Highlights of State Working Group

The Committee under Emergency Management is the State Working Group and is no longer referred to as the State Council. This entity was tasked by Director Craig Fugate to reach out to the remaining counties who do not have Community Emergency Response Team Training (CERT) Programs. Current members and new members of the State Working Group will be charged to highlight the Citizens Corp Programs through their public outreach channels.

Highlights of State Activities

Keeping in mind that current CERT volunteers need to stay abreast in disaster response, the City of Debary in Region 5 presented the Refresher Training for all current CERT volunteers within their community. The course covered fire suppression, medical treatment, and cribbing.

In Region 2 Escambia County’s Escambia High School presented disaster preparedness Teen CERT classes for all students who wanted to make a difference in their community on March 26th-28th. Escambia High School is the first school in Escambia County to have a team of 30-50 students participate in Teen CERT. Escambia County hopes to expand the program to include students at other schools.

Region 5 Orange County put on their Annual Faith-Based Breakfast on July 14th of 2011. This event is an opportunity to showcase the faith-based organizations in the Central Florida area and correspond and share experiences with one another.
In an effort to support Citizen Corps programs, the Florida CERT/ Citizen Corps Program Coordinator, Ms. Peggy Cadeaux published a memorandum on August 1, 2011 which stated that the Florida Citizen Corps Program would provide training support resources for all non-grant awarded trainings as long as all CERT trainings were organized under the guidance of an active Citizen Corps Council and the County Emergency Management Director. All Citizen Corps Programs who were awarded grant dollars that still has remaining balances are not eligible for these support services. In order to place an order, the CERT coordinator must complete an application and a Memorandum of Agreement regarding the use of the kits and reporting requirements.

For more information on the CERT support initiative, new program updates, or Florida Citizen Corps Program, please visit www.floridadisaster.org/CitizenCorps/.

The Florida Division of Emergency Management CERT/Citizen Corps Coordinator also put on the 2011 CERT Workshop in Training which was held in Daytona Beach, Florida November 1st-4th. This workshop was put on in order for representatives from all 67 counties to come together to network and share ideas and experiences pertaining to the emergency management field. The entire programmatic staff also attended the workshop in order for sub-grant recipients to meet and greet with them as well as answer any looming questions or concerns with regards to the grant managing process.

The instructors Chief Harry Small from the City of Pompano Beach and John Moede, Emergency Management Coordinator from Scottsdale Arizona were a great pair to facilitate the L-427 Manager Course. Participants were encouraged to mentor up and coming programs to further the number of highly qualified volunteers and programs. Participants were also encouraged to incorporate the Teen CERT program within their counties. Promoting this initiative will continue to enhance the number of volunteers and bring in a youthful amount of CERT volunteers who would be able to respond to disasters first at home and then throughout their communities. Participants also took part in the Manager Course that was offered as a part of the workshop.
Annual Governor’s Hurricane Conference

The 25th anniversary of the Governor’s Hurricane Conference was held in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida on May 17th-19th. In 1987 the conference was established to focus on the challenges caused by hurricanes and tropical events unique to Florida, the most hurricane-vulnerable state in the nation. Since then, tens of thousands of emergency management professionals from around the state, the country and the world have come to the Governor’s Hurricane Conference to attend training, state of the art workshops and to network with partners who are committed to making the state of Florida more prepared to respond to hurricanes that have and will continue to affect us.

Among the courses that were provided during the conference, the CERT Train-the-Trainer course was one with (13) thirteen county emergency employees completing the course. Our very own CERT/Citizen Corps Coordinator, Peggy Cadeaux gave a wonderful presentation during the Hurricane Conference informing participants of the CERT/Citizen Corps program, the initiatives of the program, as well as providing information for participants who currently have active grants with the CERT/Citizen Corps program.

Volunteer Programs and Support

Our Florida Sub-Grant recipients yet again experienced a year of great accomplishments. In total, the number of CERT volunteers trained was 851. For 2011 there were 94 CERT Teams, 21 Citizen Corps Councils, 2,525 Neighborhood Watches, 129 Volunteer in Police Services, 33 Medical Reserve Corps, and 21 Fire Corps. In response to the recent state-wide emergency situations, our Citizen Corps/CERT members gained a surplus of experience. As a result, our response capabilities significantly continue to improve. These capabilities allowed us to help relieve post-disaster strain on local emergency service providers, thus raising community awareness and serving as a no-cost force multiplier.
STRENGTHENING PLANNING AND CITIZEN PREPAREDNESS CAPABILITIES INITIATIVE

In lieu of the memorandum for Florida Citizens Training Support, the CERT/Citizen Corps Program began the Strengthening Planning and Citizen Preparedness Capabilities Initiative. This initiative was put into place in order to help all new sub-grant recipients for the current fiscal year and those to come. The CERT/Citizen Corps Program has pledged to give 30 CERT Kits in support of all executed grants that are in compliance with the guidance for the fiscal year. This will help to enhance the amount of people who will be able to participate in each respective sub-grant recipient area, and show the support of the CERT/Citizen Corps Program.

