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**THE CERT VOLUNTEERS OF THE CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR THE 2012 FEMA AWARD IN THE CATEGORY OF VOLUNTEER INTEGRATION – AWARENESS TO ACTION FOR THE REASONS OUTLINED BELOW.**

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### **AWARENESS TO ACTION: THE MANTRA OF CERT VOLUNTEERS FOR THE CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH, CA**

The City's extensive Emergency Management Plan encompasses planning, training, events and information to cover a variety of natural and man-made disasters most likely to impact this city.

As a coastal city, we deal with annual flooding, sea-level rise and tsunami threats (both local and global). We also prepare for earthquakes, canyon and gully wild fires, airport/airplane threats, hazardous highway incidents, as well as all the other potential disasters or emergencies that can strike a city anywhere.

As a result of forward-thinking city leaders, and the efforts of their appointed Emergency Management Coordinator and Community Preparedness Coordinator, the City of Newport Beach has been recognized at the local, state and federal level for its comprehensive and progressive emergency and disaster programs. The coordinators have been energetic, enthusiastic and committed to get and keep city employees, residents, businesses, schools, and civic organizations engaged in preparation and planning.

These efforts have led to the highest per-capita CERT volunteer-to-resident ratio in all of California. And it's not just the volume that's impressive . . . it's the initiative taken by these volunteers to develop programs and training opportunities within their own ranks and neighborhoods that is truly impressive and noteworthy. Examples include: initiating a CERT Volunteer Board of Directors, CERT volunteers becoming Certified CPR Trainers, CERT volunteers developing and conducting Radio Communications Training curricula, CERT volunteers organizing and funding neighborhood supplies and storage projects, CERT volunteers planning and equipping volunteer response trailer with communications capabilities, CERT volunteers identifying and implementing resource software, and more. Below we have defined the specific activities associated with these examples.

### **CERT Volunteer Board of Directors: Setting Goals, Sharing Resources and Enhancing Access throughout the City's Neighborhoods**

Seven CERT volunteers stepped up to create a Board of Directors who help the City's Community Preparedness Coordinator identify and develop training opportunities, marketing and outreach opportunities, a speakers' panel, radio communications opportunities, and who manage the volunteer pool and offload much of the administrative efforts involved in CERT recordkeeping and event planning. Actions taken by this Board have helped jump-start many of the new programs and training which were adopted in the last 18 months by the City and by the 1,000 active volunteers. It also gives the City a huge advantage in being able to maintain a robust and aggressive CERT program while managing its overhead and paid staff. These board members also actively network with the city's leadership to keep

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a focus on the importance and value of the CERT program and its volunteers to the city and each of its neighborhoods. These volunteer Board members were keenly **AWARE** of a resource gap that needed to be filled, and they took the **ACTION** needed to remedy that gap.

### **CERT Volunteers: Certified CPR Trainers**

Two CERT volunteers identified a need to improve the City's ability to continually educate and refresh CPR skills within the CERT volunteer ranks. They stepped up and volunteered to not only become CPR-Certified trainers but to also develop the programs and training curricula needed to hold recertification classes for the City's CERT and CMAP volunteers. The trial classes were held late Spring and were a rousing success. We now have a waiting list of CERTS who plan to take these classes. These two CERT Volunteers were keenly **AWARE** of a need to proactively offer CPR training, and they took the **ACTION** to fill that need.

### **CERT Volunteers: Advanced Radio Communications Training Programs**

Two CERT volunteers, also on the Board of Directors, identified a need to improve the radio communications skills of our CERT Radio Communicators ("CERT Comms"). Once licensed by the FCC, our CERT Comms participated in a weekly NET to practice using their handsets and call signs. However, there was no program or training in place that gave our CERT Comms an opportunity to simulate emergency radio traffic, which they would be expected to do in an actual disaster situation. These two volunteers enlisted the support of other radio volunteers, including RACES members, to develop training materials, classroom instruction, and a variety of simulated disaster situations through the use of photos and Power Point slides. These media were used for training CERT Comms on how to report an incident, teaching them how to identify the details needed for the effective dispatching of emergency services personnel and how to pace the traffic so that the transcriber could accurately take the call. These two CERT Volunteers were keenly **AWARE** of a need to create disaster simulation radio communications training, and they took the **ACTION** to fill that need.

### **CERT Volunteers: Organizing and Self-Funding Preparedness Projects**

The City of Newport Beach has 156 discrete neighborhoods and over 1,000 CERT volunteers spread across them. While the City offers CERT training programs, it is up to the CERT volunteers to take their knowledge and use it within their respective communities for educating and organizing over 88,000 residents. Over the last 18 months, several communities stand out for having taken the preparedness challenge to heart. And CERT role models stood ready to help them achieve their goals having successfully completed similar neighborhood projects in years past. Cameo Community CERTS (320 households) rolled out their Community Disaster Plan, which included community education and outreach, funding from their Board of Directors. They also held a residents-only silent auction, raising over \$3000 for the purchase and acquisition of supplies. Broadmoor Hills CERTS (50 households) assessed each household for funds needed to acquire supplies, and then conducted their own community emergency drill which required homeowners to assemble, triage, and use radio communications to relay simulated incidents to the City's Communications Control volunteers. CERT

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volunteers from Balboa Island, Jasmine Creek, Irvine Terrace, and Granville helped mentor these communities giving them the benefit of their experience with similar projects over the last few years. These CERT volunteers were keenly **AWARE** of a need to create community-based and community-specific disaster plans and education programs to insure that all the residents in their neighborhoods were ready at some level for a disaster or emergency, and they took the **ACTION** to fill that need.

