

CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH CERT NEWSLETTER

March 2009

SINCE 1991



HB CERT HIGHLIGHTS

CERT 2009
Save--A- Life
Saturday Classes

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CLASS 1

FEMA: In or Out of DHS?

By Brevyn Mettler, MPA



As you know CERT is a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) endorsed nationwide program that is in all 50 states, two territories, the District of Columbia and several nations around the world. Because of this affiliation, it is important that you understand some of the complex issues that face emergency management and FEMA.

On Feb. 25, 2009, HR 1174, the FEMA Independence Act of 2009, was introduced by Chairman James Oberstar (D-MN) of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Original co-sponsors are the Full Committee's Ranking Member John Mica (R-FL); Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management; and Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL), the Subcommittee's Ranking Member. This Act, if passed, will reorganize FEMA into an independent agency with cabinet level representation.

The argument over whether FEMA should have been put under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in the first place has generated heated debate. Either way, the genie has already been let out of the bottle and moving it could cause more problems than it would fix. Over the years, FEMA has been reorganized countless times and has had its share ups and downs. Many agree that FEMA was at the top of its game during the Clinton Administration because of the appointment of James Lee Witt as FEMA Director, who had worked under Clinton in Arkansas. Experts argue that it was because the FEMA Director was a cabinet level position that it

had such great successes. While this is a sound argument, it can also be argued that it was because of the personal relationship Witt had with President Clinton.

Under the Bush Administration, FEMA lost much of its respect with the American people because of FEMA's response to the Hurricane Katrina debacle. The failures of Katrina can be linked to the reorganization under DHS, lack of experience by Director Brown and not having the ear of the President. However, this problem has been corrected in the wake of Katrina.

Recent events have shown that FEMA is fundamentally sound and is adjusting to its new home with great results. FEMA has been involved in approximately 300% more exercises since its inception and is more closely tied to terrorism, something Witt had shied away from. FEMA has built relationships with the Coast Guard and other agencies that are crucial in a disaster. Under DHS, FEMA has the resources of the entire department. Furthermore, more grant funds are available through the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) and State Homeland Security Grants.

FEMA must definitely be reorganized and should be placed at the top of the organizational structure, much how it was originally conceived under the Hart-Rudmann Commission in the late 1990's. The FEMA director should be at least an undersecretary position and should have a direct line to the President. Removing FEMA from DHS is probably not the best course of action because it would take years to reestablish FEMA as an independent agency. This is something we can't afford in this day and age



President's Message

Judy Ann Morris



A special welcome to our 2009 Save-a-Life Saturday Class participants! We hope that you will learn a lot from our classes and also have fun. We try to make our classes very hands-on and would like you to participate as much as you are physically able.

We hope that you will become part of our HB CERT Organization and will enjoy the friendship that so many of us share. When you are at our class, look for our Executive Board Members who will be wearing green vests. They will be able to answer any questions that you have about the class or CERT.

We hope to plan a few fun events this year. If you have any ideas of what you would like to do as a group (picnics, trips, game nights) please email me directly at jamorris189@yahoo.com. If you would like to help organize an event, just let me know. We are always looking for new, fresh ideas.

Disaster preparedness can be overwhelming, so each month we give you a task. This month's assignment is to start buying your extra food supply. It doesn't have to be as complicated as some people think. Look for sales on dry milk, cereals, canned fruit, canned tuna or meat, crackers and soup. For additional ideas, look in your kitchen cabinet and buy extra of canned foods that you already know your family will eat. As you put the disaster supplies away, always write a note on them as to their expiration dates. This way, you can periodically check your supplies and rotate them before they expire

Class Dress Code

Brevyn Mettler, Assistant Emergency Services Coordinator

To all of our class participants and instructors: There will be a strict dress code this year. In many of our classes we will be working within construction zones and safety codes will need to be followed. Everyone must wear long pants (no shorts) and shoes with closed heels and toes to all classes. Please no flip flops or backless shoes. DSW graduates, please also wear your CERT black shirt, yellow jacket and CERT ID badge.

CERT Member Achieves Stardom

By Juanita Walker



The CERT Management Team recognized team member Bill Worth as a "Super Star" at the March 5th meeting.

Bill is one of those people that every volunteer organization hopes will join their group. He is totally unselfish with his time and talents and is always willing to help.

