

READY...



Volume 4, Issue 4
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An update on Homeland Security in Montcalm County

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A word from the Homeland Security Coordinator

Montcalm County is running at full tilt lately. We have just completed a revision of the Hazard Mitigation Plan and are preparing to submit the document to the state. The NIMS project is winding down with the completion of the 100, 200, 700, and 800 courses. A design team is being formed to plan for the list of exercises that all of us developed in January and to begin preparing for our full scale exercise in August.

In the following pages, you will notice a few articles about Citizen Corps. Montcalm County's Citizen Corps has been expanding. We now have three out of five of the programs active in Montcalm. Very soon I believe we will expand again to four programs with Neighborhood Watch groups coming online.

Thank you to all of our Emergency Operations Center agencies! We have completed our annual revisions of the plan and our annexes. By the end of the month, all books should be updated and plans will have been handed out.

If you have an article that you would like to submit for the READY please email me at pboody@co.montcalm.mi.us. These articles can be emergency services related, a fundraiser that your organization is hosting, or information on what your agency is doing. We would love to hear from you!!



Community Emergency Response Team

Taken from Citizen Corps Website

As part of our continuing series of the Citizen Corps programs, I present to you Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

The Community Emergency Response Team concept was developed and implemented by the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) in 1985. The Whittier Narrows earthquake in 1987 underscored the area-wide threat of a major disaster in California. Further, it confirmed the need for training civilians to meet their immediate needs. As a result, the LAFD created the Disaster Preparedness Division with the purpose of training citizens and private and government employees.

The training program that LAFD initiated makes good sense and furthers the process of citizens understanding their responsibility in preparing for disaster. It also increases their ability to safely help themselves, their family and their neighbors. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recognizes the importance of preparing citizens. The Emergency Management Institute (EMI) and the National Fire Academy adopted and expanded the CERT materials believing them applicable to all hazards.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help. CERT members also are encouraged to support emergency response agencies by taking a more active role in emergency preparedness projects in their community.

How can you become CERT trained? You can be trained by attending one of our regularly scheduled classes. For a list of the classes please contact Jodi Cole at 616-225-1082 or email her at jodi_vista@yahoo.com



Two Roads to Somewhere

By Jerry W. McCoy

Emergency Management in Montcalm County continues to travel a two-lane street as local preparedness efforts share the stage with regional planning and coordination issues. I sit on the Region 6 Governing Board as Montcalm's representative, and am also chairing the regional Exercise Committee.

Pamela Boody is working on groundwork issues for the development of a local plan for a regional response, and is also serving the region as the Regional Planning Coordinator for Newaygo, Ionia, Kent and Montcalm counties. She is uniquely suited to this dual-role position since as the Solution Area Planner (her previous position) she interfaced with planners and emergency managers from many other counties in Region 6. Her involvement with the Region 6 Bioterrorism Committee, the Citizen Corps initiatives, the Red Cross and many other entities and initiatives has provided a good base of experience and knowledge that will continue to help her serve Montcalm and her other counties very well.

I recently held our second Exercise Committee meeting in Wyoming. We received exercise funding requests from all interested jurisdictions in Region 6 and agreed on allocation recommendations for all those jurisdictions. The exercise request for all jurisdictions is \$120,000, significantly less than the nearly \$350,000 originally earmarked by the Regional Board for exercises. Probably most importantly the Exercise Committee agreed to design and conduct another regional exercise. This exercise will hopefully test some of the equipment Region 6 has purchased to enhance local and regional preparedness, as well as the region's ability to stand up an ACC and NEHC on the health and hospital side. We plan to hold the first Exercise Design Committee meeting soon – the tentative date and location is April 4th in Walker.

Locally Montcalm is concentrating on Do 1 Thing, planning for another Terrorism to Tornadoes Summit, completing the Hazard Analysis and continuing our work on pandemic flu planning. Pamela has managed to meet with all of our Annex Heads and updated all of the local Emergency Action Guidelines in preparation for her development of our local plan for a regional response.

Speaking of a "local plan for a regional response", I should mention that the phraseology used at the regional level for the Regional Planners (one of Pamela's positions) has been the development of a "Regional Plan". I have always subscribed to the idea of a regional plan, however I have just as strongly held that the only way this could come to fruition was if each jurisdiction developed its own local plan for a regional response. Once those local plans are developed, the Regional Planning Coordinators (Pamela's other position) can go to work on developing a Regional Response Plan.

