

## Working Together

Public, private groups team up for disaster management • *Christine Payton*

**A** NEW INSTITUTE AT THE UNIVERSITY of Louisiana at Lafayette is tackling disaster management full force.

The National Incident Management Systems and Advanced Technologies (NIMSAT) Institute is set to empower national, state and local incident managers during catastrophic times.

After witnessing the effects of hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 and other disasters that followed, NIMSAT leaders knew questions about management, homeland security, private sector supply chains and critical infrastructures needed to be addressed.

“At the foundations of NIMSAT are efforts to enhance the understanding of threats and vulnerabilities to the nation’s critical infrastructure and improve the resiliency of private sector supply chains that fuel the national economy,” said Dr. Ramesh Kolluru, NIMSAT’s executive director.

“NIMSAT will do this by processing and analyzing data using supercomputing and visualization technologies. The Institute is built on the expertise of researchers from UL Lafayette’s Colleges of Business Administration, Science, Liberal Arts and Engineering, along with those of its national partners.”

These national-scale partners include James Lee Witt Associates – a part of GlobalOptions Group, WalMart, SGI, Priority 5, CISCO, Tulane University,

San Diego State University and many others. At NIMSAT’s core is a partnership between the public, private and governmental sectors leading to cross-cultural

collaborations that could fundamentally impact the way the nation manages disasters – regardless of their cause.

“NIMSAT is a key public-private partnership working to prepare us for the next disaster that strikes, be it natural or manmade. Its state-of-the-art technology provides the kind of testing we need to simulate disasters and smartly direct the response of government and the private sector,” said U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu. “I am proud that Lafayette is the home for this institute – bringing together the best

and brightest to bolster our homeland security. I will continue to work to ensure UL Lafayette and NIMSAT have the funding they need to continue their success.”

By leveraging the expertise of its 20 public and private sector partners from across 10 states, NIMSAT is pursuing an all-hazards approach to homeland security and disaster lifecycle. Plans are to conduct research, develop applications, prepare the next generation workforce of homeland security and provide operational and decision support to enhance the nation’s

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**SENATOR MARY LANDRIEU**

ability to manage incidents on any governmental level.

NIMSAT will tap into supercomputing systems across the nation, including the Louisiana Optical Network Initiative (LONI) and the National LambdaRail (NLR).

In addition, the Institute has formed a partnership with the Louisiana Immersive Technologies Enterprise (LITE) at UL Lafayette. The facility is one of the world’s most advanced technology resources for industry, government and research. LITE’s supercomputers – 160-processor SGI Altix 4700 – feature 4.1 trillion bytes and can compute and visualize complex disaster models, data and scenarios.

“Public-private partnerships are essential in facing many of the challenges in preparing for disaster. NIMSAT will be vital in the creation of these partnerships,” said James Lee Witt, chief executive officer of James Lee Witt Associates, one of the Institute’s partners. “NIMSAT will bring together stakeholders and encourage the real-time coordination needed during a crisis to improve situational awareness and make good decisions.”

NIMSAT seeks to contribute to the mission of saving human lives, strengthening the private-sector supply chains that drive the national economy and providing the nation’s critical infrastructure and key resources that support the economy and everyday life. ■

## NIMSAT’s National Level Partnerships (Unified by the National Lambda Rail)



### ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS:

1. University of Louisiana at Lafayette
2. Louisiana State University (LSU/Ag Center)
3. Tulane University
4. San Diego State University (SDSU)
5. University of California, San Diego (UCSD)
6. UC, Santa Barbara (UCSB)
7. Texas A&M University System (TAMU)
8. Arkansas Tech University (ATU)
9. Mississippi State University (MSU)
10. University of Alabama (UA)

### ORGANIZATIONS/PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS:

11. Louisiana Immersive Technologies Enterprise (LITE)
12. National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR)
13. James Lee Witt Associates (JLWA)
14. Priority 5
15. Idaho National Lab (INL)
16. SGI, Inc.
17. CISCO, Inc.
18. Wal-Mart
19. Rextag Strategies Corp.