Campus alert system initiated

Michael Hagearty
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

As part of an ongoing effort to enhance its rapid response capabilities, Georgia Tech recently entered into a contract that will provide a new communication system for use in emergency situations.

"Efficient and effective communication is critical during an emergency," said Andy Altizer, Georgia Tech’s emergency preparedness director. "This system will work in tandem with existing notification systems and preparedness activities.

The GT Emergency Alert System allows the Georgia Tech administration to contact faculty and staff via e-mail, voice and text messaging, alerting the campus to important, time-sensitive information and offering direction on what action to take and where to find more information.

Administration of the GT Emergency Alert System is managed jointly through the Office of Emergency Preparedness, the Office of Information Technology and the Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance.

Participation in this new communication tool, though optional, is strongly encouraged.

"With this system we can rapidly notify campus of potential hazards such as severe weather or a chemical spill as well as more immediate threats to safety and security," Altizer said.

In order to participate, members of the campus community will be asked to provide additional contact information such as cell phone numbers or alternate e-mail addresses. The information provided is considered confidential and will not be shared with other services — it will only be used in the GT Emergency Alert System.

Those who do not want to participate in the notification system may choose to opt out. Contact information or the choice to participate may be changed as often as necessary by accessing the "Emergency Alert" tab in Passport (passport.gatech.edu).

More information about the system can be found at www.gatech.edu/emergency.

Flood forecasts aid poor residents in Bangladesh

As catastrophic floods worsen in Bangladesh, a pilot forecasting program is being used to warn thousands of vulnerable residents in selected flood-prone regions. The forecasting system was designed by scientists at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) and Georgia Tech.

The system uses a combination of weather forecast models, satellite observations, river gauges and new hydrologic modeling techniques. It is part of a larger initiative, known as Climate Forecast Applications in Bangladesh, to improve flood and precipitation warnings in the low-lying nation. Peter Webster, a professor in the School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, is the principal investigator of the overall initiative.

The 1- to 10-day forecasts are delivered directly, when possible, to more than 100,000 people living in floodplains of the Brahmaputra and Ganges rivers. They will be distributed more widely in coming years.

Webster and NCAR scientists Thomas Hopson have provided forecasts to Bangladesh agencies since 2003, but the forecasts often have not reached rural regions, where many residents lack radios and even electricity. This year, the nonprofit Asia Disaster Preparedness Center has established a network of organizations to distribute the forecasts directly to people in five districts along the two rivers.

Protecting lives and income

Almost every other year in recent decades, the Brahmaputra and Ganges rivers have flooded for periods ranging from a few days to a month or more. Residents of the districts in the forecast area have said that advance notice of floods could help them ward off some of the worst impacts of rising waters. If they had sufficient warning, they could harvest at least a portion of their ripening crops, move some livestock to safety, encircle fish ponds with nets to prevent fish from escaping and stock food and other supplies.

"The goal here is to help very local, grassroots economies," Webster said.

Forecasts continued, page 2

Tech names director of government relations

Dene H. Sheheane has been named Georgia Tech’s new director of Government Relations. Sheheane comes to the Institute from Georgia State University, where he was the associate vice president for External Affairs.

"We’re extremely fortunate to have Dene Sheheane represent Georgia Tech in our Government Relations office," said President Wayne Clough. "Dene has experience supporting educational issues at the state capitol and has developed strong relationships with our state government officials."

A native Georgian, Sheheane has extensive state and local government experience. For the past 13 years he has worked at Georgia State University, most recently as associate vice president for External Affairs.

Prior to that, he worked in the governor’s office.

"As a graduate of Georgia Tech, I am eager to return to campus and serve the Institute that played such a major role in shaping my life," said Sheheane. "Representing Georgia Tech in the State Capitol will be both an honor and a privilege. I especially look forward to meeting the talented faculty and staff at Georgia Tech as we work together to communicate the value of a strong investment in the Institute. Georgia Tech has earned many friends in state government, and I am committed to strengthening those relationships to ensure the Institute’s strategic goals and priorities receive outstanding support and recognition."

