

National Security Experts and First Responders Collaborate

BY ELIZABETH TADIE

The National Center for Biomedical Research and Training, or NCBRT, at LSU held their 4th Annual Instructor Professional Development Conference Aug. 15 -17 at the Baton Rouge River Center. The theme for the event was "Evolving Threats, Trends, and Training."

This annual event hosted nearly 350 NCBRT instructors, Department of Homeland Security representatives and training partners, exhibitors and several agency representatives from states across the nation. The conference provided a setting to discuss current issues and to prepare for the evolving threats that may impact the nation's safety and security.

"We're bringing together the best weapons of mass destruction counter-terrorism instructors in the nation for professional development and training," said NCBRT Director Col. Thomas Tucker. "We've assembled the leading experts in safety and security training relating to biological warfare and other emerging issues of concern. The conference is a chance for our instructors to update their knowledge, enabling them to consistently prepare the emergency responder community across America."

Instructors met and conversed with emergency first responders from around the United States, sharing experiences and making valuable contacts and alliances with other instructors, government agencies and NCBRT affiliates. Throughout the week participants took advantage of diverse seminars, expert speakers and workshops.

The conference also featured presentations by biological warfare experts

William C. Patrick III and Kenneth Alibek. Patrick served as the former chief of the Product Development Division, Biological Warfare Laboratories for the United States offensive program, while Alibek is the former chief scientist and first deputy director of Biopreparat for the Soviet Union's Biowarfare/Biodefense program. Director of the Department of Homeland Security, Preparedness Directorate's Office of Grants and Training's Training Division Sandra Webb provided the conference's keynote address.

"The Department of Homeland Security, Preparedness Directorate's Office of Grants and Training recognize the importance of instructor professional development and its significant impact on homeland security. We applaud the efforts of LSU's NCBRT in assembling this group for the fourth year," said Webb.

NCBRT began at LSU in 1998 as the Academy of Counter-Terrorist Education through a subcontract with the Office of Grants and Training. The organization trains America's emergency responders in the areas of biological incidents, law enforcement operations, tactical command and operations, agroterrorism, CAMEO, public safety sampling and much more. These courses are taught throughout the United States and U.S. territories. The mission of the NCBRT is to help America prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from domestic and international acts of terrorism. Through teaching, training, technical assistance and research, NCBRT is striving to become the premier organization to increase the nation's safety and security.