



Not often do we see a government program succeed as intended, but in the case of the inception of the Citizen Corps program we can proudly say our tax dollars are working for the people that paid them.

The Santa Rosa County Citizen Corps began in late 2006 with a Coordinator that knew nothing about the program. In June of 2007 the National Citizen Corps program partnered with the National Emergency Management Association and the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) to put on the first Community Preparedness Conference which focused on Citizen Corps and affiliate programs. Santa Rosa's Citizen Corps Coordinator attended this conference and had an epiphany. It was at this time that Santa Rosa's Citizen Corps program took off. Education can be a motivating factor, having knowledge of what Citizen Corps was about, Santa Rosa applied for and received a state Citizen Corps grant and started partnering with volunteer agencies around the County. Partnering with the School District, Citizen Corps brought the Teen Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program to the County. Teen CERT is a Department of Homeland Security funded program provided by East Michigan State University. Teen CERT will be introduced in some Santa Rosa schools in the 2008-2009 school year, making them the first schools in the state providing this program. As a precursor, 4-H children have been put through the Teen CERT program, and they have been introduced to what some of the Santa Rosa County Citizen Corps affiliate programs have to offer, like HAM radio, Neighborhood Watch and Volunteer Reception Centers, in an effort to start creating an environment of preparedness in the future of our nation, which is our children.

Santa Rosa is the proud home of the Navarre CERT team, a 501c3 organization that has logged over 7000 hours of volunteer time over the last year. This organization epitomizes community service by not only serving the Navarre area, but by enthusiastically making themselves available throughout the County whenever the Division of Emergency Management requires volunteer assistance. Navarre CERT hosts training in CERT, as does the County CERT coordinator out of the Emergency Operation Center.

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) of Santa Rosa is a growing organization that is also looking forward to introducing a Junior MRC in the future. The MRC has also partnered with the West Florida Area Health Education Center to provide CEU's to professional volunteers. This process assists with recruitment and with professional development. The MRC accepts all applicants, including lay persons.

The Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) program is operated out of the Gulf Breeze Police Department and has volunteers logging several hundred hours a month. They have also learned CPR, first aid and AED operation, in an effort to expand service to their community.

The Sheriff Office sponsors the Neighborhood watch program. This program has grown rapidly in the last year with the introduction of six new neighborhood watch groups. Additionally they are working in concert with local municipality police departments to further enhance both County and city Neighborhood Watch programs by introducing crime prevention classes as an educational component of each new program.

The Santa Rosa Citizen Corps Council is comprised of individuals from all of the above groups, plus our affiliates in the Amateur Radio Emergency Services, Volunteer Reception Center, American Red Cross, and 4-H.

Grant money has been used to purchase CERT bags to support the Teen CERT program, Citizen Corps banners (1) to advertise all the member groups, individual banners for those groups, advertising cards (2) with information about all the Citizen Corps programs in the County, CPR masks for VIPS, Neighborhood Watch brochures, and little knickknacks as give away items at functions to attract crowds to the Citizen Corps booth.

After working on the job for about 14 months, the Santa Rosa County Citizen Corps Coordinator is proud to say that he is now a Teen CERT instructor, a Medical Reserve Corps Steering Committee member, and has started a Neighborhood Watch in his community. Additionally the Santa Rosa County Board of

County Commissioners passed a Proclamation in September supporting the concept and function of the Citizen Corps program.

The success of the Santa Rosa Citizen Corps Program can be attributed to people setting aside egos and jurisdictional differences. There are examples of municipalities and the County working together, different non-profits cooperating, and a general sense of belonging to something bigger and more community oriented, that is causing the programs affiliated with the Santa Rosa Citizen Corps Program to thrive. Partnerships are the key to success.

For more about the Santa Rosa Citizen Corps program and its affiliates please visit;
<http://www.santarosa.fl.gov/citizencorps/index.html>

Daniel Hahn
IAEM Region XII Vice President
APUS IEMSA President
Santa Rosa County
Emergency Management Plans Chief
Citizen Corps Coordinator



(Figure 1)
Citizen Corp Banner is 3' x 7'
Second banner has 4H club on it.



Santa Rosa County Citizen Corps is looking for volunteers to work in any number of volunteer agencies throughout the County. Citizen Corps is the umbrella organization created after 9/11 to foster volunteerism in communities around the nation. Some of our local successes are:



Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) operating out of the Gulf Breeze Police Department is a program managed and implemented by the International Association of Chiefs of Police. Expanded to

include a Seniors against Crime program. For more information or to volunteer contact the **Gulf Breeze Police Department** at 534-5121.



Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)
The Medical Reserve Corp is designed to bring together a group of dedicated and qualified medical professionals in the event of a disaster. PLEASE RSVP

to **Jennifer Terry** at 983-5200 or to Jennifer_Terry@doh.state.fl.us



USAonWatch - (UOW) Neighborhood Watch, operated out of the Santa Rosa Sheriff Office, promotes and fosters safer living communities by providing information, training and resources. For more information contact the

Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office - Crime Prevention at 983-1236.



Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) educates people about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and

rescue and disaster medical operations. Using their training, CERT members assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event and can take a more active role in preparing their community. Interested in CERT? Contact us at **983-5360**.



FIRE Corps

A key component of Citizen Corps that supports and supplements resource constrained fire and EMS departments through the use of citizen advocates for non-operational activities. Currently there is not a Fire Corps program in Santa Rosa County but we hope to have one started in the future. Want to help start this program? For more information visit www.firecorps.org or Contact us at **983-5360**.



Santa Rosa County Volunteer Center

One of Citizen Corps great partner organizations, Volunteer Center is a clearing house of community volunteer agencies. The Volunteer Center organizes training and exercises for volunteers all over the County. They actively recruit and track volunteer hours. Volunteers who are not interested in a traditional Citizen Corps volunteer program are encouraged to contact **Denise Garner** 983-5223.



American Red Cross

American Red Cross of Northwest Florida provides relief to victims of disasters and helps people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies. For additional information visit www.northwestflorida.redcross.org



Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS), incorporates ARES and RACES Ham radio operators. If interested please contact **Bobby Tyree** through the **Emergency Management Office** at 983-5360.

The Citizen Corps Council is operated out of the Santa Rosa County Division of Emergency Management. For more information on any of the programs listed or additional information on volunteerism in general do not hesitate to call Daniel Hahn at 983-4606 or 983-5360. <http://www.santarosa.fl.gov/citizen corps/index.html>



(Figure 2)
Citizen Corps Rack Card (front and back)
New version has 4 H on back