

COLORADO

Highlights of State Council Activities

The Governor's Commission on Community Service continued to serve as the State Citizen Corps Council in 2005. Commissioners are appointed by the Governor and serve two- to three-year terms under the guidance of Lieutenant Governor Jane E. Norton. The Commission includes members who have expertise in community disaster preparedness and volunteerism. The Lieutenant Governor actively supports community disaster preparedness efforts statewide and promotes the expansion of Citizen Corps Councils.

Currently, there are regional and local Councils. The Regional Councils coincide with the nine all hazards regions outlined in the Governor's Executive Order. The focus for Colorado Citizen Corps is to promote Citizen Corps Council formation statewide as well as provide established Councils with supplemental information on volunteer management and component program development.

Highlights of State Activities

Public Education and Outreach

In 2005, Colorado Citizen Corps teamed with the Denver Urban Area Security Initiative (DUASI) to create the public education campaign, READY Colorado. The campaign was launched in October 2005, and promotes making a plan and making a difference. The campaign's Web site, www.readycolorado.com, provides basic preparedness information, and links to the Citizen Corps Web site for volunteer opportunities. The READY Colorado Campaign works in close coordination with Colorado Citizen Corps. Citizen Corps serves as the volunteer program and READY Colorado provides the overall preparedness message. READY Colorado has launched in the Denver metropolitan area and will eventually be implemented statewide.

Training and Exercises

Colorado Citizen Corps, working with national and state partners, carried out regional technical assistance sessions in six of the nine all hazards regions. The regional sessions for the 2004 grants cycle have been conducted in Alamosa, the San Luis Valley Region, Arapahoe County and City and County of Denver in the North Central Region; Sterling in the Northeast Region; Grand Junction in the Northwest Region; and Colorado Springs in the South Central Region. The Lieutenant Governor served as the keynote speaker for the regional sessions. The sessions provided an overview of the Citizen Corps Program as well as supplemental information regarding Citizen Corps.

Volunteer Programs and Support

Colorado's CERT program has 15 registered teams. The CERT Program thrives in Colorado each CERT has taken different approaches on how to keep their volunteers engaged and involved. The Arapahoe County CERT, located in Centennial, has trained over 400 citizens. The program has developed smart cards for their volunteers so that in times of disaster they can be identified and called upon to respond. The Arapahoe County CERT also holds special trainings for teens and the CERT instructors can often be found providing public education for local schools and senior homes. The program is very popular and has been featured in many news articles and television programs.

El Paso County CERT from Colorado Springs has become a publicized and well-established program on Colorado's Front Range. The El Paso County CERT has trained 400 people -- one trainee for every 1,000 El Paso County residents. Sheriff Terry Maketa recorded a public service announcement that has been aired on local television and radio stations.

In rural Northeast Teller County, Fire Corps has become a true asset to the Northeast Teller County Fire District. Volunteers have assisted firefighters by cleaning hoses, preparing meals and providing the community with public education. The volunteers have been the subject of many news articles and are called by the State Citizen Corps to speak at statewide conferences. Members of the Northeast Teller County Fire Corps recently began a new chapter in their training; they are becoming CERT trained as well.

The Medical Reserve Corps of Southern Colorado was started by a group of physicians who understood the importance of having medical volunteers and citizen preparation. The group often conducts exercises of mass casualty situations, setting the standard for their volunteers to be practiced and ready to assist in times of disaster.

In rural San Luis Valley, Neighborhood Watch has become a special program that has assisted many citizens in identifying criminals and other threats. The El Paso County Neighborhood Watch's National Night Out Program included going into neighborhoods and teaching residents how to be prepared in times of disaster and also helped people in the community to get to know each other.

Support for Hurricane Katrina Response

Colorado Citizen Corps was instrumental in the management of volunteers and donations at the Operation Safe Haven dormitories on Lowry Campus in Denver while Medical Reserve Corps volunteers from Mesa County were deployed through the American Red Cross to respond in the Gulf Coast region. Citizen Corps throughout the state played a role in making 1,800 evacuees feel at home and helping them locate their families.

National Preparedness Month

Colorado Citizen Corps hosted a booth at the Colorado State Fair that promoted the program as well as citizen preparedness. Due to Hurricane Katrina, most events were postponed; however, the resolve to prepare citizens became much stronger as Colorado residents welcomed evacuees. The month was spent improving the READY Colorado message to make sure that citizens realized the valuable lessons learned from the 2005 hurricane season, including the personal responsibility inherent in preparedness.