



**From The Editor**  
**Frank Lucier, NAEM, Inc.**

**Winter 1999**  
**Volume 1**  
**Edition 1**

The Connection newsletter is comprised of articles from around the Country and written by the people who are involved in community preparedness on a daily basis. This first edition is a sampling of the programs that are currently taking place. There are community programs in other location across the Country, and around the world. We hope to adding more in the near future. While the training programs take many names, we will refer to them all as CERTs (Community Emergency Response Teams), the name accepted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Some states have many programs currently taking place. There are hundreds of programs throughout California and almost as many in Florida. This is not surprising after examining the history of disasters in those states. But there are many other areas of the Country where, after evaluating there disaster potential, have aggressively developed community disaster response programs. In Utah, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, Missouri, Colorado, Kansas and all across the Southern States communities are embracing these types of programs. *Continued on page 9*



### **C.E.R.T. Conference at EMI**

**Sam Isenberger,**  
**FEMA's Emergency Management Institute**

On August 31st, a great group of folks from around the country gathered at FEMA's Emergency Management Institute to talk about emergency response training for civilians. During this Community Emergency Response Team conference in Emmitsburg, Maryland, presenters shared their successes, challenges, and lessons learned. Discussions included: civilians responding to the Northridge earthquake, making effective classroom presentation, developing newsletters, conducting focus groups, creating public/private partnerships, maintaining teams, conducting final exercises, and applying moulage.

Another benefit of this conference was hearing how quickly the concept of training community members to prepare for and respond to hazards is growing. From its beginning in Los Angeles and Sunnysvale, today, tens of thousands of people have gone through training and are better prepare to care for themselves, their families and neighbors. Presenters and participants, alike, ex-

pressed the belief that they were making a difference in their community's readiness. Another strong feeling that came across was that those involved in training received as much from the participants as they gave. Community members attending their local training programs expressed appreciation to the instructors and agencies for taking the time and caring enough to help them help themselves. One gets the sense that the sponsoring agencies not only have trained a community member but also made a friend.

During the conference, a couple of initiatives were discussed. One was the "Connection" which you are reading. This is a great vehicle to share information and reach a wide audience. Another was facilitating the networking among CERT programs. To do this, we have started a "CERT Directory by State" on the FEMA website which is located at <http://www.fema.gov/emi/cert/>. Agencies that sponsor emergency response training for community and business members are asked to list information about their program.

Page 2  
 Keeping CERT Programs on Track

Page 3  
 LA HEART Program

Page 4  
 Hurricane Help!

Memphis Airport Prepares

Page 5  
 Community Disaster Response

Page 7  
 CERTs...Bigger than Disaster Response

Page 8  
 Kansas CERT and Building Collapse

Page 9  
 Hurricane NORA Threatens

Page 10  
 What's an "East Coast CERT"?

Page 11  
 BayNET...Are we Selfish?

Page 12  
 Washington Conference Includes CERT

Expanding the Jean Pool

Page 13  
 Using CERT in Schools

Page 14  
 Handshake of 1998

*Continued on page 13*



**The  
Connection  
is part of  
NI/USR's  
Vision 2000.**

**It is intended  
to support  
community  
disaster  
preparedness  
efforts  
through the  
sharing of  
Information and  
ideas.**

**For more  
information  
[http://  
www.niusr.org](http://www.niusr.org)**

**Lois Clark McCoy,  
President**

**National  
Institute for Urban  
Search & Rescue**

**PO Box 90909,  
Santa Barbara,  
CA 93190**

**Voice:  
805-569-5066**

**Fax:  
805-966-6178**

## Keeping CERT Programs on Track

Rachel Jackey, Community Emergency Services Manager, Portland (OR) Fire Bureau

“Keeping CERT programs on track” That reminds me of a conversation with a CERT coordinator from another city who had just completed a second round of the basic training for their volunteers. “It’s a great program,” he said. only problem is, I’m already working at full tilt and I’ve just seen the light at the end of the tunnel...it’s a train heading straight for me.”

The basic I training course he was talking about tends to be where we all get stumped with Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT’s NERT’s NET’s, BET’s, BURT’s, you name it). The FEMA material covers all the essential skills a CERT needs and, with a bit of tailoring, to address local hazards and communities, it works, well. It’s a great *training course*.

