



National NEWSLETTER

Vol. 4 – Issue 1

Giving CERT a Spanish Flavor



CERT training being delivered in Spanish

Recent reports from the 2010 Census show that the Spanish-speaking population of the United States has grown by almost 29 percent in the last decade. Because of this dynamic growth, many CERT programs have begun to broaden their course offerings to serve the Spanish-speaking community.

But is offering training in Spanish just a matter of getting a few translators? We spoke to several programs in California, Arizona, and Texas to see what they are doing to help meet the emergency preparedness needs of this important population and how other programs can copy their success.

San Pablo CERT Adapts Curriculum and Techniques to Local Population

Although translation is a crucial and obvious first step in bringing CERT to Spanish-speaking populations, it is also essential to know your audience, says Andrea Barte, Disaster Preparedness Coordinator for the San Pablo, California Police Department. “When you put out programs to empower the community, you have to realize who your target audience is....Some of our trainees never went to school; some had only an elementary education, so we had to modify [the CERT Basic Training] a lot.” However, despite the modifications to the CERT PowerPoint presentation to include more visuals and make it simpler to understand, she notes that “we stick to the learning objectives so they are being met even with the changes.”

Barte began offering CERT classes in Spanish in 2007 because of the growth of the Hispanic community in her area. Since she does not speak Spanish, she enlisted the help of several bilingual CERT training graduates to help translate and adapt materials and then recruit trainees from within the community. “I don’t speak Spanish, I am not Hispanic, so I’m very fortunate to have a strong corps of volunteers,” says Barte. “The community is more receptive to hearing information from them than from me as a uniformed officer.”

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<http://www.citizencorps.gov/cert/>



NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS DIRECTORATE





Giving CERT a Spanish Flavor

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Offering CERT classes in Spanish has ultimately helped to bring disparate communities together, said Barte. Noting that the Spanish-speakers in her community have traditionally had distant relations with the police department, Barte said she had to think outside the box and begin to offer CERT training in other locations to get Spanish-speakers to come to the classes. “If they see that the program is from the police department, they are reluctant, so we’ve moved our training to schools and local churches, and this has helped to almost double attendance,” says Barte. In turn, the classes have helped the police’s relationship with the Spanish-speaking community. “We’ve demystified the hatred towards police,” says Barte. “Once we get that interaction, and they see what we’re trying to do for the community...They don’t think we’re the bad guy anymore, and it has helped change how they view the police department and our employees.”

Even more important, CERT is serving as a bridge between the English-speaking and Spanish-speaking communities around San Pablo. “We’ve done our joint drills with neighboring cities that don’t do Spanish CERT but their students now realize the importance of communicating with those who don’t speak English during an emergency,” says Barte. “We’re raising questions and bridging communication gaps. Everyone benefits.”

Carpintería Uses CERT “Hybrid” as Recruiting Tool

Like San Pablo, the Carpintería, California CERT program has also used innovative training and recruiting techniques to involve their Spanish-speaking population in local emergency preparedness efforts.

Carpintería offers a 4-week emergency preparedness class targeted towards Spanish-speakers. “Our plan is to move these community members into full Spanish CERT, but we first need to get everyone’s attention,” says Kris McGuire, who is the city’s coordinator of emergency and volunteer services. “The reality is that we needed to do a much better job of outreach...Our population is very stretched in terms of job commitments,” says McGuire.

The 4-week class covers personal and family emergency preparedness and can be a gateway to the CERT Basic Training.

The strategy has been a huge success and has led to over 200 people taking the class, with many of these individuals later asking for CERT Basic Training and becoming active in forming new CERTs in Latino communities.

Although many CERT programs draw upon older or retired individuals who have more time to devote to the program, McGuire targets young families by offering free child care during the trainings and having training programs at local elementary schools, churches, and even people’s backyards.

Like Barte, McGuire credits many volunteers for the success of her program. For example, for the 4-week preparedness training, two of her volunteer instructors, Gracie Huerta and Anthony Rodriguez, came up with the name Listos, which means “ready” in Spanish.

