

RHODE ISLAND

Highlights of State Council Activities

Rhode Island Citizen Corps is housed in the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency to facilitate active local Citizen Corps Councils and programs in each community throughout the state. Through a partnership with the Red Cross of Rhode Island and the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency, Rhode Island Citizen Corps has over 1,200 volunteers prepared to assist in shelter operations during an emergency. Rhode Island Citizen Corps volunteers have formed relationships with local emergency management to deliver Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training. In 2005, Rhode Island Citizen Corps participated in local disaster preparedness drills, distributed disaster preparedness materials to state residents, assisted with Hurricane Katrina relief efforts, and responded to localized flooding in October by filling sandbags and assisting with local evacuation efforts in affected areas

Highlights of State Activities

Public Education and Outreach

Five coastal communities collaborated on a National Night Out event that brought together local CERT volunteers to showcase their capabilities, perform functional exercises, and encourage their neighbors to be informed and get involved. They decided to turn their mass-feeding exercise into a community picnic and distributed preparedness materials and Citizen Corps recruitment information to over 1,500 citizens.

Training and Exercises

Rhode Island Citizen Corps programs are quite active in training and exercises. For example, Rhode Island Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers, in conjunction with the Rhode Island Disaster Medical Assistance Team (RII-DMAT) trained together in exercises and supported community events by providing resources, skills and medical care. In 2005, they participated in a number of activities, including: the Seaside Classic Soccer Tournament, the Bristol July 4th Independence Day Parade, the Pride Day Parade, the RIANG Air show, and Medication Distribution exercises at Brown University and University of Rhode Island.

Volunteer Programs and Support

Locally, Gloucester Police Department has an innovative Neighborhood Watch program called "Fleet Watch." This program is designed to build a partnership between the local police department and businesses that have one or more vehicles working in the community. Drivers are trained to become more aware of people and places along their routes, and to report any suspicious activity to the police. At times these volunteers may also be given suspect/vehicle descriptions, safety precautions, and other timely information regarding area criminal activity. Essentially, this program has resulted in many more "eyes and ears" for the police and for the Gloucester community.

Support for Hurricane Katrina Response

Rhode Island Citizen Corps was instrumental in preparation for receiving and supporting the nearly 500 evacuees hosted by the state. MRC units received 500 calls from individuals wanting to help and processed 250 new volunteer applications. These volunteers provided medical support for evacuees, staffed call centers in the state emergency management agency, and assisted with managing the extensive response of spontaneous volunteers and supported donations management.

National Preparedness Month

Cities and towns from Woonsocket to Westerly used National Preparedness Month to bring together their Citizen Corps volunteers to distribute materials and encourage their neighbors to be ready and get involved. In September, Pawtucket Citizen Corps volunteers worked with a local Boy Scout troop to distribute citizen preparedness materials and display disaster kits at a Pawtucket Red Sox Baseball game.