As Disaster Service Worker Manager, Bill schedules, organizes, and helps teach most of our advance trainings. He is also a team member of: Communications, Command Post, Care and Shelter, Booth, Search and Rescue, Senior Response, First Aid, and Logistics Teams as well as serving on the Executive Board.

In addition to his many activities with CERT, Bill is also an active member of the American Red Cross. He has responded to local and national disasters, sometimes to be called away from home for several weeks at a time.

Bill also volunteers for both the Huntington Beach Fire Department and Fountain Valley Fire Department.

Bill, we thank you for all you do and congratulate you on being our "Super Star".

Annette, aka Mrs. Bill Worth, thank you for sharing Bill's time with us!



Team Announcements:

DSW Manager Report

By Bill Worth

February was a busy month for CERT training and team meetings. We had a First Aid Team meeting on February 11. The discussion included planning for the April 18, 2009 Save-A-Life Saturday Disaster First Aid Class and also the First Aid Team organization. The team leader and instructor for First Aid is Billie Brandon. Future team meetings will be announced.

We had a very successful turnout for the Command Post training on February 26. Forty people attended the class. The class was led by Cecil Wright and Bill Worth. Training consisted of when a Command Post Team would be called out, the structure of the team, and the forms and procedures that would be used in a call-out. In an emergency, this team directs the CERT activities in response to requests from the City EOC. It also keeps track of the volunteers deployed and the supplies used in the incident. Cecil Wright prepared check-off lists for the command post positions, so volunteers can immediately start the Command Post operations. The check-off lists will be added to the Command Post Booklet, so they will be available when a call-out is made.

In the past, CERT has been called out to help sandbag the homes of the frail and elderly during floods. On Saturday, February 28, the Sand Bag Team met at the City Yard for instruction on how to fill and place sand bags when we have a flooding situation. This team consists of dispatchers, drivers and sandbaggers. Job descriptions were discussed so that volunteers would be able to contribute where they feel most comfortable and capable. The Sandbag Team Leaders are Janet and Carlton Cook.

The month of March is the beginning of our Save-A-Life Saturday classes. If you wish to become a Disaster Service Worker, these classes are the first step. Supplemental classes will be scheduled during the year to round out your education as an emergency responder.

Thanks to all of the students for attending these classes and all of the instructors who make CERT a success.

Advanced Class for Search & Rescue Team Members

By Al Collins, S & R Team Leader

Our Advanced Search and Rescue Training and Practice Class for the Search & Rescue Team members will be held on April 25, 2009. The class will be conducted as if a real 7.0 earthquake has occurred. (This is the energy equivalent of 199,000 tons of TNT.)

Please bring your personal safety equipment and your search and rescue tools. When you arrive, please register at the Registration Table. You will receive a packet of Search and Rescue Information. After you receive your packet, please go to the Command Post Area to wait for your assignment. While you are waiting, please look over this information and then put the packet in your car for safe-keeping so you will not lose it. There will be mentors at every station to guide you through each skill.

I am hoping for a big turnout, so everyone will be comfortable with their skills and be prepared to help when they are needed in their neighborhoods or as part of the CERT Search & Rescue Teaching Team. Search and rescue skills are very important in disaster preparedness.

You will need to pre-register so I will have enough training materials. Please pre-register by emailing me at my CERT email address: alsurfcity1@aol.com



Upcoming Events

April 2, 2009-7:00PM: Management Meeting, open to all HB Disaster Service Workers

March 21, 2009 7:45 AM –noon Save-A-Life Class
April 18, 2009 7:45 AM –noon Save-A-Life Class

*To register for classes call 714-536-5974 or online at www.surfcity-hb.org/CERT

* Fire Med customers can take CPR classes for free and non-FireMed customers can take classes for a fee of \$35. Dates are listed below. To enroll in CPR classes, call 800-400-4277.

Wednesday, April 8th from 6:00pm to 9:00pm
Saturday, April 18th from 9:30am to 12:30pm
Wednesday, May 13th from 6:00pm to 9:00pm
Saturday, May 30th from 9:30am to 12:30pm

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Attention!

If you want something placed in the Upcoming Events e-mail Brevyn at bmettler@surfcity-hb.org

Please help save postage, if you can view the newsletter via the internet at www.surfcity-hb.org/CERT
Please call (714) 536-5974 to take your name off the mailing list.



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