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Press Release

Source: National Association of State Fire Marshals

Survey Seeks Feedback on School Safety & Security Priorities

Thursday February 10, 10:01 am ET

Organizations Join Forces on Multi-Hazard Program

WASHINGTON, Feb. 10 /PRNewswire/ -- The National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM) and the National Infrastructure Institute (NI2) Center for Infrastructure Expertise encourage school officials throughout the country to visit a new online survey (<https://www.keysurvey.com/survey/40561/412f>) to provide input and feedback on safety and security issues affecting their schools, including biological/chemical, physical and violence-related concerns.

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The information gathered from the survey will be used to guide the priorities of the Safe & Secure Schools (S3) program, a joint effort between NASFM and NI2, with funding from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U. S. Department of Commerce. Launched in the fall of 2003, the objective of the S3 program is to help school administrators evaluate and improve their safety and security measures. The S3 program will develop a web-based software program that will provide information on resources available to help schools identify safety and security issues.

"We have an obligation to strengthen and protect potential targets, especially schools, from acts of terrorism," says NASFM President James A. Burns. "But we also recognize that schools face a host of other potential hazards every day that have nothing to do with terrorism. S3 is being designed to help schools decide for themselves which hazards need to be addressed and how best to do so."

Currently, NASFM and NI2 have partnered with an array of school districts across the country,

which are set to test portions of the S3 software as it is developed. S3 pilot participants include: Anchorage School District (Alaska); Alameda County Schools (California); Orange County Public Schools (Florida); Parkway School District (Missouri); Goffstown School District (New Hampshire); Morris County Schools (New Jersey); New York City Public Schools; and the Wyoming Department of Education.

"We are pleased to be part of this important program to improve emergency management and response in school districts across the country," said Emil Suarez, Rockaway Borough School District superintendent, who oversees Morris County Schools. "Emergency planning is of the utmost importance to us, and S3 provides a sense that we are heading in the right direction."

S3 began as a study of school fire hazards, but has grown to include emergency response, environmental, law enforcement and public health issues. NASFM and NI2 continue to tap the expertise of various federal, state and local agencies on different aspects of safety and security, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Education, Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Homeland Security.

"NI2 is pleased to partner with NASFM in working with schools to improve safety and security preparedness," said NI2 Director Donald P. Bliss. "We need input from schools through this survey so that we know their priority concerns, and we can work with them to improve their emergency operational planning."

The National Association of State Fire Marshals (<http://www.firemarshals.org/>) has as its principal members the most senior fire official of the states and the District of Columbia. Its mission is to protect life, property and the environment from fire and other hazards.

The National Infrastructure Institute Center for Infrastructure Expertise (<http://ni2cie.org/>) operates under a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). The center is dedicated to assisting federal, state and local government agencies, as well as private industry and non-government organizations, in developing and applying best practices, creative ideas and cost-efficient solutions to protect our nation's built infrastructure from terrorist attacks and other catastrophic events.

Source: National Association of State Fire Marshals

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