McGuire also worked to make the Listos training and the CERT training culturally appropriate by building in time for socializing and settling children at the beginning of each training session. “There’s a lot of flexibility built into our program,” says McGuire. “If we take a little extra time in the beginning, they stay a little extra time later. It’s very flexible, very grassroots, a little more informal...We build a community around this.”

As with Barte, McGuire also found that offering Spanish CERT classes broke down traditional barriers between communities. “We are one community, especially in an emergency or disaster; there is no separation,” she notes, “so we have find ways to understand each other and to know what works. We all will need each other in a disaster. “

Nogales CERT Part of Larger Cross-Border Effort

Spanish CERT classes are even more important to border areas like the Santa Cruz County, Arizona CERT, which includes Nogales and other communities on the U.S.–Mexico border.

“We didn’t even need to think of why we needed to do it; it was very natural,” says Louie Chaboya, who is an emergency manager for the Tubac Fire Department.

Reflecting the reality of life on the border, where people might live in Mexico but work in the U.S. or vice versa, the CERT program here takes a binational view of emergency preparedness and offers training on both sides of the border. “We’re a border, and there’s a fence, but for an emergency, there is no fence,” says Sandra Eriksen, the emergency management specialist at Nogales’s Office of Emergency Management.

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A Spanish-speaking graduating class of the Santa Cruz County, Arizona CERT

Chaboya said the interest in binational emergency preparedness grew out of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Border 2012 initiative. Border 2012 tries to protect the health of the nearly 12 million people living along the U.S.-Mexico border through efforts to improve the environment.

Through exercises on containing hazardous materials spills and a drill that involved a simulated terrorist attack on the Nogales Port of Entry, it soon became evident that CERT training would be beneficial to communities on both sides of the border. Although classes were at first targeted for just U.S. residents, they were later opened for Mexican emergency officials and residents living in border areas, such as workers in the region's many maquiladoras, or factories.

"Down here, we have a lot of equipment to go into Mexico, but in a major emergency, the most valuable resources are human resources," says Chaboya. "[After doing CERT trainings in Mexico] with our Mexican counterparts, we know who to call now if there's an emergency. They have a lot of volunteers, they have many hospitals, they have many doctors," adds Eriksen.

Like McGuire, Chaboya counsels that CERT programs need to carefully translate any materials and vet any instructors purporting to speak Spanish. Chaboya noted one embarrassing moment in a training when an instructor mispronounced the Spanish word for "emergency" as "emergencia" instead of "emerGENcia." However, finding good bilingual trainers has not been difficult overall, he notes.

Chaboya said that programs looking to offer CERT programs in Spanish also need to be sensitive to cultural differences.

"Even in the U.S., the Mexican culture is very laid-back," said Chaboya. "Not just on the Mexico side, but on the U.S. side, too, it can be hard to get people to commit." Eriksen agreed: "People will say 'yes' and then not show up. But you have to work with that."

The way to overcome this difference is through patience and doing business in a more personal way, says Chaboya. "In the U.S., you announce a meeting once on email, and people show up...[but when dealing with Mexican culture], you have to keep reaching out and calling them." And you must be willing to do business outside the meeting room, advises Chaboya. "It's almost a mandate that you have lunch or dinner...That's where you meet people, that's where you learn, that's where...you build relationships....Once you learn it, you see it's a very low-stress and healthy lifestyle. ...My advice is to not get frustrated with it."

Eriksen and Chaboya also said that radio is an important communication medium in the Spanish-speaking community that should not be overlooked when promoting CERT.

“Down here, we have a lot of equipment to go into Mexico, but in a major emergency, the most valuable resources are human resources.”

– Emergency Manager for the Tubac Fire Department.

Louie Chaboya

Chaboya's and Eriksen's efforts have paid off, and this year, CERT members from both sides of the border will help to provide public safety during a major festival and parade to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the life of Father Kino, an area religious figure recommended for canonization. "Both sides are working as if there was no border," says Chaboya.

