Quarterly NGA Energy Security Brief – Summer 2020

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The Latest in Energy Assurance News

Securing the Unites States Bulk-Power System Executive Order

On May 1st, President Trump issued an Executive Order titled "Securing the United States Bulk-Power System". This EO aims to prevent utilities from purchasing bulk-power system equipment (such as reactors, capacitors, transformers, large generators, etc.) from "foreign adversaries". This is intended to protect the electric system from potential tampering by foreign governments through the installation of malware or surveillance technology. Although this EO impacts future purchases and installations, it may also impact technologies already in use. A one-page summary of the EO can be found here.

Utility ransomware attacks becoming more sophisticated, new 'honeypot' operation finds

Cybereason, a Boston-based cybersecurity firm, created a fake industrial control network to study how hackers target utilities. Cybereason used a "honeypot operation" – a tactic where hackers are lured to break into a fake network - to study their methods. The study revealed that hackers are increasingly using targeted tactics to steal data and credentials while trying to compromise as many endpoints as possible. The firm concluded that "multistage ransomware attacks on critical infrastructure providers are increasingly dangerous and more prevalent."

Utility Dive Article: https://www.utilitydive.com/news/utility-ransomware-attacks-becoming-more-sophisticated-new-honeypot-oper/579780/

Cybereason Blog: https://www.cybereason.com/blog/cybereason-honeypot-multistage-ransomware

NASEO 2020 Severe Summer Weather Outlook Webinar

In preparation for extreme summer weather (e.g., hurricanes, wildfires, tornados, extreme heat, etc.) with the potential to impact critical energy infrastructure, NASEO hosted the 2020 Severe Summer Weather Outlook Webinar. The webinar provided an outlook on anticipated summer weather, assessed natural hazard levels and specific infrastructure vulnerabilities, reviewed lessons learned from previous summertime energy emergencies, and identified available resources that states can use to in preparing for and responding to energy emergencies.

The Latest with NGA

***New Release*: Planning for Concurrent Emergencies –** Given the protracted nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, states will likely experience additional, simultaneous emergencies concurrent with additional outbreaks of the virus. Experts are forecasting an above-average season for hurricane activity across the Atlantic as well as an above normal wildfire risk for the states in the Pacific Northwest. Extreme heat may present a nationwide threat and most states are likely to experience above average temperatures for many months of this year. Earthquakes, targeted violence, and cybersecurity incidents know no season and pose persistent risk. Responding to and recovering from these disasters independently presents a significant challenge to states, notwithstanding the already staggering effects of COVID-19 on human, financial, and physical resources. Governors will need to work across the

emergency management enterprise to properly prepare for a confluence of events that will strain their already burdened systems to ensure that their states are ready to protect lives and property.

This memorandum provides: Actions for Governors Looking to Bolster Emergency Preparedness and An Overview of the Planning Considerations for Simultaneous Emergencies. In addition to the following recommendations, standard best practices for emergency management, including using a "whole community" approach, updating and socializing emergency operations and continuity of operations (COOP) plans, and enabling individual preparedness will provide a useful foundation for enhancing state readiness for disasters

What We're Working On (and How You Can Help)

Information Sharing Within Your State – When it comes to the energy sector, who is your states main source of threat or cybersecurity information? Your fusion center? The MS-ISAC? The PUC? Some other entity? Does your state have established procedures to share information between state parties i.e. from the homeland security advisor to the energy advisor or from the PUC to the energy advisor? Do your state emergency plans specify who to seek information from or where it should be disseminated to? If you would like to share your states information sharing procedures or learn about best practices from other states, please reach out to Alyse Taylor-Anyikire (amtaylor@nga.org).

If you have comments, question, best practices to share with your peers, or would like us to feature your state, please contact Alyse Taylor-Anyikire at amtaylor@nga.org.