A Message from Mike Sena
President of the National Fusion Center Association
Director of the Regional Northern California Intelligence Center
Director of the Northern California High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)

Increasing Capabilities and Expanding Impact for Fusion Centers

This has been an extremely busy year for fusion centers. As the nucleus for information sharing and analysis for national threat information with a local context, fusion centers provide a vital service to both our local communities and our federal partners. This year, the National Fusion Center Association (NFCA) made great strides as we've increased the number of tools available to fusion centers to accomplish their missions more efficiently and effectively. At the same time, we worked with our primary partners, like HSIN, to better define the changing role of fusion centers and increase the level of support we provide to our state and local partners.

Sharing Actionable Information
Since 9/11, we have come to understand the importance of sharing information between jurisdictions and between levels of government. Making this a natural part of the job means developing trusted relationships with partners in many different sectors and agencies. Fusion centers fill this role and work hard to develop and disseminate relevant and actionable information to state and local decision makers. We also pass along critical information from our regions to federal partners in the intelligence community. All of this collaboration and sharing is made easier because of the capabilities HSIN provides.

Collaborating on Response Efforts
When a crisis occurs, established avenues of information sharing become vitally important. In these situations, HSIN provides one of our greatest assets—SitAware. Having the ability to share raw data from the field, as it happens, and obtain the support of mission partners across the country as we face potential threats or are actively working an investigation is essential. In the past year, SitAware has matured and been adopted by law enforcement and intelligence analysts at all levels of government. Having boots on the ground able to focus on the job at hand while ensuring broad situational awareness is key and many local and regional jurisdictions have now copied the SitAware format to use during issues specific to their own areas of operation.

Addressing Cyber Threats
At the national level, we have also broadened the scope of collaboration between fusion centers as we set up the Cyber Intelligence Network and CINAware—a HSIN community and resource focused on responding to and mitigating the impact of cyber attacks. Now, every fusion center has the ability to leverage all of the cyber security resources within the network to support overall national security. With this new capability our cyber analysts can work together and build on each other's knowledge stores to stop a cyber threat before it has the chance to spread.

Creating a National Strategy
As important as these efforts are, they represent only one aspect of our broader objectives. Working with our partners in DHS, the FBI and the Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment (PM-ISE), as well as several state and local agencies and many people in our nation's law enforcement associations, we developed a national strategy for the NFCA that focuses on 37 initiatives designed to bring all 78 unique fusion centers towards a common goal. Because fusion centers act as a hub for information sharing and analysis, we also take a lead role to support these efforts in areas that require interagency collaboration, like cyber security and critical infrastructure. On the law enforcement side, we have played a similar role and brought together multiple organizations and programs to support deconfliction efforts. After nearly 40 years of trying, this is the year all our Regional Information Sharing System, HIDTA, Drug Enforcement Administration, PM-ISE and El Paso Intelligence Center partners made it happen.

Laying a Foundation
We are in a stage of collaboration that the U.S. has never seen before and our success is getting noticed—to the extent that Congress has described us as a national asset. Fusion centers are always going to be independent information sharing operations, but now we have begun to operate as a national enterprise.

The future is bright. The foundation we have put in place and solidified this year is going to help us mitigate or even stop the next man-made or natural threat we face.
In the Know

Keeping Infrastructure Running on Race Days

The Road World Championship is considered one of cycling's pinnacle events. The 9-day event features 12 races with 1,000 athletes. This year, the event was held in Richmond, Virginia, and welcomed 645,000 spectators from around the world—almost 200,000 more than anticipated. With a race course that wound its way through the heart of the city and neighboring towns, the impact on local infrastructure was significant. Using HSIN, critical infrastructure professionals were able to maintain awareness of the impact of the race and manage support efforts more efficiently.

Before the race, event managers made sure that sectors likely to be heavily impacted by the race had representatives in the Critical Infrastructure Resource Center (CIRC) as well as access to HSIN. "We used HSIN to track incidents and activities across sectors," explained Protective Security Advisor Rob Mooney, "like road closures or a utility outage. We were able to identify areas that needed additional resources and made sure they got it."

Event managers in Richmond turned to HSIN when they learned about the benefits and capabilities the system provided during the World Police and Fire Games. "We had many people in the CIRC on HSIN throughout the event and it took virtually no training to be efficient with the system," said Mooney. "It worked perfectly for our purpose."

