The Washington Post Reports Russia Hacked the Electrical Grid in Vermont - Electric Utility Clarifies: On Friday, the Post claimed, "A code associated with the Russian hacking operation dubbed Grizzly Steppe by the Obama administration has been detected within the system of a Vermont utility, according to U.S. officials (WashPost)." However, the claim was subsequently qualified by the Burlington Electric Department which said, “Last night, U.S. utilities were alerted by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) of a malware code used in Grizzly Steppe, the name DHS has applied to a Russian campaign linked to recent hacks. We acted quickly to scan all computers in our system for the malware signature. We detected the malware in a single Burlington Electric Department laptop not connected to our organization’s grid systems.” Vermont Public Service Commissioner Christopher Recchia told The Burlington Free Press, “The grid is not in danger (more).”


Cyber Attacks and Water Utilities: In 2014, the federal Industrial Control Systems Cyber Emergency Response Team (ICS-CERT) released its "Monitor" report (link) that featured a cyber incident at a water utility that possibly caused an overflow of the system’s wastewater treatment process. A 2014 ICS-CERT report (link) characterizes possible impacts and consequences of cyber-based penetrations in water systems (excess dose of chlorine, no chlorine, damage pumps, bypass in the treatment process, change real-time data within a SCADA system, or loss of the SCADA). ICS-CERT details seven strategies that can be implemented to counter common exploitable weaknesses in “as-built” control systems (Seven Steps to Effectively Defend Industrial Control Systems). ICS-CERT’s 2015 Year in Review report found 295 incidents involving critical infrastructure reported in the U.S. with 25 reported in the water sector (report). In 2014, Iowa Rural Water Association reported that one of its member rural water systems was the victim of a cyber breach of its SCADA system. The attack was discovered by ICS-CERT, which subsequently visited Iowa and conducted an on-site assessment for the system free of charge.

More Media Scrutiny of Drinking Water Privatization: Last week, NPR featured water problems in Idaho’s Syringa Mobile Home Park: "Since the 1980s, this community of roughly 100 houses has been plagued repeatedly by drinking water problems — including periods with contaminated water or no water at all. Rivers of raw sewage have occasionally gushed out of the ground and formed stinky ponds around
homes..." A consumer advocate said, "The heart of the problem with manufactured home communities is that the residents don't own or control the land beneath their homes (NPR)." The following day, NPR featured a success story in Park Plaza, a community in Fridley, MN. NPR found that "When Residents Take Ownership, A Mobile Home Community Thrives..." Before taking over ownership, "the water pipes were so old they would rupture a few times a year, and everybody would go without water — sometimes for days (NPR)."

Section 1926(b) Ensures Fair Resolution in Iowa Service Area Dispute: City of Dubuque purchases rural water system service area for $6.1 million (news video). Territorial (or service area) protection from unfair annexation, condemnation or competition is a priority advocacy issue for NRWA (more).

Federal Agencies Rush to Hire More Employees Before Trump (WashPost).

Federal Agencies Rush to Finalize More Regulations Before New Administration (news).

EPA Helps Flint Receive $100 Million in SRF Grants (news).

Michigan Sewer Collapse Causes Massive Sinkhole, Affecting Two Dozen Homes (news).

EPA Launches Clean Water Act Jurisdictional Determination Website to Show the Types of Waters Regulated by EPA (EPA).

EPA Proposes Rule to Establish Public Notification Requirements for the 182 Combined Sewer Overflows in the Great Lakes (EPA).


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