### **CERT Volunteers: Radio Communications Equipment & Software**

The City's CERT Program received grant funds which they used to purchase a trailer for use as an incident command center for emergencies and disasters. A group of CERT volunteers, primarily radio communicators, saw an opportunity to outfit the trailer with communications equipment and resource management software which would vastly improve its functionality in a disaster setting. Several thousand volunteer hours were spent defining the plan, acquiring the equipment and software and installing and testing the various components. The trailer now has hundreds of miles of wiring, laptops, a satellite dish, HAM radio equipment and stations and DEPICTION software which maps the location, identity and profiles of all CERT resources in the city. The trailer was successfully unveiled at a city-wide disaster drill during California's Great Shakeout event. It now appears at many city functions and events, always staffed by volunteers from the CERT Radio Communications team. It is used to market the City's CERT program and the need for individuals to prepare themselves for the eventual emergency or disaster. The trailer is activated for each CERT drill and for all CERT-sponsored community events. These CERT volunteers were keenly **AWARE** of a need to improve the functionality of this important resource, and they took **ACTION** to remedy that need.

### **CERT Volunteers: Community Outreach Initiatives**

Newport Beach CERT volunteers are always on the hunt for opportunities to showcase and highlight not only the CERT program but what every individual must do to prepare their family members and pets for an emergency or disaster. Volunteers from almost every neighborhood take the initiative to host a CERT Booth at community events. These booths are a combination of "show and tell" with samples of family-oriented supplies and equipment, triage, first aid and CPR demos, and materials and information about upcoming events and training. These booths are very popular with residents, organizations and businesses, and the CERT volunteers are now being invited to attend even more events. These same volunteers also help to organize and staff many of the city-sponsored preparedness events during the year, such as the National Preparedness Expo each September, the twice-yearly Drill The Skills event for new and returning CERT graduates, Town Meetings, Parades, 5K Walk/Run and more. These CERT volunteers were keenly **AWARE** of a need to create outreach programs specifically tailored for their respective neighborhoods, and they took **ACTION** to fill that need.

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## Supplemental Information

### Newport Beach CERT Statistics

- Population: 86,738 (based on 2010 Census Data)
- Community & Homeowner Associations: 156
- CERT Participants as of June 2012: 1,270 (838 of whom are active)
- CERT Communicators as of June 2012: 88
- Each year the number of CERT Graduates increase; in 2012 we have already certified 160.

### CERT Volunteer Hours

- 2011 Reported Hours: 25,000 valued at \$500,000
- 2012 Report Hours (January through June 2012): 15,000(e) valued at \$300,000

### CERT Community Events

- National Preparedness Expo – Annually in September
  - Held at local library and reaches over 1000 residents; interactive demonstrations and displays; robust participation by disaster supply vendors; extensive planning and involvement by City Preparedness Coordinators and CERT graduates
- Spring/Fall Mini Preparedness Expos
  - Held at City community center twice a year to remind residents about changing smoke alarm batteries, renewing supplies in their emergency kits, preparedness training
- Neighborhood Annual Social Events – Year-long : CERT Volunteers set up booths and demonstrations at a variety of city/community annual social events, creating new opportunities to reach residents from all areas of the city in an engaging and fun environment
  - Town Meetings
  - Parades
  - 5K Walk/Run
  - Christmas Walk
  - Jr Lifeguard Summer Events

## **CERT Community Events (cont'd)**

- Speakers' Bureau – Ongoing: City Preparedness Coordinators and CERT Volunteers meet with resident groups, schools, businesses and civic organizations to promote preparedness at the individual and organizational level.
  - HOA Meetings
  - Business Meetings (BERT)
  - School Administrators & Pupils (SERT)
  - Newport Beach City Service League Project (high school students created and distributed over 200 disaster supply kits to Meals on Wheels recipients and residents in elder care facilities)
- RACES/CERT Communicator Field Days – Annually in June
  - Working in concert with the City and RACES volunteers, CERT Communicators participate in a day-long event which promotes HAM radio skills and training opportunities

## **CERT Training Programs:**

- Spring:
  - 24-hr Certification Training
  - HAM Radio Certification (partners with City's RACES program)
  - Mutual Aid Certification
  - CPR Certification
- Summer:
  - CPR Certification
- Fall:
  - 24-hr Certification Training
  - CPR Certification
  - Advanced CERT Training Program (under development)

## **Preparedness Drills**

- Annual City Employee EOC Activation Drill
- Annual ALERTOC Communications Test
- Monthly Tsunami Alert & Siren Testing
- Spring and Fall Recertification Programs for CERT Grads
- Annual Radio Communicators City & County Drill
- Annual Radio Communications Community/Homeowner Assn Drill

## CERT Volunteers in Action – City of Newport Beach, CA



Balboa Island Community Booth



Annual State of CERT Awards & Dinner



Corona del Mar Town Meeting Booth



Jasmine Creek HOA Supplies Campaign



Corona del Mar CERT Leaders Meeting



Corona del Mar Annual 5K Booth

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## CERT Volunteers in Action – City of Newport Beach, CA



2012 Mayor's Dinner – CERT Volunteer Board



2012 CMAP Graduates



Cameo Community HOA Meeting



2012 Drill The Skills Class & Graduation