To learn more about how HSIN can be used to support critical infrastructure preparedness in your area, contact HSIN Outreach at HSIN.Outreach@hq.dhs.gov.

Spotlight on a Mission Advocate:
Supporting Active Collaboration among Public and Private Partners

By Mission Advocate Hanh Truong
Supporting KS, LA, OK and TX

Whether it's supporting preparedness activities for critical infrastructure, securing cyber networks or providing key resources during emergency response and recovery operations, government agencies need the support of private sector partners. However, sharing information and collaborating with a wider audience presents a unique set of challenges that need to be overcome. What information can be shared? How do you support sharing across a multidisciplinary team of public and private partners? And maybe most important, how do you support these partnerships without negatively impacting available budgets? For all these questions, HSIN provides a solution.

While working with the Texas Department of Public Safety, I helped facilitate the Private Sector Advisory Council. To make that effort as successful as possible, we needed the capability to share information broadly while also maintaining information security. Now as a HSIN Mission Advocate, I meet with many people that face this same dilemma. As a freely available resource, HSIN supports information sharing with a broad audience while also providing access to a variety of other necessary capabilities for effective collaboration.

The nature of working with numerous external partners means allowing access to internal networks is not an option. With HSIN, there are no limitations to which organizations can be provided access and the appropriate protocols and infrastructure for vetting users is already in place. If you have a need to share information with private and public sector partners, contact your HSIN Mission Advocate to find out how we can help get your partners actively involved.
Adding Resources through Federated Partnerships

This past year, HSIN has grown at an accelerated rate. As a user-driven information sharing platform, the primary goal of the HSIN Program is to connect the right people with the right information at the right time. One way HSIN strives to make information more accessible for users is to partner with other systems, enabling access to additional resources for HSIN users and sharing the capabilities and tools HSIN provides with new communities.

New Partners: Welcome, TRIPwire!

HSIN has partnered with the DHS Office for Bombing Prevention to provide federated access to the Technical Resource for Incident Prevention, better known as TRIPwire. Now, users with access to both systems no longer have to remember multiple usernames and passwords. Instead, they can log in to HSIN and move back and forth between the systems to get the information they need more easily and efficiently.

If you are a TRIPwire user and would like to associate your TRIPwire and HSIN accounts, a quick reference guide is available on HSIN Learn to help you through the process.

New Resources: Nationwide Officer Safety Event Deconfliction

Event deconfliction is a critical tool to help law enforcement officers identify possible conflicts in operational situations. In an effort to further strengthen officer safety and expand officer safety event deconfliction coverage nationwide, the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas, the Regional Information Sharing System® (RISS) and the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) collectively worked to develop the first nationwide officer safety event deconfliction solution by integrating three event deconfliction systems: Case Explorer, SAFETNet and RISSafe™. This groundbreaking achievement has already experienced success. You can learn more about this new capability on HSIN Central or at www.ncirc.gov/Deconfliction.

If you would like more information about current or planned future partnerships, contact HSIN.Outreach@hq.dhs.gov.

Supporting Papal Security

From Sept. 22–27, Pope Francis visited the United States. Hundreds of thousands of visitors flocked to Washington, D.C., New York City and Philadelphia to take part in the many events and parades held in his honor. Numerous agencies in all three cities worked together and shared information via three Multi-Agency Communication Centers (MACCs) to support security operations. Throughout the visit, the U.S. Secret Service piloted a new HSIN community to address information sharing needs.

In the months leading up to the event, members of the HSIN team worked with the U.S. Secret Service to develop and then pilot this HSIN community to address mission needs during the papal visit, including broad situational awareness and incident tracking capabilities. HSIN Mission Advocates were on-site at all three MACCs to provide hands-on access and training for personnel from more than 30 different agencies. After the papal visit, the HSIN pilot continued to support ongoing communications as the U.N. General Assembly convened in New York City.

To learn more about the effort that went into securing Pope Francis’ visit, and get a glimpse of the HSIN geospatial incident monitor in action, watch a clip from the Sept. 24 edition of Good Morning America. For more information about how HSIN can support event operations in your area, contact HSIN.Outreach@hq.dhs.gov.

How Does HSIN Help You?

Information sharing is more than sharing data; it’s about sharing ideas and learning how to make the best use of the tools available. We want to hear how you use HSIN to help get the job done!