National Preparedness Month

Governor Rick Scott proclaimed September 2011 ‘Florida Preparedness Month’ to raise awareness amongst all Floridians on the importance of being prepared for all hazards that face the state. In recognition of the month, the Florida Division of Emergency Management will participate with more than 3,200 public and private sector organizations throughout the country as a part of National Preparedness Month and the Ready.gov awareness campaign to promote the value of disaster preparedness."It is essential that Floridians take the time to prepare their families, homes and businesses for the possibility of natural and other disasters," said Governor Scott. “We encourage every resident to recognize the importance of creating a plan now, to ensure they are ready to protect themselves and their loved ones from the wide array of hazards we face in Florida.” National Preparedness Month (NPM) is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Ready Campaign and is designed to encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and communities.

September 2011 marked the eighth annual NPM. The month always focuses on getting a kit, making a plan, being informed, and most importantly, getting involved. This year’s theme “A Time to Remember, A Time to Prepare perfectly described the month’s
activity. With 2011 also marking the 10 year anniversary of 9/11, volunteers especially helped to make the month a success. Volunteers participated in programs, National Preparedness Month, disaster open houses, police academy, law enforcement function awareness training and coalition meetings. National Preparedness Month also included home and family preparedness, including pets, older persons, and individuals with disabilities and special needs, as well as back-to-school and business preparedness.

**During the National Preparedness Month a plethora of activities occurred throughout the state involving the employees and citizens; activities included:**

- A preparedness proclamation by The City of Miami-Dade’s Mayor Carlos Gimenez declaring the month of September National Preparedness Month was given.
- Jackson County held Search and Rescue for CERT Training class in Hosford, Florida for all Jackson County CERT members in order to refresher skills previously mastered. Participants learned how to grid search and all proper search methods.
- A Volunteer Open House was held in Dixie County at the Dixie County Emergency Operations Center in conjunction with Lafayette County and the American Red Cross in order to promote disaster awareness and encourage volunteering in each respective area.
- The City of Navarre sponsored a SkyWarn Weather Spotter Training on September 2nd. SkyWarn is a voluntary program developed by the National Weather Service where volunteers serve as storm spotters for local emergency management programs. These volunteers serve as the eyes and ears for the whole community. The National Weather Service needs real time reports of hail size, wind damage, flash flooding, heavy rain, and tornado development in order to effectively warn the public.
- BRACE (Be Ready Alliance Coordinating for Emergencies) hosted its second annual Youth Emergency Preparedness Expo - YEP! September 10th. The YEP! event brought together the largest number of public safety, emergency
management, fire departments, law enforcement agencies and volunteers from youth serving organizations to demonstrate that "Kids Save Lives Too." YEP! 2011 was an I REMEMBER - I SERVE commemorative event! Conducting YEP! As a salute to those who "serve" as volunteers in the community and those who sacrifice so much to protect our freedom wherever they serve around the globe provided a fitting tribute to "remember" those lives lost 10 years ago on 9-11.

- Miami-Dade's C.O.R.E. effort was held on September 13th. This effort is part of the DHS Center for Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships which in part seeks to connect minority faith traditions and community leaders with government emergency management systems and voluntary organizations (like the ARC) active in disasters. The effort is designed to promote a whole of community engagement to identify challenges and opportunities in engaging leaders and constituents of diverse groups, identify assets and strengths diverse groups can bring to an emergency situation, and develop a network of 25-30 newly affiliated groups (representing any of the seven target groups (including minority faith sector) who can partner with emergency management somewhere along the continuum (preparedness, response, recovery, mitigation). FEMA is considering expanding the effort to other major U.S. cities.

- CERT Training (SM-317) for State employees was held Sept 26th-28th in Tallahassee at the American Red Cross. This event was put together in order for State employees to take advantage of learning the basics of CERT.

- Region 7 presented the 2011 South Florida Citizen Corps Conference on September 23rd and 24th in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. The Conference theme “Ride the Preparedness Wave” was pertinent throughout the conference. The conference was a 2-day networking and training for all Citizen Corps volunteers in the South Florida area. This conference gave all volunteers the opportunity to share experiences and ideas with each other in order to enhance disaster response and preparedness.
Closing Statement

As a result of all the previous events, The Florida Division of Emergency Management is continuing to grow and succeed in the field. The division has been able to further education on the importance of disaster preparedness. Therefore with newfound energy, the division will continue, with the help of all 67 counties spread awareness, and provide civilians with the skill-set needed to act as the first responder during any natural disaster. None of this would be possible without the undying cooperation and encouragement from The Division of Emergency Management Director, Brian Koon, Deputy Director, David Halstead, the staff of grant managers and personnel, and all of our grant recipients.

The CERT/Citizen Corps program will continue to reach for the stars while continuing to embrace the personal responsibility of getting all civilians informed and prepared, getting the training needed to assist in first aid, and volunteer to support each of their local communities. Ultimately, The Florida Division of Emergency Management's CERT/ Citizen Corps Program is looking forward to yet another year of supreme partnership with surrounding counties in Florida.