

NEW MEXICO

Highlights of State Council Activities

The State of New Mexico Citizen Corps Council is supported by and organized through the New Mexico Office of Homeland Security, Office of the Governor. The Governor's Office has partnered with the Department of Public Safety and Office of Emergency Management in a coordinated effort to provide guidance and support for the implementation of Citizen Corps programs throughout the state.

Highlights of State Activities

Public Education and Outreach

The New Mexico Agroguard program was officially announced at the December meeting of the Joint Stockmen. The Agroguard is a statewide community awareness program sponsored by the New Mexico Department of Agriculture, New Mexico State University College of Agriculture and Home Economics, New Mexico Livestock Board, New Mexico Department of Public Safety, New Mexico Governor's Office of Homeland Security, and the New Mexico Sheriffs and Police Association. The goal of the organization is to enhance the partnership between law enforcement and the agriculture industry. The Agroguard will establish training, planning, and prevention methods to assist emergency responders in the most appropriate methods to manage risk. The program will facilitate aggressive response to suspicious activity around food chain facilities. The Agroguard will rely upon industry members to be the watch dog for their products and cooperate with law enforcement to avert criminal acts.

Training and Exercises

Citizen Corps is partnering with the New Mexico Municipal League to educate elected officials on the benefit of having Citizen Corps Councils in each community. Over 400 fliers have been distributed to mayors across the state. The Citizen Corps Council has been invited to present at the annual New Mexico Municipal League Conference.

Volunteer Programs and Support

New Mexico Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and other Citizen Corps programs have partnered with Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) to assist United Way with setting up and running a Volunteer Center to handle unsolicited volunteers. They will participate in Leadership and Management Training specifically geared to train members on the establishment and operation of a volunteer center.

New Mexico's largest city, Albuquerque, formally established its Citizen Corps Council in October. The Council consists of representatives of community organizations, public and private agencies, and citizens. The council is aggressively engaging the community in the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), CERT, Citizen Police Academy, and Neighborhood Watch. The Council

will meet quarterly. The Albuquerque Citizen Corps Council has already received much coverage in the local newspaper and heightened awareness is fueling membership.

As New Mexico's fastest growing city, Rio Rancho recruits CERT members through classes offered three times a year. The CERT groups participate in many community events from the Great American Cleanup, a Fourth of July celebration, to a Senior Assistance Activity where they replace batteries in smoke detectors for all seniors requesting the service. Rio Rancho CERT has also established its presence in the community as serving as a communication and information asset to the public during special events.

Garnering the greatest amount of press, Grant County's Citizen Corps Council was formed in late 2005. Their first initiative is to hold a CERT training class. Another focus will be marketing and volunteer recruitment. As a border county, the organization hopes to utilize volunteerism in a rural setting to address border issues.

Support for Hurricane Katrina Response

The newly established New Mexico Citizen Corps recruited local volunteers to assist the relief efforts through volunteering with local Red Cross chapters. New Mexico provided housing and support for about 440 evacuees through the Red Cross and local partnerships.

National Preparedness Month

National Preparedness Month coincided with the start date of New Mexico's first State Citizen Corps Coordinator. The greatest initiative created during National Preparedness Month was the dissemination of Citizen Corps literature to local municipalities. With almost immediate response, new local government organizations were formed.