And so it goes. Two streets on the emergency management boulevard, each working in parallel and headed for the same location – the best possible level of preparedness for our citizens, both in Montcalm County and in the entire region.

I am grateful for the efforts of those who have helped and continue to be valuable assets in our preparedness efforts. There are many, but a special thanks to Pamela, Jeni Williams, Ron Retzloff, Lynda Farquharson and Steve VanHolstyn (our NIMS instructor – everyone who takes his class *loves* the class!!).



Montcalm MRC Members Travel and Lead

By Denise Hubbard

Deb House was the lucky MRC member who won the draw to serve as Montcalm MRC's representative to the National MRC Conference in Providence, Rhode Island, in April. Deb is anxiously awaiting the trip and looks forward to bringing back lots of ideas for our local team.

Julie Carter is the lucky MRC member who was drawn to attend the State Homeland Security Conference, scheduled for May in Grand Rapids. Julia will also bring back information to share with our local team.

MRC member Ruth Schottle has agreed to serve as the MRC member representative on the Montcalm County Citizen Corps Advisory Council. This group serves as a steering committee of the full Montcalm Citizen Corps Council and provides feedback, direction, and counsel to Montcalm County Citizen Corps programs, including MRC, CERT, and the newly added Fire Corps.

MI Volunteer Registry

By Denise Hubbard

Montcalm MRC and CERT are encouraging all volunteers to register with the MI Volunteer Registry, a statewide database for volunteers who are willing to be part of disaster response. The Registry, at www.mivolunteerregistry.org, provides advance registration of health care and other volunteers that will allow a rapid response of qualified, credentialed volunteers in the event of an emergency.

Volunteers who register on the site agree to be contacted if their area of expertise is needed during a natural or public emergency. Registration does not obligate volunteers to respond during an emergency, but provides information to allow the volunteer to make the best decision in the situation. Volunteers who register on the site will also be notified of training opportunities and exercises.

MRC and CERT volunteers who register on the site will be asked to identify their affiliation with the county program(s) where they are already engaged. This additional information on the state site will allow these volunteers to be activated following the appropriate chain of command for an incident or emergency situation.

S.E.R.T.

Submitted By: Steven D. VanHolstyn

Grain Bin Incident – Montcalm Twp.

February 20th marked a day when several agencies came together in an effort to try and save one life, the life of a 65-year old farmer trapped in a corn silo. At 10:29, Central Dispatch received a frantic 9-1-1 call reporting a subject trapped in a silo. MCES and Montcalm Township Fire were dispatched to the scene. Quick thinking by Dispatcher Amy Thomas, summoned SERT to the same response. Not knowing how tall the silo was or if access could be gained using ground ladders, a call to Greenville Public Safety brought their 95' Platform aerial device to the scene on W. Holland Lake Road west of M-91. Shortly before 11:00, all of these agencies were involved in the difficult task of recovering the victim from his near certain death in a 22'x28' silo filled with 9,000 bushels of corn. While it is not known exactly what happened, it is presumed the victim was in the silo attempting to clear a "bridging" of corn when he fell into a void leading to the near bottom of the silo. Command officials implemented a unified incident command system to address all of their needs including the sheriff's office, Greenville Public Safety, Montcalm Twp. Fire, MCES and even the family, friends and co-workers of the victim. Each agency had something to offer the effort, no one worried about territories or jurisdictions. The task of emptying the silo was hampered because of the closeness of the other silos and where to place the large amount of corn needing to be removed. Rescuers used numerous ladders, rope systems, trench panels, shovels, saws, poles, generators, ventilation systems and cameras to locate and extract the victim. Consideration was given to deploy a cadaver dog in the silo to attempt to pinpoint the victim. Nearly 2 hours after beginning the effort, SERT Rescue Technician Curtis Almas located the victim in the center of the silo and was the victim pronounced dead on scene by MCES paramedics. Although the outcome was tragic and unfortunate, there were lessons learned and challenges to overcome. I must applaud the efforts of all of those involved in the rescue/recovery operation. From the firefighters, paramedics, SERT technicians, police officers, ladies fire auxiliary from Montcalm Twp FD, the area farmers and even the media, who cooperated and honored our requests, they all did a tremendous job in an extraordinary event. This is yet another example of how we all can work together with and for one another.



S.E.R.T.

