Bruins.

“ The NYSIC’s migration to HSIN R3 required the coordinated effort of several New York state agencies. We feel that this new platform will not only assist in information sharing across the state but also among fusion centers nationwide. The New York State HSIN workgroup is looking forward to building out the HSIN-New York site. ”

Captain Douglas Keyer, New York State Intelligence Center (NYSIC) Director

HSIN Community Corner: Domestic Highway Enforcement

This month marks two years of the Domestic Highway Enforcement (DHE) program utilizing HSIN to connect troopers, deputies, and analysts of nine major transportation corridors across the country to provide users with up-to-date trend information on drug trafficking, traffic safety, and homeland security threats on the nation's highways.

The site began as a library for materials referenced during monthly conference calls with each of the corridors but has evolved to a 24/7 information sharing tool. Until 2011, photos and documents to supplement the conversations were emailed to attendees of the calls. Not only did this pose a security risk, but the information was hard to track and search. HSIN solved that problem by providing a central location for the site's members to find trend information—a need that wasn't being met by existing intelligence databases and other technology.

The site is having a direct impact on the way troopers identify and search suspicious vehicles leading to real-world successes in catching criminals. Last year, a fusion center task force in California found a warehouse that was making hidden compartments in plywood which could be used to conceal the transportation of illegal materials. The task force worked with the Oregon High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program to post the pictures of the compartments on DHE's HSIN site. A trooper in Illinois, who saw the pictures on HSIN, stopped a pickup truck with California plates carrying plywood. The trooper searched the vehicle with consent and found a hidden compartment within the plywood that was being used to transport

marijuana. That trooper then posted information about the incident on HSIN completing the information sharing loop.

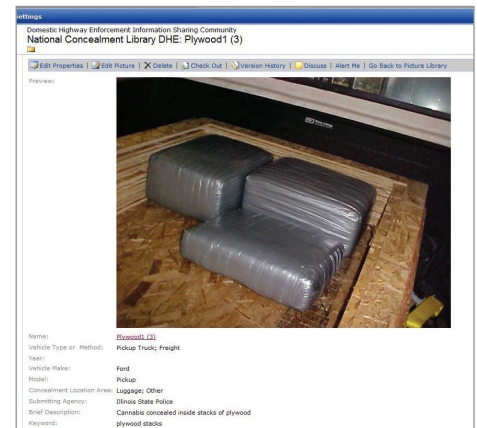
"HSIN fills an information sharing niche that we couldn't find anywhere else," said DHE Deputy Coordinator Mike Snyders, who manages the DHE site along with DHE National Coordinator Rocky Stone and Chicago HIDTA Director Kirk Schmidt, "More than 500 officers from federal, state, and local levels as well as analysts needed a way to communicate, and HSIN filled in that gap for us."

The site has grown to include an expansive, searchable photo library of concealment areas in vehicles, and new "hot" information is entered daily. For the monthly meetings, HSIN Adobe Connect is used to share presentations, photos, and maps in real-time during the briefings. This limits the need to email meeting materials to participants and increases efficiency and security of shared information.

Over time, the DHE team has collected and implemented best practices on how to use HSIN Adobe Connect for their monthly calls.

"Typically, our attendance ranges from 20 to 40 participants, because we have found larger sessions can be unwieldy with background noise and managing questions," said Snyders. "We limit our sessions to 60 minutes or less and have a standing agenda so users know what to expect."

The site migrated from HSIN Legacy to HSIN R3 at the end of June. HSIN R3 offers more opportunities for DHE site members to find relevant information



from other corridors with the platform's advanced search and ability to share documents and images based on a user's profile. This means information will no longer be isolated by corridors, which can help with identifying new trends.

Want your community featured here? Contact HSIN Outreach at HSIN.Outreach@hq.dhs.gov.

CONTACT US

If you would like to share your experience with HSIN Release 3, please send an email to HSIN.Outreach@hq.dhs.gov.