The challenge for CERT program staff is that the basic training course itself is not the program. The additional work to develop and maintain a program is the oncoming train most of us face as soon as we start to offer the basic course. And let’s face it, that course also represents the initial investment in CERT volunteers that could evaporate fairly quickly. Once participants have completed their basic training, they tend to need other kinds of assistance to stay actively involved. Addressing those needs makes up most of the day-to-day work we all have to do to maintain the volunteers, and ultimately, to build the program.

Let’s say we’ve connected with a critical mass of citizens. A critical mass means enough people to provide useful feedback during the initial round of training, to help spread the word among their friends and acquaintances, and to impress “the powers that be” that the community is interested in CERT training. The experience of most CERT program coordinators is that it’s not too hard to get that critical mass, but what does it take to develop, maintain and grow a program?

The answers to that question probably vary with every CERT program, but there are some basic, elements of program management that seem to be critical for all us.

### Keeping track of all the volunteers

Most CERT programs use a database to keep track of all the citizens who take the training. Maintaining the database is time consuming, but it is a good investment. Depending on how the database is set up, it can be used to easily generate a wide range of up-to-date documents.

Sets of mailing labels—for the entire list of program participants, for a single, team, for the program participants who live in a single fire station’s service area, for program participants who are also medical professionals, etc.

Team rosters, which can be easily updated every time a new group completes the basic training. Up-to-date rosters are a pretty important tool for team leaders, fire station captains, or anyone who needs a reliable list for contacting program participants.

Statistical reports to interested parties (e.g., elected officials) about the numbers, growth, and activity of participants in different parts of the city.

Most CERT coordinators would strongly urge that the database get set tip with the very first round of training. Otherwise, you can end up with literally hundreds of names and all the associated data to enter. Playing catch-up is tough!

### Ongoing Personal Contact with Program Participants

Most of us have some kind of program newsletter to keep CERT members informed of upcoming events and what teams around town are doing. The newsletter is an important tool for maintaining and building the program. If you offer drills, refresher classes, and other events of interest to program participants, a newsletter can also be an economical alternative to all the individual flyers and announcements you’d otherwise send out. What a newsletter can not provide, however, is a timely response to day-to-day questions and concerns of team members. The fact is, the really active program participants, the folks who recruit new trainees and work on getting their team organized—need really active attention.

Most CERT program coordinators would probably tell you that the volume of phone calls from active volunteers is something of a dilemma: We wouldn’t want to eliminate these calls, even if we could; however, it’s hard to return the calls in a timely manner. There is no solution outside of adding and training more staff, but there is a simple practice that can help with the dilemma: pre-printed “tip sheets” that can be mailed to callers rather than spending a lot of time on the phone. A hard copy version of the information also provides them with an easy way to pass this information along to other members of their team. Some examples of “tip sheets” that provide quick response to typical phone call inquiries are:

*Continued on page 3*

- Next Steps in Organizing Your Team
- Generic job descriptions for team mgt. structure
- Check list for Team Leader
- Team emergency kit list

### Maintaining Trainers

Some staff believe that overall CERT program quality is most affected by the quality of the trainers. All of us would probably put great trainers among our top priorities. On a day-to-day basis, how do we maintain and build the corps of trainers? Here are some of the ideas from programs around the country:

“Provide CERT trainers with periodic evaluations. Formal feedback is motivating. It identifies their strengths and areas for improvement, and, just as important, helps to legitimize the work they do with the citizens.”

“Trainer burn-out is a real challenge. We try to get experts on each of the topics, but we also try to rotate the good trainers so they’re not always conducting the same units of the course.”



“We try to provide formal recognition of the trainers by the program participants, and by the trainers peers and supervisors. For the

trainers, this recognition seems to be as much of a motivation as the pay they receive.”

“The trainers seem to appreciate opportunities to help shape the overall program. For example, we get together with all the trainers once a year and management buys the pizza. We review program accomplishments, discuss possible revisions and new topics for advanced classes.”