Sheheane holds a bachelor’s degree in management from Georgia Tech and earned a master’s degree at Georgia State. His professional affiliations include service as chairman of the National State Relations Task Force, an organization of higher education government relations professionals from across the country.

He currently resides in Acworth, Georgia, where he serves on the Acworth Downtown Development Authority.
Tech study finds wind power feasible off Georgia coast

Economic and regulatory issues still need resolution

Megan McRainey
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

S
outhern Company has announced that a thorough two-year study, conducted with Georgia Tech’s Strategic Energy Initiative, has identified conditions potentially favorable for wind power generation off the coast of Georgia, but costs and regulatory concerns remain to be resolved.

Launched in 2005, the joint study examined in detail a variety of factors — including wind resources, technology, siting, environmental concerns, climate, permitting and economics — associated with sites off the coast of Georgia. In conclusion, the study recommended that Southern Company continue to pursue the potential development of wind energy resources off the Georgia coast.

“We believe that given the available wind resources and the extent of the shallow water continental shelf, there is considerable ultimate potential for wind power generation off the coast of Georgia. While the 20-year levelized cost of wind power is higher than current production from existing power plants, offshore wind power may become a viable option for green power generation. We, therefore, support the conclusion that development of offshore wind power should be pursued,” said Sam Shelton, research program director for the Strategic Energy Institute.

Currently, the Department of Interior Minerals Management Service (MMS) has jurisdiction over alternative energy-related projects on the outer continental shelf, including wind power developments. MMS is currently outlining the permitting requirements for such projects, a process that should be completed in late 2008. Until these regulations are finalized, only limited activities to develop an offshore wind farm in federal waters may be conducted.

Though the Southeast in general does not have sufficient wind speeds on land to effectively support wind power generation, the conditions are better off the Georgia coast, the study said.

Among the other key findings, the water in the area is relatively shallow, which makes it easier to construct the foundations of a wind farm. Also, the study said, Jekyll Island and Tybee Island are the two locations with the best potential for connecting power from an offshore wind farm to the transmission grid.

However, the study found that based on today’s prices for wind turbines, the 20-year levelized cost of electricity produced from an offshore wind farm would be above the current production costs from existing power generation facilities.

Additional costs for offshore wind power generation include the relatively high cost of purchasing and installing undersea cable and the costs of construction and maintenance of a facility in the ocean. While specific installation and maintenance infrastructure is in place in Europe, the offshore wind industry is in its infancy in the United States.

Forecasts, cont’d from page 1

explained Thomas Hopson, an NCAR scientist who helped develop the forecasting system. “The forecasts also alert relief agencies to prepare to bring in drinking water, cholera tablets and other essentials in case of a major flood.”

Hopson, Webster and Georgia Tech scientists Carlos Hoyos and Hail-Fu Chang have worked to create forecasts that extend beyond 10 days, thereby giving residents additional time to prepare for floods. Over the next year or two, increasing numbers of Bangladeshis will begin to receive 20-day forecasts, followed by 1- to 6-month seasonal forecasts.

The team will also study the feasibility of applying its forecasting technology and methods to other vulnerable countries, such as Cambodia and Vietnam.

“We feel that the prediction modules we have developed for Bangladesh are templates for flood forecasting in developing nations with limited infrastructure and resources,” Webster said.
Georgia Tech welcomes its newest faculty members

