

SOUTH DAKOTA

Highlights of State Council Activities

The State Citizen Corps Council is run by the South Dakota State Emergency Response Committee (SERC). South Dakota is working on legislative changes to the SERC charter to fully incorporate the Citizen Corps mission. South Dakota Citizen Corps has 22 local Councils. The State Citizen Corps Council developed a five-year strategic plan that focuses on growth of the program. Grant funds are provided to local Citizen Corps Councils based upon a combination of standard award and an amount proportional to the local population.

Highlights of State Activities

Public Education and Outreach

The state used public service announcements to help recruit new members and to spread information on the importance of Citizen Corps. In 2005, the state also emphasized training in the programs, particularly Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

A recently certified CERT participant from United Tribes Technical College came upon a car accident involving a small pickup truck that had rolled over just off the interstate road. Within seconds, he arrived on the scene with his backpack of medical supplies and explained his credentials and CERT background. After a quick assessment, he realized there were two females in shock and one male with minor scrapes who was responsive. He then gave the females blankets for warmth and helped them get to a safe area. He asked each person questions to acquire knowledge and check their cognitive responsiveness. After the police and paramedics arrived he was through with his responsibilities as a CERT member. He had already demonstrated his ability to give back to his community as a Native American CERT member.

Training and Exercises

The State hosted a Citizen Corps Information Exchange Workshop to share ideas and best practices with the participating Councils. Six CERT teams participated in their county emergency disaster drills utilizing training in the Incident Command System (ICS), medical response, search and rescue, evacuation, and emergency responder support.

Volunteer Programs and Support

South Dakota Citizen Corps volunteers assisted in sobriety checkpoint efforts in 2005 by directing traffic, assisting with logistics and transporting drivers home. As a result, 71 drunk drivers were removed from the roadways, 15 arrests were made for drug violations, 25 people were found in violation of open container laws, and 21 arrests were made for a variety of license infractions.

Support for Hurricane Katrina Response

The South Dakota Office of Emergency Management and Citizen Corps deployed volunteers through FEMA and prepared staffing for three emergency shelters to be ready to assist evacuees entering the state. Although shelters were not opened for this response, the Citizen Corps work contributed to community preparedness for the future. Citizen Corps updated member volunteer lists and procedures for deploying volunteers. Unaffiliated citizens volunteering to respond were encouraged to volunteer by joining their local Citizen Corps programs to get additional training and help prepare their communities.

National Preparedness Month

South Dakota Department of Public Safety, Citizen Corps and the American Red Cross promoted National Preparedness Month at the South Dakota State Fair in Huron. The theme of the booth was “Create a Plan. Make a Kit. Be Ready”. The exhibit distributed information on preparing for a disaster, including family communications plan guidance and what to have in an emergency supply kit. There was also appropriate information available for children.