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Newsletter of the InfraGard Vermont Members Alliance, Inc.

### **General Meeting Coming November 18<sup>th</sup>**

Our next general meeting that will be on Wednesday, November 18<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 PM at BlueCross/BlueShield of Vermont Headquarters near Montpelier. Although the program is still in flux, we hope the topic will be pandemic response and continuity-of-operations planning, preparedness, compliance, and risk management in advance of a major health emergency. This material can be particularly relevant to organizations who may not yet have strong response procedures in place or who have not thought out how they can continue to operate should 30% - 40% of the workforce be unable or unwilling to work for an extended period (as suggested by the CDC). It should be a valuable meeting.

As soon as the program is final, we will post details and directions on our Web site ([www.vtinfragard.org](http://www.vtinfragard.org)), then begin to publicize the event and invite as many as possible. This is a public meeting, so anyone interested is welcome.

For the many who cannot attend, we expect to post a handout sheet with links to sample plans, procedures, instructions, check sheets, and suggestions how to think through a pandemic scenario to maintain continuity of operations, respond effectively, and utilize the assistance and resources available from regional, state and federal government agencies.

### **New Membership Cards**

You may have noticed that your IG membership card expired last month. Re-vetting of all members took longer than expected, which delayed the renewal cards. We just received all the new cards and now begin the processes to get them to each of you. You must receive your card in person or have it sent directly to you.

First, you can pick up yours at the November 18<sup>th</sup> general meeting. For those who cannot attend, let us know what you would like to do. Maybe some can get together at a central point regionally after work or convenient come to a board member's office, or just tell us you want your card mailed. Please do not put this off too long. Members whose cards are not delivered in a reasonable time may find themselves terminated. Let us know your suggestions and your preference and give us time to get your card to a distribution point.

### **Expanding the Executive Committee**

Progress on this has halted for the moment over concerns that there may be some other issues. It seems that the IRS has issued new language necessary for non-profit corporations to maintain their 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. If we change anything in our current bylaws, we may have to make these changes also. But so far, we lack clear guidance. There seem to be no sample InfraGard bylaws. Moreover, the advice from national is to ask other chapters, which opens still more worm cans because each state may require different wording.

Therefore, some free legal assistance will be much appreciated, so we can see what is actually necessary to fix our bylaws and how best to do it.

Meanwhile, the fundamental problem remains that our current board of five members is overloaded and shorthanded. We need more people to take on responsibilities such as meeting planning; liaison with national and with the region; setting up IVMA sectors within large institutions (See below.); information sharing with public and private partners; communications, marketing and PR; and most important: To reinvigorate our outreach programs that have languished of late. None of these jobs is onerous – provided several share the work – indeed they can all be interesting and fun also.

Let's think about some volunteers, now. Who is willing and able to volunteer? Who can team with you? Let us know privately and feel free to suggest other names. Many of us are in office because others recommended us, not because we volunteer ourselves.

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## **2009 National IG Congress**

This was held on October 14<sup>th</sup> via the Secure Video Teleconferencing System that connects the major FBI Field Offices. The Burlington office does not have this equipment, so we needed to travel to the regional office in Albany, NY. Unfortunately, nobody was able to do this, including our FBI Coordinator: Too far, too long, too expensive, or scheduling conflicts. However, the executive committee reviewed the handout packet for the delegates beforehand and concluded there was little we can do.

The events of the day included: Welcoming remarks by the FBI and the IG Chairman; Roll Call of each chapter whereby those delegates who are present are validated and can then vote; Reports by the President and Treasurer; Three-minute presentations by each of the four candidates for the two board seats up for election, after which the meeting was formally concluded. An informal session followed during which each alliance could comment for up to three minutes.

Unfortunately, Vermont was unable to comment or vote. To do this requires that each delegate be physically present during the roll call. It is likely that many other delegates could not vote for the same reason. And when this happens, the national board casts a proxy vote for each absent delegate. Therefore, the wishes of the national board will probably prevail. Vermont has long objected to this system, which they say conforms to Delaware's corporation law. And we are further objecting to the need for an all-day classified session. There are cheaper, better, faster alternatives, if there is no longer funding for a face-to-face Congress.