School of Aerospace Engineering
Andrew Makeev
Ryan Russell
Air Force ROTC
Steve Headley
Mi Soo Hood
School of Applied Physiology
Richard Nicholls
Architecture Program
Harley Etienne
Kevin Shankwiler
School of Biology
Nick Berghman
Yuhong Fan
Francesco Storici
Joshua Weitz
Department of Biomedical Engineering
Gilda Barabino
Charlie Kemp
Phil Santangelo
Brittain Fellows
Olin Bjork
Emma Crandall
Lori Emerson
Kathryn Farley
Daryl Farmer
Jared Johnson
Danielle Lawson
Kareissa McCay
Matt Paproth
Chad J. Pearson
Manuel Perez Tejada
Ruben Ramirez-Sanchez
Andrea Wood
School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering
Sven Behrens
Lakeshia Taite
School of Chemistry and Biochemistry
Charlie Cox
Stefan France
Raquel Lieberman
School of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Haiying Huang
College of Computing
Neta Clark
Navin Goyal
Mikel Hunter
Adam Kalai
Yoel Kalai
Hyseon Kim
Korean Liu
Byron Payza
Matt Raynolds
School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences
Annelisa Bracco
Yi Deng
Kurt Frankel
School of Economics
Tibor Besedes
Brian Hunt
Olga Shemyakina
School of Electrical and Computer Engineering
Pamela Bhattacharya
Ed Coyle
Jangjun Kim
Saibal Mukhopadhyay
Wayne Wolf
Hangwei Wu
Fumin Zhang (Savannah)
School of History, Technology and Society
Carla Gerona
Natalia Starostina
School of International Affairs
Lyn Graybill
Margaret Koslow
Library and Information Center
Jon Bodnar
School of Literature, Communication and Culture
Rebecca Burnett
Andrew Cooper
Carl DiSalvo
Nikhil M. Farooq
Fox Harrell
Dan Vallerio
College of Management
Aloke Asooru
Samuel Bond
Nicholas Dass
Chris Farmar
Jay Lee
Barry Marchman
Eric Overby
Sandra Slaughter
Jerry Thurlby
Jim Turner
Qinghao Wang
School of Materials Science and Engineering
Fayad Al-maghr
Gleb Yuhas
Seung Soon Jang
School of Mathematics
Silas Alban
Jean-Christophe Breton
Chenghun Hao
Hao Wang
School of Mechanical Engineering
Nazarin Basirin-Ghahri
Chatanya Dao
Kyrilaki Kalaitzidou
Mike Leamy
Bojan Petrovic
Olivier Pierron
Enrico Ryhär
Korin Sabo
Wilfred van Rooyen
School of Modern Languages
Chris Ippolito
School of Physics
Jennifer Curtiss
School of Psychology
Paul Verhaeghen
School of Public Policy
Aaron Levine
Julia Wallers

IN BRIEF:

Clothing drive seeks business apparel
Georgia Tech’s Institute Partnerships is running its annual clothing drive until November 1 in an effort to provide clothing and toiletries for needy families in the surrounding community. This is an opportunity to include outreach in the yearly goals of every campus department, division, school or college.

Specific needs include business clothes, usable blankets and coats. For additional information, contact Institute Partnerships at 894-5187.

Payroll deduction option for graduate, teaching assistants
Georgia Tech will be offering a new fee payment program that will enable graduate research and teaching assistants the option to pay their semester fees through payroll deduction. This option will apply to all fees assessed through the Bursar's Office, including tuition, mandatory fees, insurance, parking, residence hall and meal plan charges.

This option is included in the self-service fee payment selections available from the student invoice statement in Banner (Oscar). The graduate assistant selects the amount of outstanding balance they would like to defer for the semester. The selected amount will be deducted in three equal installments.

The plan is operational for the Fall 2007 semester and will apply for the fall and spring semesters going forward. The program will not be available during the summer semester.

The key element is the timely appointment in the payroll system at the beginning of the semester. For more information on eligibility requirements and payroll deadlines, visit www.bursar.gatech.edu/feepayment program.pdf.

Color up
Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue recently proclaimed August 31, 2007, College Colors Day for the state of Georgia. Fans, students and alumni throughout the state are encouraged to wear apparel representing their favorite college or university on Friday, August 31.

Specific needs include business clothes, usable blankets and coats. For additional information, contact Institute Partnerships at 894-5187.