This quick overview hardly scratches the surface of all it takes to maintain and build a CERT program. There’s also motivating citizens, winning over elected officials, developing resources, etc.. Then there is the occasional challenge of keeping ourselves motivated. And then there is the not small issue of getting people to participate in the program in the first place. Hopefully all of these issues, and many more, can be explored further in this publication, on the FEMA CERT website and at further conferences like the one at EMI last fall.

## The Los Angeles H.E.A.R.T. Program

### Stacy Grilich, LA City Fire Department

The Los Angeles Fire Department has a tremendously successful program known as CERT. (Community Emergency Response Team Training). The program started back in 1987. Originally there were twenty-five citizens trained from a neighborhood watch community. That program was such a success that the training continued to present. We have approximately 27,000 people trained in the City of Los Angeles.

The CERT program is a seven-week program that consists of seven classes. Each class is 2 1/2 hours in length that meets one day a week. The Disaster Preparedness Unit is responsible for the training. There are eight instructors who teach the classes on a year round basis. The instructors are divided into two teams, North and South. The classes we taught in all areas of the city.

Along with the CERT classes, the Los Angeles Fire Department offers CPR training. The program is known as HART (Heart Attack Rescue Training). This program has been primarily directed at high school students. The goals and objectives are as follows

#### GOALS

1. Save lives
2. Improve students’ self-esteem
3. Inspire students to seek careers in the Fire Service, Law Enforcement, or medical field

#### OBJECTIVES

1. Provide high school students with the knowledge and skills necessary in an emergency to: Call for Help and Help Keep Someone Alive
2. Provide information on how to reduce the risk of heart attacks and strokes
3. Promote the Fire and Police Department personnel as good role models
4. Provide Adult CPR training to- Business and Industry, School and Church Organizations, Neighborhood Block Clubs, Apartment and Condominium Associations.



*The Connection newsletter has been edited and formatted by North American Emergency Management as a pro-bono effort to support and encourage community preparedness programs.*

*All articles are the thoughts, ideas and experiences of the authors and not that of NI/USR or NAEM, unless specifically stated.*

*Please submit articles to:*

*Frank Lucier  
Editor*

*1325 Iola Ave. West  
Suite 211  
Napa, CA  
94559*

*Voice:  
415-527-6482*

*e-mail:*

*fjlucier@naem.com*

*URL: <http://www.naem.com>*

*Articles may be e-mailed or sent on an IBM formatted disk.*

*The Connection is under no obligation to publish all materials received, and submitted materials may be subject to editing for style, content and length.*

*The Connection may be copied and distributed without prior permission to all who have an interest in disaster preparedness.*

## Hurricane Help!

**Charlie Johnson, Fire Chief, Cape Coral, Florida**

CAPE CORAL, FLORIDA: September 23, 1998; As Hurricane George was making it's killer path through the Caribbean, the City of Cape Coral was preparing for what forecasters had predicted would be the worst hurricane to hit South West Florida since Hurricane Donna in 1962.

Fire Chief/Emergency Management Director Charlie Johnson along with City Manager Steve Daugnault opened the emergency operations center with a practical staff as the city began to implement it's newly revised Emergency Management Plan. One of the issues facing the city was an overload of the 911 Public Safety Dispatch Center with calls for general information. Although the Lee County (FL) already had a fully staffed and functioning hotline, calls to 911 began to swell.

Quick action on the part of the City Manager and Fire Chief to overcome this issue by setting up the city's own "emergency information hotline". As the city phone technical worked to establish the emergency telephone bank and the City's PIO worked with the county Emergency Operations Center to coordinate information, the Fire Chief and his staff looked for ways to staff the newly established hotline.

During 1997 and 1998 the City of Cape Coral Fire/Rescue and Emergency Management Services had trained approximately 85 citizens in a program called Citizens Emergency Response Teams (CERT). These teams were trained to organize their neighborhoods and take limited emergency response action in the aftermath of a natural or man-made disaster. The program was new to



the community, as it only been established in October of 1997. This meant the program managers and the citizen members had no opportunity to exercise the CERT teams on a large scale. process. Knowing the program, seeing the students preform their role during small mock disasters at the end of each class, Chief Johnson knew these citizens had the potential to handle this task and did not hesitate to put out the call for Citizen Emergency Response Team volunteers to staff the "EMERGENCY INFORMATION HOTLINE" for Cape

Coral. With CERT members staffing the phones along with their Fire/Rescue CERT instructors serving as team leaders, one thousand six hundred fifty calls for service were satisfactorily handled over a 36 hour period. The volunteers worked shifts around the clock to make the hotline a success.

