

FLORIDA CITIZENS CORPS 2008 ANNUAL REPORT



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

I. Public Education and Outreach

Unveiling of the new website

April 2008 was Florida Volunteer month and in the spirit of encouraging volunteerism throughout the state, the Florida Division of Emergency Management brought online a new website, www.floridadisaster.org/CitizenCorps, to provide information on Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) and the Citizen Corps programs.

Public education and outreach topped our successes. As twenty-one Citizen Corps Councils and thirty-nine CERT local applications were submitted during the 2008 fiscal year for funding through the newly launched website, one hundred percent of the applications were successfully funded.

Florida encourages individual and neighborhood preparedness. As the state continues to make significant strides, this fiscal year has been noteworthy as fifty-three new CERT Teams and eleven new Citizen Corps Councils were established during the 2007/2008 contract period; training a total of 67,192 volunteers throughout the State.

Kid's Weather Survival Week Kickoff at Disney World

Preparedness is for everyone...Kid's Weather Survival Week kickoff went over well as kid's got a plan at www.kidsgetaplan.com. The website was developed in partnership i.d.e.a.s. and gave students K through 6, teachers and residents' free downloadable information and educational activities and stories on

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Florida weather hazards. By preparing students for weather-related hazards, more families in Florida will be ready with a survival plan when a disaster strikes.

An Essay and Poster Contests was held for Florida students and the winners and their families were treated to a VIP tour of the Storm Stuck exhibit at EPCOT at Disney, developed in part by the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH).

II. Training and Exercises

Florida started the year off with a Campus Community Emergency Response Team (C-CERT) Train-the-Trainer, co-hosted by the Florida State Fire College, Florida State University and the Florida Division of Emergency Management held on January 15-17, 2008 in Ocala, Florida. By being trained in Campus CERT, it prepared campus police, fire service, public safety, emergency management and other appropriate personnel to recruit train and lead sustainable campus CERT teams.

The "TEEN CERT" training program is a new initiative of the State of Florida that prepares youth to help themselves, their family, and their school in the event of a disaster. During an incident, emergency service personnel may not be able to reach everyone right away. By being trained in Teen CERT, youth will have the skills to help emergency responders, save lives, and protect property. As a member of the Teen CERT, youth can respond to disasters, participate in drills and exercises, and take advantage of additional training opportunities.

Local programs have embraced the Teen CERT program as well. Santa Rosa County held their first ever Teen Train the Trainer Course on February 13-15, 2009 at Camp Timpooshee.

Florida's CERT teams had another year full of great achievements displayed through creative training techniques. The regions had outstanding responses to their efforts. Region seven had an event in which 490 citizens attended training and was provided health screenings as a part of their participation. A team from region six utilized the theme from the "survivor" TV series to get the information about fire and water safety out along with hurricane preparedness. National Crime Stop Program including: Parking Lot Assault, identity theft, and purse snatching were featured topics in region three.

Region five, Citizen Corp Council participated in a nationally sponsored event with a record 7,151 participants in the National Night Out, a crime and safety event. A Region four Council celebrated their volunteers with the theme "Garden of Thanks". Region one Citizen Corps incorporated education to the community on the part "Pets" play in the family role and disaster equation.

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CERT training for State employees was a great accomplishment as the employees learned basic disaster preparedness skills. Sponsors included the local press, Red Cross, and Volunteer Florida who were enormous supporters on this project.

The Florida Division of Emergency Management's Citizen Corps and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program conducted the first-ever Advance CERT Academy, at the Florida National Guard training site in Camp Blanding, Florida. The inaugural training taught community responders skills in advanced disaster preparedness, communications, advanced first aid and first responder training. Over 50 participants engaged in classroom activity and hands-on exercise during the 3-day academy. The responders had the opportunity to demonstrate existing skills. Proficiencies included in the training were disaster medical operations, light search and rescue, terrorism, disaster psychology and team organization.

III. Volunteer Programs and Support

Florida sub grantees experienced a year full of accomplishments as they supported the CERT Trainings throughout the State of Florida; in 2007, there were 47,363 volunteers trained, and in 2008, there were 19,829 volunteers trained. Florida has an extensive and robust list of trained citizen-based resources. These include 57 Citizen Corps Councils; 190 CERT, 114 Volunteer and Police Service (VIPS); 31 Medical Response Corps and 32 Fire Corps. In response to recent state-wide emergency situations, our Citizen Corps/CERT members gained valuable experience. As a result, our response capabilities were significantly improved. 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.

IV. National Preparedness Month

National Preparedness Month (NPM) is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Ready Campaign. NPM is held each September and is designed to encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and communities. September 2008 was the fifth annual NPM. The month focused on important preparedness steps including: - Get an Emergency Supply Kit -Make a Family Emergency Plan -Be Informed -Get Informed. Our councils and teams actively participate in volunteer programs, National Preparedness Month, disaster open houses, police academy, law enforcement function awareness training and coalition meetings.

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

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- A Preparedness Proclamation by the Orange County Florida Board of County Commissioners and County Mayor Richard T. Crotty was given.
- The American Red Cross and Lee County Emergency Management teamed up and hosted a two-part Shelter Operations Course for CERT Volunteers. The first part, was in a classroom while the second part, was a simulation drill.
- A Disaster Volunteer Open House was held for citizens to learn how to get involved before, during and after a disaster. Citizens met the Orlando Office of Emergency Management Staff and Partners. They also learned the role of the Emergency Operations Center and took a tour of the Operations Center.
- The Citizens Police Academy a 14-week program was held in a classroom setting. The mission of the Citizen Police Academy is to introduce Citizens from all walks of life to the wide variety of functions performed in police work.
- Working Together Coalition Meeting, This is a meeting at the EOC with an overview of the EOC, Citizen Corps Presentation, and having a demonstration on how to make an emergency supply kit.
- A Citizen Corps Council sponsored a community education event which included hands on refresher training for CERT members. CERT training also included triage, cribbing, light search and rescue and fire suppression. Citizens were encouraged to come out to the "Tri-City Family Affair" and watch demonstrations and learn how to prepare for disasters.