McAllen CERT Schedules Training and Offers Supplies to Draw Participants

As in Arizona, Texas's Rio Grande Valley is a border area with a majority Spanish-speaking population, so the decision to offer CERT classes in Spanish was an easy one. However, as with the other programs we have described, several adjustments were made to the CERT Basic Training materials. "We made it a point to tailor our training to the schedules of our population," says Manuel Cruz, who is homeland security director for the Lower Rio Grande Valley

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Development Council and a CERT instructor based in McAllen. Cruz said that in order to make the training more do-able for working families, he had longer sessions once a week, from 6:30-10:00, to conduct the entire CERT Basic Training program in five weeks.

In addition, he rearranged the curriculum a bit, saving the units on fire suppression, medical issues, and the final exercise for the end of course to ensure people would stick with the entire program. Cruz also provided CERT emergency supply kits at graduation as an enticement to get people to stick out the training in its entirety. “The CERT kit shows people we take their commitment seriously,” says Cruz.

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Cruz agrees that the personal touch is especially important when working in the Spanish-speaking community. “Having the connection is very important,” notes Cruz. “You have to develop a close relationship before you get accepted in these groups. I was able to connect because there was one person there who was willing to help set it up—it’s about building relationships and developing a trust with one or two people to help open doors instead of just bursting in.”

Cruz’s efforts have paid off. About 40 people were trained in his first two Spanish CERT classes, and some have assisted in CERT activations for responses to Hurricane Alex and Hurricane Dolly, says Cruz. One such CERT member worked a county phone bank providing information to the community in Spanish and English about disaster response efforts.

Noting that the Spanish-speaking residents are often the poorest and most vulnerable in his hurricane-prone region, Cruz advises others interested in offering Spanish CERT “that everyone can be eager... to learn these programs. It can be a challenge. Advertise as much as possible, because one shot is not going to do it.”

The National CERT Program Office has recently announced that all of the updated CERT Basic Training material has been translated in Spanish. This includes the Participant Manual, Instructor Guide, and PowerPoint files. To download the materials, please visit the national CERT website at www.citizencorps.gov/CERT and click on Training Materials.

Tips for Starting Spanish CERT Programs

Get materials and trainers in Spanish.

- Use translated National CERT Program materials.
- Carefully translate locally when needed.
- Carefully select bilingual trainers.

Use your volunteers to:

- Help find qualified trainers.
- Help with recruiting within community.
- Help in obtaining new CERT training locations.

Be willing to recruit in different ways.

- Use personal contacts or phone calls vs. email or flyers.
- Find a champion from within community to recruit.

Be willing to train in new ways.

- Build in extra time for socializing and getting children settled.
- Train in new locations (churches, homes, and schools vs. the Fire Dept.).
- Adapt curriculum to appropriate educational levels.
- Consider offering shorter, more personal preparedness program at first.

Be sensitive to culture.

- Emphasize personal contact in recruiting and during training.
- Focus on emergency preparedness’s value to family.
- Build in resources for child care.
- De-emphasize ties to police and fire departments.
- Realize that sometimes people say “yes,” but then do not come.



New Jersey Flooding Leads to Salem County CERT Activation



Salem County, NJ CERT members fill sandbags to protect against rising floodwaters.

The combination of high tide, a full moon, and torrential rainfall in April 2011 led to the Salem County CERT's first disaster activation. The triple threat caused some of the worst flooding in the area in 10 years. Four towns experienced significant flooding, making roads inaccessible and assistance difficult to receive. The waters rose so quickly, communities did not receive the typical advance warning and were not prepared.

That is when Salem County CERT stepped in. The team was activated around 11:15 p.m. on Saturday and by 11:45 p.m. 15 volunteers were waiting for direction, said B.J. Smith, of the Department of Emergency Service and one of the CERT's program directors. At 1:30 a.m., Elsinboro Township requested help filling sandbags to hold back flood water. Starting at 2 a.m., 13 CERT members spent 5 hours filling 250 sandbags.