Until recently, the Congresses were held at a resort location and delegates' expenses paid by the government. This system worked. Many became delegates just for a free trip to somewhere nice. And everyone had a couple of days to network, decide what's best, and then vote wisely.

## **Sectors**

Many individual alliances have formed sectors and found these very effective to better serve more members and reach out to our communities. For us, a sector is simply a subsidiary group of IVMA members, under our corporate umbrella, and headed by a sector chief who works closely with the executive committee. Effective sectors have been formed within colleges, large businesses, and professional groups.

The advantage is that sectors can meet easily at a nearby facility, hold closed meetings or invite anyone interested, arrange presentations and hold discussions, and readily share information and advice. Meetings are often monthly and often after working hours. This is especially useful to those who cannot always attend our regular meetings. There is no formal process to form an IVMA sector and no limit how many. First, there must be IG members involved and then we ask you adhere to the same policies and procedures that we as an IG alliance must follow. We can start a sector from scratch with new members or use existing members as a nucleus. Let us know who is interested and we will work with you to make it happen.

Let's hear some ideas on institutions and organizations that might be interested and who to contact: colleges and universities, big businesses, trade groups and associations, industry groups, perhaps even state government. Why not approach communications carriers, utilities, business groups (such as Rotary) and suggest how this can benefit them. This can be particularly useful for people far removed from Burlington. Our operating area is not just Vermont. Rather we reach eastward from New York, north from Boston, and west from Portland.

## **Finally**

The unique value of InfraGard membership is that we can all share useful security information that is otherwise not available to the public. We are each vetted by the FBI and cleared to see sensitive material that is otherwise restricted for official use only. We are also able to obtain sensitive security information via secure Websites and can quickly reach out to members for advice and the input from others who may be experienc-

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ing the same trouble. Moreover, we have an exclusive relationship with law enforcement and other government agencies to share information for the protection of all of us. These benefits are unique to InfraGard members.

The problem is that few are participating, so that everyone is losing out. Perhaps some are too busy. Or it's not your job, or you don't want to get involved, or you don't think something unusual is important. More likely, though, is the fear of embarrassment that you might be wrong. These are not excuses. We're not here to find fault, suggest blame, or embarrass anyone. Instead, our input can be valuable to ourselves and to law enforcement to stop trouble from happening. As members, we all have an opportunity to protect our region and our organizations and clients and ourselves. As members, we can each be involved, so please don't expect someone else to do this for you.

Ask others to report unusual incidents to you privately and in confidence. Management may not want to hear about threats or may demand a cover-up when trouble does come. This benefits no one. You can redact identifiable persons, places or products and then report a situation that others can benefit from knowing. Report all threats, attacks and breaches you can hear about. You can also share organizations' internal alerts and warnings and those received from trade groups. These too can be redacted and sanitized to protect both you and management. This way, everyone benefits and law enforcement can do more to protect us.

You can post information in confidence on our secure Website or share information privately with any board member and we can post it anonymously for you. You can also speak directly with our law enforcement coordinators. To not do this is to stovepipe and squirrel away information to be forgotten or ignored lest there by embarrassment. It is time that every member remains vigilant and gets involved. This is our mission and we all need to do it. Security is everybody's responsibility and we can no longer afford to leave it to others.

Consider too what the near future may bring by way new security challenges. Many are now predicting sharp increases in new and stronger cyber attacks, hacking and spying. Jihadist violence, possibly WMD attacks within the U.S. and probably bombings as well. Numbers of disgruntled, angry and often desperate unemployed who have insider information and the skills to profit and disrupt. Increased outages due to severe weather and attacks on utilities. Lastly, insider attacks reported (admitted) by seventy percent (70 %) of a large group on financial institutions during the past year. Where will this leave you, if even some of these predictions come true? Each of these threats is a reason to share security information.

As always, comments, suggestions and contributions are welcome.

Frank Platt, IVMA VP and Editor

[This space is available for members to list their products or services, post links to interesting sites, or contribute material of interest to the general public. Submissions may be edited for brevity and to reduce commercial content.]

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