Submitted By: Steven D. VanHolstyn

AFC Home Evacuation - Lakeview

In January, the Lakeview Fire District invited SERT to a regular meeting to explain the functions and operations of SERT. In the brief 45-minute presentation, no one imagined SERT could be utilized in this manner. The manner? As most of you are aware, either because you were a part of it or heard it on the radio/scanner, LFD responded to a structure fire on Coral Road. Nothing out of the ordinary with that except, when they arrived on scene, the house was fully involved and a nearby adult foster care (AFC) home was in danger. LFD Chief Clark Newell requested the activation of SERT to coordinate the potential evacuation of the residents and clients of the AFC home. Realizing EMS services were already taxed due to this incident and the extreme weather, SERT seemed the logical choice because all of the SERT personnel are medically trained and have the available resources to manage that type of assignment. Hats off to Chief Newell for thinking out of the box and utilizing SERT in such a resourceful way.



Basic Disaster Life Support Certification Class

April 24, 2007 8:00 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

**Holiday Inn Conference Center, Big Rapids, Michigan
Contact: Connie Maxim 616-451-8438 to Register**

This class is designed to introduce emergency preparedness concepts to providers of all levels of Emergency Medical Services. This course provides a strong overview of the different resources available to first responders of all levels in times of disaster. This is a free class, and there are only 100 slots and is open to all levels of EMS. Lecture continuing education credits are as follows:

**2 Operations credits; 1 for CBRNE and 1 for Triage
1 Medical Credit 1 Trauma Credit**

A TEAM RESPONSE

Sgt. Gary Valentine

On February 9, 2007, the Montcalm County Sheriff Department responded to a call of a barricaded subject who had hostages and indicated that he had rigged his residence with explosives. The hostages were the ex-wife and her new boyfriend. This incident started out earlier in the day, but the sheriff department did not receive notification until later in the day when the hostage taker released his ex-wife.

The sheriff department responding officer immediately realized the severity of the situation. Additional manpower was summoned and a command post was established and perimeter set around the residence. The Montcalm County Sheriff Department requested the assistance of the Kent County Sheriff Department's SWAT Team. Upon the arrival of the Kent County Team, they realized that they were going to need additional assistance. They notified the Muskegon County Sheriff Department Swat Team and the Greenville Department of Public Safety Emergency Response Team (SWAT), the Michigan State Police Bomb Squad, local fire department and the Red Cross. The Greenville team has a medical component that includes an Armed Paramedic, a Physicians Assistant (soon to be armed) and an Emergency Room Physician which makes this team one of the few that has all three included into its tactical response matrix.

This incident lasted for several hours and finally the suspect released the remaining hostage. After several more hours of excellent hostage negotiating by Sgt. Bellinger of the Montcalm County Sheriff Department the incident concluded with the suspect surrendering peacefully.

This was the first time that the three tactical teams had worked together in a crisis situation although members of each team have trained together at several different schools.

Thankfully this incident ended peacefully, and was a valuable learning experience for us all. The Greenville team while en-route to the incident experienced a major malfunction with the team's response vehicle (SWAT van: a 1980's era used Montcalm EMS ambulance) and it broke down at the Sand Lake exit. Team members transferred equipment and personnel to a team members trailing pick-up truck. We are now in the process of looking to acquire another truck of some type, but as with everyone all budgets are tight.

All of the teams realized that with the extreme cold temperatures that we experienced that night, none of the teams had enough cold weather gear. All teams need to upgrade their equipment.

The Greenville team is in the process of evaluating incorporating Montcalm County SERT team into its response matrix as an unarmed element that could provide valuable assistance in such things as traffic control, medical assistance, communications, Haz-Mat assistance as well as other areas still undetermined. This is still under review, but has valuable potential.

One big valuable lesson that we all proved that night was that the system works. This was an excellent example of an emergency situation were a single Incident Command was established that soon progressed to a Unified Incident Command. Some of us had never worked together. On this incident, all of the responders worked together like a well oiled machine. With all of our training in the Incident Command System and Unified Incident Command this incident proved that training pays dividends.

As Richard Marcinco stated (SEAL Team 6), *it is better to sweat in training than bleed in combat.*

What's Blazin'

Submitted By: Steven D. VanHolstyn

The next Firemen's Association meeting is scheduled for May at Greenville Public Safety beginning at 7:00pm. The meeting will be held at Greenville Central Services Facility. Please plan on attending as these meetings are held for the firefighters to learn about new and innovative training.

The County Fire Chiefs will meet again on Wednesday, April 18, 2007 at the Stanton City Hall beginning at 7:00pm. Please send an appropriate representative, if a Chief Officer is unable to attend. West Michigan Chiefs are officially on the agenda to discuss topics such as Cost Recovery.