“CERT members ranged in age from 20 to 70 and were happy to be part of a response and to make a difference.”

– B.J. Smith,

Department of Emergency Service and one of the CERT's program directors

The small town had fewer than 10 firefighters, all of whom had been working all day. “They were hoping they'd be able to get someone to fill just 50 bags,” said Smith. “If it weren't for the CERT, it was another responsibility they were going to have to handle.”

CERT members ranged in age from 20 to 70 and were happy to be part of a response and to make a difference, said Smith. “They were excited, they were tired, but they were ready to go.”

The CERT previously held an H1N1 vaccination clinic and assisted with some rehab at fire scenes, but this was their first disaster activation. “We're a rural county, and don't have a lot of times where we need to activate volunteers. It was a great opportunity to put their training into action,” said Smith.



Working into the wee hours of the morning, CERT members fill 250 sandbags for Elsinboro Township, N.J.

Luckily, the flood waters went down as quickly as they had risen. But the value to their community is just beginning. “The one real positive result is that because we're a relatively new group of volunteers, the communities weren't really aware of this resource. [Towns] are starting to realize there is a group of volunteers to assist them when they're overwhelmed.”

For more information, contact Bessie Smith at Bessie.Smith@salemcountynj.gov

Gloucester County, Va. CERT Provides Long-Term Assistance after Tornado



Gloucester County, Va. CERT members recently spent over two months helping with cleanup and citizen assistance after a tornado struck the county in April 2011. The tornado, which was classified as an EF2 with wind speeds between 111-135 miles per hour, killed two people and damaged over 160 homes in the county.

“CERT members worked constantly over this period to assess damage, help with traffic control, and deliver water and food. They did a little bit of everything,” said Jane Wenner, Gloucester County CERT’s Emergency Trainer/Planner. They also visited tornado victims to assess their physical and emotional needs. “About 120 volunteers gave their time. CERT members who I hadn’t seen in a while came out. They were amazing,” said Wenner.

The county was hit so hard that the cleanup lasted through June 30. During this time “there were very few days that CERT was not out,” Wenner said. Gloucester County CERT leaders learned early on in this experience that they needed to delegate better. “When you’re going through something like this, everybody cannot do everything.”

Wenner recommends that all CERT programs around the country follow the Incident Command (IC) structure during an emergency. “We learned to tighten up the program. Then the training is more beneficial when put into action,” she said.

Gloucester County CERT operated out of a local church throughout the two-month period, and now some of the church members are in CERT training. “We have 17 people in training now,” Wenner said. “We want members to take the complete training so they can use all the knowledge they have learned” in an emergency. She added that some CERT members who completed the Basic Training a while ago have requested refresher training.

The tornado was unexpected, Wenner said, “but we were prepared and did what we had to do. You take what you’ve been practicing and get the job done.”

Branson CERT Assists Joplin Neighbors after Tornado



Branson, MO CERT members help clear debris after a tornado in Joplin, Mo.

On May 22, 2011, an EF5 tornado ripped through Joplin, Missouri, destroying a large swath of the community and devastating its residents. EF5 refers to the Enhanced Fujita scale used to rank tornadoes according to damage caused. An EF5 is the most severe and consists of winds greater than 200 mph.

More than 100 miles away, Branson residents, though not physically affected by the twister, were compelled to action.

Paul Harkins, City of Branson Fire Captain and CERT Coordinator, led an 11-member team to Joplin to assist with the recovery. The team included Branson CERT members, firefighters, and a city alderman. A mass text from an official in Springfield asking for CERT assistance led to their 48-hour activation.

On the first day, they checked in at the field operations staging area and were given locations to search. “We got an address—church, house, or neighborhood—and we’d go out, do a search, check back in, and then go out again,” said Harkins.

