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Organizations Join Forces to Combat Cybersecurity Challenges

OAK RIDGE, Tenn. - October 21, 2016 -- Two of the nation's leading research entities – the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the University of Tennessee, – have joined with Cisco Systems, Consolidated Nuclear Security, Sword & Shield Enterprise Security, the East Tennessee Economic Council and other private corporations to form the Cyber & Information Security Consortium (CISC).

The kickoff meeting for the consortium was held earlier this week in Knoxville, Tenn., where representatives from state and federal government, educational institutions, and private companies gathered to focus in on the challenges, and to begin collectively working on meeting them.

“The mission of the consortium,” said Dennis Corley, CISC director, “is to enable our members to effectively operate and protect their enterprises amid the reality of growing and persistent cyber-attacks.”

Corley, formerly the founder and chief executive officer of Knoxville’s Digital Crossing, outlined the vision of the consortium’s founders in one of many presentations given by speakers from Cisco, Intel, the Baker Donelson law firm, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and a panel of companies in the health care industry.

The Director of the National Security Agency stated recently, “The challenges [in cyberspace] are so broad...it is going to take a true partnership between the private sector, the government and academia to address [them].”

That kind of partnership is exactly what CISC is.

Among its four areas of strategic focus, the consortium is addressing workforce development, a regional and national issue.

“The University of Tennessee and Pellissippi State Technical Community College have put together programs over the last few years to address this challenge,” says Corley. “We want to partner with them, the TCAT system, and other educational institutions to produce a mature pipeline of talented cybersecurity professionals for our members.”

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October 21, 2016

Page 2

Other strategic objectives of the consortium include supporting:

- Peer-to-peer information sharing including forums and a secure online networking portal powered by ServiceNow.
- Public awareness and policy discussions
- Research, development, and entrepreneurial efforts

The consortium has already begun its work. In April CISC hosted an initial planning and “listening” session where 30 executives helped guide the focus for the consortium. Then in September, the consortium hosted a cybersecurity themed entrepreneurial workshop as part of the Innov865 Week at Oak Ridge Associated Universities. At that meeting information was presented about Oak Ridge National Laboratory’s cyber-related technologies and the process to license them, as well as practical information for small businesses on security from a cybersecurity expert at CNS’ Y-12 National Security Complex.

One of CISC’s top priorities is to provide, at both the executive and practitioner levels, an opportunity for peer-to-peer networking and interactions through forums and an online secure portal providing a knowledge base for best practices and vulnerability/threat awareness.

Also, the consortium is partnering with the UT Howard Baker Center of Public Policy to present educational programs on key issues. Stuart Brotman, the inaugural Howard Distinguished Endowed Professor of Media Management and Law at UT-Knoxville, will kick off that series of discussions on November 11 at a joint meeting held by CISC, the East Tennessee Economic Council, and the Baker Center. Brotman will speak on: “Cybersecurity, Information Security and the C-Suite: Improving Corporate Governance by Boards of Directors at Publicly-Held Companies.”

“There is a tremendous amount of cyber-related industry talent in this region,” says Jim Campbell, president of the East Tennessee Economic Council. “As it matures, our goal is for the CISC to be a catalyst for innovation, a resource that helps our businesses thrive, and an advocate for what is a fast growing part of the Tennessee economy.”

Companies who have an interest in joining this group focused on security and collaboration are encouraged to visit the Cyber & Information Security Consortium’s website, www.cyberinfosec.org.

For more information regarding the November 11 meeting visit, <http://www.cyberinfosec.org/new-events-1/>.

The Cyber & Information Security Consortium (CISC) is forming as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation to enable its members to effectively operate and protect their enterprises amid the reality of growing and persistent cyber-attacks.

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