



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nation's First Incident Management Center for Utilities Launched

New Partnership Creates Training Opportunity for Utility Companies

PORTLAND, Ore. – April 20, 2015 – Emergency and disaster preparedness for utility companies – critical to keeping whole communities and their infrastructure safe – just received a boost.

A new training center to support incident management for the utility industry was announced this week at the Western Energy Institute (WEI) Spring Operations Conference in Las Vegas.

WEI and Concordia University-Portland, in collaboration with Portland General Electric (PGE) and Organizational Quality Associates (OQA), announced a new partnership to create the nation's first center designed to provide emergency management training and educational services specifically for utilities.

The new Incident Management for Utilities National Training Center is located at Concordia University's Columbia River Campus, along with Concordia's Center for Homeland Security Studies and Homeland Security Simulation Center.

Concordia's simulation lab will offer new training capabilities for utilities in Incident Management and Emergency Response practices. The effort will strengthen the industry's sharing of instructional resources, best practices and mutual assistance. WEI has been instrumental in supporting its members in this collaborative approach. OQA has provided expert instructional services and FEMA-approved certification for many years in multiple industries. PGE has provided conceptual and subject matter expertise.

"We are excited to meet the utility industry's need for high-quality, sector-specific, incident command and emergency management training," said Chuck Meyer, president, Western Energy Institute (WEI).

"Critical infrastructure systems can't suspend operations for training purposes, so they come to Concordia-Portland," said Jason Nairn, director of Concordia's Homeland Security Simulation Center. "By simulating disasters in the virtual world, we offer students the opportunity to learn in a safe-fail environment without disrupting business."

“Emergency preparedness is a critical part of our community’s safety,” said Larry Bekkedahl, PGE’s vice president of transmission and distribution. “This new training center will be a great resource for the industry to help us all be better prepared to respond in an emergency.”

Training is anticipated to begin this summer. For more information, please contact Eric Christenson at christenson@westernenergy.org or Jason Nairn at jnairn@cu-portland.edu.

ABOUT WESTERN ENERGY INSTITUTE

Western Energy Institute (WEI) is a regional association serving the electric and gas industries, both public and private, throughout the Western United States and Canada. Based in Portland, Oregon, WEI was formed in October 2000 from two longstanding industry associations — the Western Electric Power Institute (WEPI) founded in 1908, and the Pacific Coast Gas Association (PCGA) founded in 1893.

WEI’s membership is comprised of 80 energy companies, including gas pipeline, electric and gas distribution, electric generation, power marketers and nearly 200 industry service providers. WEI offers a member-driven, open learning environment to develop effective leaders and ensure well-trained employees. www.westernenergy.org

ABOUT CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY’S HOMELAND SECURITY SIMULATION CENTER

Concordia-Portland is home to the largest Advanced Disaster Management Simulator in the North America, which provides a unique learning environment for companies that want to train staff to manage emergency incidents effectively, in a safe environment. Its convenient location near the Portland International Airport and the unique facilities provided by the Columbia River campus provide benefits in addition to the world-class simulator. www.cu-portland.edu/homeland-security-simulator

Concordia University-Portland is a private, nonprofit, Lutheran, liberal arts university located in northeast Portland, Ore., serving more than 8,500 students with a mission of preparing leaders for the transformation of society. www.cu-portland.edu and www.law.cu-portland.edu.

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