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Branson CERT Assists Joplin Neighbors after Tornado

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On the second day, they teamed with Gateway Search and Rescue dog teams to do area searches. They worked behind the team and if the dogs spotted something, the group would mark it, clear it, or report it. “We just did whatever the handlers needed,” said Harkins. They would also clear debris out of the dogs’ way. “It was hard work,” he said, “but it at all went back to the CERT training we’d learned.”

The team did not recover any victims during their search and returned to Branson. But they were happy to offer their help and provide some assistance to the town. “It was still a success. And we learned what we needed to work on and to do better” for next time, said Harkins.

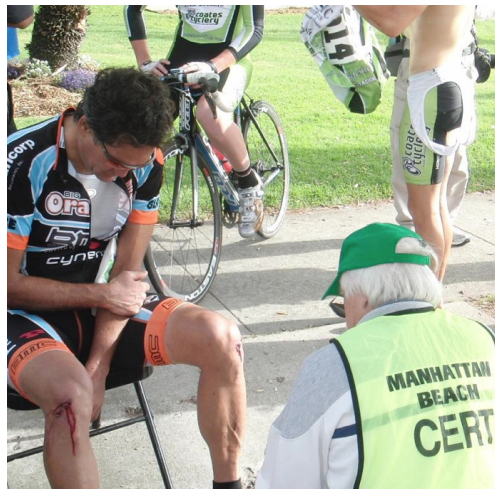
Ted Martin, City of Branson Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director, said the activation really allowed everyone to see the value in CERT. “CERT members became a valuable resource when professionals became overwhelmed. They made an impact.”

“[It was] neighbors helping neighbors. Branson neighbors helping Joplin neighbors. If something happened here, I feel confident that the state-wide program would come to help in Branson,” said Martin.

“The impact made by the CERT is valuable, applicable. It’s just right for the community.”

For more information, contact Ted Martin at tmartin@bransonmo.gov.

Manhattan Beach, Calif. CERT Goes the Distance at Bike Race



Manhattan Beach CERT member Mike Hill treating a bicyclist’s wound.

Manhattan Beach CERT was on hand at the 50th annual Manhattan Beach/Chevron Grand Prix held June 26, 2011. For the third year in a row, CERT members assisted bicyclists with minor injuries, such as road rash, cuts, and scrapes. The event, known as “The Oldest Single Day Race in the USA,” also attracted thousands of spectators, and Manhattan Beach CERT was a welcome presence in assisting paramedics whenever needed.

“It was a relatively quiet day until the end of the first race,” said Manhattan Beach CERT President George Butts. “There was a crash that involved about 20 bicyclists, with seven transported to the hospital for broken bones and head and face injuries. We treated riders with minor injuries and provided a lot of cleaning up and bandaging of minor wounds.”

Manhattan Beach CERT’s involvement with this event began in 2009 when Butts received a last minute phone call from the local fire battalion chief during the first race. There had been a large

bicycle crash. At one point approximately 16 bikers were lined up on the curb, awaiting treatment. Could CERT help out?

“We arrived, set up our canopy and tables, and started attending to the injured,” said Butts. “We assisted the fire department and paramedics in treating the minor injuries.” Manhattan Beach

“*The more we are out there, the more people see us and ask questions about our training. They take an interest in CERT.*”

– George Butts,
Manhattan Beach CERT President

CERT has been a fixture at the race since then. “We will always be a part of it now,” he added.

Next up for Manhattan Beach CERT is an exercise where members will practice disaster response after a simulated earthquake on the San Andreas Fault. “The biggest thing for us is the awareness factor,” said Butts. “The more we are out there, the more people see us and ask questions about our training. They take an interest in CERT.”

Manhattan Beach CERT members have many opportunities to assist their community, whether it’s setting up a first aid tent at the concert in the park or assisting police in an active shooter exercise. Butts commented, “You’ve got to continue training and practice what you’ve learned – use it or lose it, as they say. These events also give us the opportunity to be out there and provide visibility for the CERT Program.”

