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UNHs Whittemore School and National Infrastructure Institute Launch Web based Library to Assist with Critical Infrastructure Protection

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DURHAM, N.H. -- A new defensive "weapon" in the war on terrorism is now available to the public -- only this weapon is actually a unique library intended to enhance homeland security by being a one-stop shop for all pertinent information related to the protection of built infrastructure and key assets.

The University of New Hampshire's Whittemore School of Business and Economics and the National Infrastructure Institute's (NI²) Center for Infrastructure Expertise announce the roll-out of a new web-based library developed to capture, organize, and archive the wealth of information available regarding protection of the nation's "built" critical infrastructure.

"The library portal provides valuable reference materials related to the protection of the infrastructure in 14 sectors," says A.R. "Venky" Venkatachalam, Hamel Professor, chair of the Whittemore School's Department of Decision Sciences and principal investigator for the project. "Not only will it address the needs of homeland security, but developing long-term research expertise in this area will foster economic development in the nation and provide opportunities for profit and nonprofit businesses."

Examples of built infrastructure include power and chemical plants, telecommunication nodes, transportation systems, water treatment facilities, nuclear reactors and vital government buildings. This infrastructure provides a substantial economic and public safety benefit that extends across the nation to local communities.

"Our long-term goal is to take the library to the next level and develop an electronic marketplace where state, federal and private agencies with specific problems related to homeland security can engage with private enterprises to meet their needs," says Steve
Bolander, dean of the Whittemore School. "We are very glad to share the expertise of our faculty and students for this important project."

Users can also access the library to learn about upcoming professional conferences, educational programs, government documents and other related topics. The users of the portal are anticipated to be those involved in the management and operations of built infrastructure, academics, and leaders in the homeland security commercial industry. The NI² Center, which designed the library and manages it, will actively seek new references and articles to catalogue at the site.

"Critical infrastructure touches every part of our lives. This library will serve as a valuable resource for the public and private sectors as they continue to identify ways to better secure the country from potential terrorist attacks," notes David O'Keeffe, director of the NI² Center.

The design, development and hosting of the portal have been accomplished by the Whittemore School, in collaboration with the Research Computing Center at the university.

Venkatachalam has previously led the development of two similar research projects under the auspices of the Whittemore School and in collaboration with UNH's Research Computing Center-the Access to Capital Electronic Network (ACE-Net), which helps small businesses to find equity capital and Procurement Marketing and Access Network (PRO-Net), an electronic gateway of procurement information for and about small businesses.

The NI² Center for Infrastructure Expertise is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to improving the management and protection of the United States' built infrastructure and is currently focused on addressing urgent critical infrastructure protection issues related to homeland security. Its long-term mission also includes assisting government agencies in applying creative solutions that will provide cost effective methods to improve how the nation plans, acquires, operates, disposes of and secures its federal infrastructure. The center operates under a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), which was received with the backing of Senator Judd Gregg.

The library may be accessed to view its contents or to submit articles or documents by logging on to www.ni2ciel.org. To contact Venky Venkatachalam, call (603) 862-0015, or e-mail venky@cisunix.unh.edu.

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