HSIN users frequently show their creativity and innovation as they find new ways to meet their community’s needs. What do you find most helpful about the communities you access the most? Is there a best practice that you think could benefit other communities? By sharing your experience, you can help us create tools to support all HSIN users.

Let us know HSIN helps you deliver mission success! Contact us at HSIN.Outreach@hq.dhs.gov.

NFCA Annual Training Event

Alexandria, VA | Nov. 3–5

At this year’s National Fusion Center Association Annual Training Event, HSIN will once again have a large presence. HSIN Mission Advocates and members of the Program Management Office will be on hand to answer questions, share information about the latest tools and capabilities and participate in panel discussions to highlight some best practice scenarios for using HSIN to achieve operational objectives.

Nov. 3 | 11:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m. Cybersecurity (exercise and technical assistance)

Nov. 5 | 8:30–10:30 a.m. Plenary Session: Overview of HSIN (beginning of session)

We look forward to this constructive and educational event. If you would like to set up a meeting with a HSIN Mission Advocate, let us know at HSIN.Outreach@hq.dhs.gov.
IN THE TRENCHES

National Cyber Security Awareness Month

Highlighting Best Practices in Rhode Island

We live in a world that is more connected than ever before. The Internet touches nearly every aspect of daily life, whether we realize it or not. National Cyber Security Awareness Month is designed to engage and educate public and private sector partners with the goal of raising awareness and increasing the resiliency of the nation in the event of a cyber incident. A prime example of effective cyber security operations can be found in the Rhode Island Cyber Disruption Team (CDT) where HSIN is a large part of their strategy.

The Rhode Island CDT was one of the first in the country and has a primary focus on strong public-private partnerships. To support those efforts, they established a HSIN community that has become a trusted resource to securely share information, provide updates on current trends and notify the broader community about known incidents.

Cyber Terrorism Program Manager, Meghan Martinez, with the Rhode Island State Police explains, “We frequently update our HSIN community and keep it organized by topic and sector to make it as easy as possible for partners to access needed information. When we are notified about fraudulent or malicious activity, HSIN makes it easy for us to share that information statewide so our partners know to monitor their networks more closely or can help brainstorm a malware response.”

Since it launched, the Rhode Island CDT community on HSIN has been used as the model for other states as well as the National Fusion Center Association’s Cyber Intelligence Network. “We have plans to make the community even more dynamic,” continued Martinez, “HSIN is poised to get us to that next level.”

For more information about how HSIN supports cyber security operations, contact HSIN.Outreach@hq.dhs.gov.

Congratulations to Our Rising Stars

Among this year’s winners of the FCW magazine Rising Star Awards were two accomplished individuals associated with the HSIN Program: Katie Mullins and Michael Brody!

Katie is the director of HSIN Mission Integration and Outreach and works tirelessly to support stakeholder engagement and ensure that HSIN is meeting the operational needs of our users. Michael Brody is the director of Policy, Architecture and Governance for the Information Sharing Environment Office (ISEO) and was formerly the HSIN Outreach, Communications and Policy manager. As part of ISEO, he continues to find common ground between mission partners to increase information sharing between DHS components and their partners.

Awards were presented on Oct. 14 as part of the GCN Awards Gala. From the entire HSIN Program, congratulations!

REMINDER:

Closing Out HSIN Connect

HSIN Connect is an invaluable tool for many HSIN users to support real-time information sharing during active operations. To maintain optimal functionality and make sure that your information is properly cached, it is vital to properly close out your HSIN Connect sessions.

The How to Properly Shut Down a HSIN Connect Meeting quick reference guide on HSIN Learn provides step-by-step directions for this procedure.

For more information, contact HSIN.Outreach@hq.dhs.gov.

HSIN Learn

HSIN is about more than just accessing information. It is about sharing knowledge, resources and materials. We invite you to check out HSIN Learn today to help you get the most out of HSIN. These courses and more can be taken at a time and location that meet your schedule:

- HSIN Basics
- Site Owners
- HSIN Connect
- HSIN Box
- HSIN Notify
- HSIN Chat

For more information, contact the HSIN Outreach Team at HSIN.Outreach@hq.dhs.gov or visit our website at www.dhs.gov/hsin.

Scan the QR code* or visit our website to learn more about how HSIN can help support your mission.

* You must have a QR code reader installed on your mobile device.