Thach CERT Cares for Animals after Alabama Tornado



Every CERT member strives to do the “greatest good for the greatest number.” In many cases this “number” does not refer to just people, but to animals as well. Such was the case after a tornado tore through Alabama in April 2011. Walker County was one of the areas hit hard by the storm, destroying homes and displacing residents—and their pets.

While conducting preliminary damage assessments in the aftermath, Thach CERT members frequently encountered lost or forgotten pets. One of those members, Jennifer Bidwell, saw a need to care for them. “I knew the people would get taken care of,” she said. “But a lot of the times they forget about the pets.”

When she told the local Emergency Management Agency that someone should do something, they told her to go for it. As director of the Thach CERT’s Animals in Disaster Unit, she had both the experience and passion to start a shelter. “It was something that there was a need for and something that had to be done,” she said.

The CERT used the county fairgrounds for the shelter. The agricultural areas had stalls that were easily converted to rooms for dogs and eventually cats. Most animals arrived at the shelter malnourished and scared. But they were cared for by three veterinarians that offered their medical services and a rotation of volunteers that staffed the shelter 24/7. All volunteers were either current CERT members or future members taking the training. Food donations and supplies such as blankets and building materials came from across the state and country. “The outpouring was phenomenal,” said Bidwell.

A Facebook page created to help reunite owners with their pets drew national attention. One woman from Michigan sent a package of chew toys and cat toys. “They came as a ‘gift’ from her two dogs and two cats because she cared about the animals,” said Bidwell.

In addition to maintaining the shelter, volunteers also distributed 22,000 pounds of animal feed for dogs, cats, rabbits, horses, and pigs. Most of the feed was donated by Alabama residents and other rescue companies. “You call Alabama to task and they will come to task,” said Bidwell.

Volunteers walked neighborhoods and talked to residents to try to connect owners with their pets. In the end they had a 25% return/reunited rate, which is “pretty good,” said Bidwell. While most temporary shelters operate for only 14 days, the Walker County shelter operated for 45 days. When the shelter closed, pets that could not be reunited were taken by the Birmingham Humane Society, a no-kill shelter. Many were fostered immediately.

Bidwell credits CERT training for helping the volunteers know what to do and how to adapt to caring for animals. “I don’t think we would have been able to do what we were able to do without the training. This all started by doing preliminary damage assessments. Without the training we wouldn’t have been able to have it as successful as we did.”

“The hardest part is letting them all go because they become yours,” said Bidwell. While the emotional side was draining, everyone felt good about what they did. “No one had any regrets. No one ever complained.” And they all agreed they would “absolutely do it again,” said Bidwell. “Which really says it all.”

For more information, contact Christine Wilson at cwilson@readywalker.gov.

More Information:

Local CERT programs interested in providing supplemental training to CERT members on animal response in emergencies can visit the national CERT website at www.citizencorps.gov/CERT and click on Training Materials. You’ll find Participant Manuals, Instructor Guides, and PowerPoint files for CERT Animal Response I (three hours) and CERT Animal Response II (four hours) in the Supplemental Training section.

Caribou CERT Provides Assistance During Storm



Photos Credits to Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)

A powerful storm swept through Caribou, Maine, on June 9, 2011, with 90 mph straight line winds and heavy rain that felled trees, downed power lines, and flooded or blocked 21 roads. Emergency Management Agency director Chief Roy Woods activated the Caribou CERT to assist in the storm response.

The team reported to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and 22 members were assigned to help with traffic control by blocking roads and helping to remove trees from the roadways. All CERT members used radios to communicate with the EOC, providing updates on damage and reporting road closures. CERT members were out in the elements for several hours providing assistance to professional responders.

“They did a great job functioning in the EOC,” said Woods. “And they added extra hands and eyes to the situation.”