Stanton Fire Department held a FREE 6-hour state certified (OFFTC) Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior on Sunday, March 11. Leo Evans from the DNR instructed the 29 students and some good information was shared between departments as well.

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) should be releasing the Program Guidelines very soon. A few Chiefs attended the DHS Workshop in Midland last month and there was some interesting and helpful information presented. The biggest suggestion was to read the Program Guideline carefully; the panel review uses these intensely. If you don't follow them, your application will be rejected.

Are you ready for wildfires? Make sure to get your equipment ready, review your local protocols and procedures for fighting these potentially dangerous fires. Conduct a risk/benefit analysis on your incident; typically, the only thing that we are losing on these types of incidents is nature. Is it what we are doing worth the risk? Call for help early.

Last month, I mentioned the need for us to slow down and stop at intersections as a result of a Detroit firefighter losing his life and others being seriously injured. Well, it happened again, this time in Chicago. The same thing happened, the Engineer ran a red light and struck a school bus killing the firefighter and injuring three (3) more. We became firefighters because we want to help people and protect life and property. We can't do this if we keep killing ourselves on the way to the fire. STOP and BUCKLE UP!!

On a personal note, I want to say thank you and best wishes to a man who has given so much time and energy to a community he holds very close to his heart. Greenville Department of Public Safety Director Bruce Schnepf has resigned from his position this year. Director Schnepf has seen this county grow from a small rural community to an increasingly populated suburb of Grand Rapids. We are better prepared to care for our communities through some of his efforts in Montcalm County. I personally was involved with some of those changes, as were some of you. We wish him well and thank him for his dedication and commitment to the emergency services communities of Greenville and Montcalm County.

If you have any questions, I can be reached at mcert1@yahoo.com or call me at 616.835.3243.

Wilderness Search & Rescue Search Manager Course (SARM)

Sponsored by: Kent County Search and Rescue
www.kcraces.net

Presented by: Anthony Marzano, Division Chief, Will County Illinois EMA

Topics Include:
Search Management
Resource Management
Incident Command Issues
Search Planning

Course Meets or Exceeds NFPA & NIMS requirements for Wilderness SAR

Dates / Times / Pre-Requirements:

Pre Requisite Search and Rescue Operations Lecture: Friday October 26th 6-10 PM
(Only if you have not taken SAR Op's lecture)
Should also have understanding of Incident Command System (FEMA IS-100 & IS-200 or MI
UIC)

Search Management Class Session 1: Saturday October 27th 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Search Management Class Session 2: Sunday October 28th 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Lunch and Snacks included in cost!!


Location:
Kent County Sheriffs Department EOC Room
701 Ball Ave NE 49503
www.kcraces.net/kcsd - Google Map to location

Cost (includes meals during class):
\$65.00
Payable date of class limit 30 participants
Reservation Required by February 10th 2007


Lodging Information:
Grand Inn - 3221 Plainfield Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI (616) 363-0800 – K9 Friendly!!

-Make sure to tell them you are scheduling for the Search and Rescue Training!!-Ask for the Corporate Rate! (65.00 Per night, extra if you bring K9)

April

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 CHEP Mtg. Region 6 Exercise Design Committee	5 Pandemic Flu Mtg. Regional Interoperable Comm. Committee	6	7
8 	9 Regional Planning Mtg. Regional Training Mtg.	10 Regional Law Enforcement Committee Citizen Corps Mtg.	11 Region 6 Governing Board and Bio Defense Board Joint Mtg.	12 Pandemic Flu Coordinating Committee EMAC Do 1 Thing Mtg.	13	14
15	16 Regional Coordinator's Mtg.	17 MEMA Mtg.	18 Regional Citizen Corps Mtg.	19 Region 6 Bio Defense Mtg.	20	21
22	23 Region 6 Governing Board Mtg.	24 BDLS Class in Big Rapids	25	26	27	28
29	30					

May

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
		1 Summit Mtg.	2 LPT Mtg.	3 Regional Interoperable Comm. Committee	4	5
6	7	8 Regional Law Enforcement Committee Homeland Security Conference	9 Homeland Security Conference	10 Homeland Security Conference	11 Homeland Security Conference	12
13	14 Regional Planning Mtg. Regional Training Mtg.	15 MEMA	16 Regional Citizen Corps Mtg.	17 Region 6 Bio Defense Mtg.	18	19
20	21 Region 6 Governing Board Mtg.	22	23	24	25	26
27	28 	29	30	31		