

AMERICAN SAMOA

Highlights of State Council Activities

The Citizen Corps Council of American Samoa consists of representatives from faith-based and community-based organizations, industry, and village governing groups. A partnership has been formed with local media to deliver the Citizen Corps message to residents and translate Citizen Corps materials into the Samoan language.

Highlights of State Activities

Public Education and Outreach

American Samoa coordinated the Territorial Office of Homeland Security (TOHS) EXPO, which showcased the unveiling of the digital model of the new Emergency Operation Center, and educated the public on the role of the TOHS. Each of the six sections of the TOHS had a display with presentations to inform the public about their particular functions. Several handouts were made available for the public, and pre-publicity for the event was done via radio, television, and newspapers.

The Council helped create television and radio spots and newspaper inserts on public awareness for tsunamis and other natural disasters. Radio stations ran six 30-second public service announcements daily, the newspapers printed warning ads three times a week, while a television station broadcast the awareness spot several times a day.

Citizen Corps was invited to perform preparedness outreach for the high school Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) summer camp at the Army Reserve Center. The Council set up TOHS portable displays with equipment for the students to view.

Training and Exercises

American Samoa worked with the Department of Commerce, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) to put together a comprehensive tsunami preparation plan. Central to this effort was the development of contoured maps, the availability of radios in each village for immediate communication, and the identification of evacuation areas 100 feet above sea level. The NOAA provided the most updated information about tsunamis for translation and distribution to the community, plus a public awareness message for the media. A half-hour television program with the officials from NOAA was broadcast to help the public prepare for tsunamis. The Council paid for the translation of the tsunami brochures, the radio spots and the newspaper ads. The Department of Commerce is working on formulating a map with well-marked contours to clearly show different elevations. Upon completion of the maps, the Council will work with mayors in each village to mark the 100-foot contour above sea level, a base line for evacuation for tsunamis. As a result of a joint effort with NOAA, the Council has radios for the villages as part of an early warning system.

The National Preparedness Month committee planned and implemented a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training that certified 120 CERT members. Approximately 40 CERT trainers prepared presentations. The Administrative Service was able to print student manuals and TOHS printed instructors' manuals. TOHS staff assisted in getting all the material needed by the students and the instructors including audio visual equipment. Half of the trainees were village mayors and the rest from other government agencies. The core of the CERT training included medical, fire prevention and suppression, search and rescue and disaster psychology.

Volunteer Programs and Support

The Village of Vaitogi had major challenges in their Neighborhood Watch, because of the enormous size of the village, and the rural nature of part of the village, making it difficult to secure the whole area. Their Neighborhood Watch was organized into several posts, and they were provided with two-way radios, flashlights and megaphones to enhance their efforts in crime prevention and the safety of their village.

Support for Hurricane Katrina Response

Although American Samoa Citizen Corps was unable to assist in Hurricane Katrina response efforts, the island prepared itself for natural disasters in several ways. Local villages and schools were informed about the use of the Early Warning System (EWS), and volunteers were given an orientation to NOAA where the EWS control is located. American Samoa's Council has worked with NOAA and agencies that help the disabled to provide outreach to local schools and villages concerning tsunamis. The EWS has enhanced the island's ability to give early warnings to the villages and schools.

National Preparedness Month

To further enhance the outreach programs for schools, a curriculum plan and resource package was provided to all schools. The purpose of the curriculum was to provide detailed information and enrichment activities to reinforce messages behind the daily outreach. It also targeted students who were not part of the outreach due to time constraints.

Another important activity during NPM was the free First Aid and CPR training from the Red Cross. These life saving courses were offered free of charge to the public during the National Preparedness Month.