The storm also knocked out electricity at the local high school, where an end-of-year dance was being held. As it was in the middle of the storm, it “would have been the worst time in the world for the students to leave and hit the roads,” said Woods. Fortunately, Chief Woods’ son, Darren—a fire captain involved with CERT—was serving as a chaperone at the dance. Darren was able to keep people calm and start the backup power generator. “He was also able to keep everyone at the school and probably helped prevent accidents,” said Woods. “They continued the dance, and it’s definitely something they will remember.”

By the time the EOC closed, six CERT members remained and all but seven roads were cleared. In a press release, city manager Steven Buck called “the coordination of resources... exceptional.”

Woods strongly believes in using CERT as a support resource for the community. “CERT doesn’t go out to take over, but to help with police, fire, ambulance, public works, etc.,” he said. And the departments are glad to see “there are people that are willing to give a hand, have some training, are dressed properly, and can be of some sort of help.”

“ CERT doesn’t go out to take over, but to help with police, fire, ambulance, public works, etc. ”

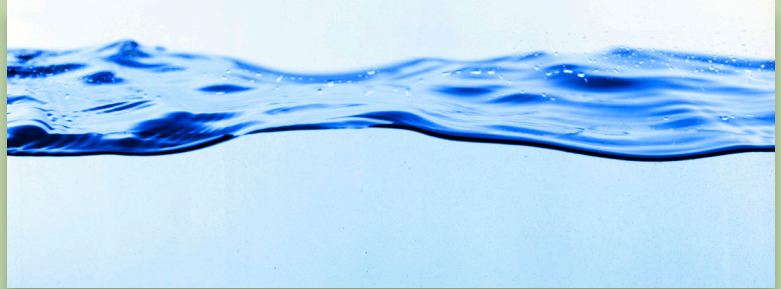
*– Chief Roy Woods,
Emergency Management Agency director*

In the past the Caribou CERT has provided traffic control at parades, assisted with search and rescues, served meals out of feeding trailers to professional responders, and staffed communication centers at various events. Woods views every event as a training opportunity, preparing the CERT for when they will need to respond to a real emergency. Woods says their experience and training prepared the CERT members to help with this storm response and he was happy with the role they played. “It’s an active team and I’m very proud of the team,” he said.

For more information, contact Chief Roy Woods at roywoods@maine.rr.com.

Remember...

You can purify water by heating the water to a rolling boil for 1 minute, using commercial purification tablets, or adding perfume-free household chlorine bleach (if it is pure 5.25% sodium hypochlorite) in the quantities recommended in the table below:



Ratios for Purifying Water with Bleach

Water Quantity	Bleach Added
1 Quart	2 Drops
1 Gallon	8 Drops
5 Gallons	1/2 Teaspoon

Note: If water is cloudy, double the recommended dosage of bleach. After adding bleach, shake or stir the water container and let it stand 30 minutes before drinking.

Submitting Stories to the National CERT Newsletter

The National CERT Newsletter is published quarterly and welcomes stories from local, state, tribal, and territorial CERT Programs. For example:

- CERT in Action – Activations in actual emergencies
- CERT exercises you have conducted
- A CERT member who has gone above and beyond the call of duty
- Community awards/commendations your CERT Program/teams have received
- Innovative ways you have dealt with challenges in your CERT Program

When submitting a story, please include:

- City/state of event
- Names of people/organizations involved
- Date(s) of activity
- Author's contact information
- Other relevant information

Format: Articles should be between 50 and 150 words. Submit text as a Microsoft Word file or paste article text directly to e-mail. (PDF files cannot be used.)

Photos: Submit as an e-mail attachment in JPG or TIF file format. Include names of people in photo and a description of what they are doing and why. Please provide only photos approved for publication.

Deadline: Articles considered for the next publication must be received by December 31, 2011. Send your articles to cert@dhs.gov. Include in subject line: "Submission for CERT Newsletter."

Note: CERT retains the right to edit all stories for length, clarity, and accuracy.

Acceptance: Publication of submitted materials is based on a variety of factors, including but not limited to timeliness, space available, completeness of information, and relevance.