The City of Cape Coral and South West Florida was spared the full wrath the Hurricane George delivered further north. Still, knowing the potential of such a storm the City was well prepared and the proactive approach that had been taken by the City leaders paid off.

Likewise the Citizen Emergency Response Teams were prepared, ready and willing to lend a hand. Their actions displayed in response to this emergency has given the program the credibility within the community that it deserves and the city leaders have taken notice of these constituents by preparing personalized thank you letters from the Mayor, City Manager and Fire Chief.

The CERT program fits any community and works through most any disaster. The most important thing the training provides is confidence in one's self that they can "survive" a disaster and help others do the same.

## Memphis International Airport Prepares for a Natural Disaster

**David S. Washington, Director of CERT Development**

In the event of a major natural disaster that immobilizes the City of Memphis, passengers at Memphis International Airport can rest assured that help is on the way.

This is due to the formation of the Airport's Community Emergency Response Team, (CERT). Memphis lies along the fault line of the New Madrid, Missouri fault. During the winter of 1811 and 1812, a series of three magnitude-8 earthquakes struck the region. These earthquakes were so violent that they caused church bells to ring in Boston, Massachusetts and the Mississippi River flowed backwards for three days creating the 10 square mile, Reelfoot Lake. Scientists predict that there is a 90 percent chance of a magnitude 6 to 7 earthquake occurring in the New Madrid Seismic Zone in the next 50 years. In response to this threat and the possibility of widespread loss of life.

Memphis requested volunteers to begin training. After eight weeks of extensive training, Memphis International Airport graduated its first CERT team, Airport CERT Team One, on June 1, 1998. Airport CERT members undergo an additional training week because of the unique glass architectural design of the terminal building complex and the potential injury hazard of this design.

Airport CERT members are volunteers from all technical fields employed by the Airport Authority, airfield and building maintenance, clerical and management personnel. Team members are equipped with the standard issue of CERT supplies such as, helmet, vest, goggles, gloves, and an emergency response carryall bag. Also strategically placed around the aircraft parking apron are metal emergency storage boxes filled with additional medical supplies, tools, food, and water.

## Community Disaster Response

### Frank Lucier, Retired, San Francisco Fire Dept. Currently a Principal with NAEM, Inc.

Community disaster response is certainly not a new concept. The history of our Country's pioneers is filled with stories of neighbors helping neighbors and communities banding together in the face of adverse conditions. More recently the Civil Defense system was created during World War II to respond to the effects of a bombing raid on this country. Local volunteers were used as neighborhood ward captains and a pocket manual was produced outlining basic emergency skills and response procedures.

Following a major earthquake in the Los Angeles area in the mid 1980s, a group of Los Angeles city officials visited Japan to observe first hand an exercise of a neighborhood based response program that was taking place in Tokyo. They were so impressed by what they saw, that following their return, a program was created by the Los Angeles City Fire Department to train citizens in basic disaster skills. This program was developed under the direction of Chief Frank Borden.



In 1989, the city of San Francisco and the surrounding communities suffered a devastating 7.2 Richter event, the Loma Prieta earthquake. It became very clear to the Fire Department that night that the help of civilians would be needed, if we were to successfully respond to all the emergencies that arose. While the citizens were to help, we quickly discovered they had few disaster skills. We realized that the people on the scene when a disaster happened, whether an earthquake, storm or terrorist activity, were the first responders and in a major event the only responders for possible long periods of time. We felt it our duty to follow Los Angeles Fire Departments lead and develop a community disaster training program.

We researched the Los Angeles program and in 1990 developed our own program and began training the citizens of San Francisco in the Neighborhood Emergency Response Team training program. I developed and directed this program for the first seven years in which time we trained over 7,000 people from neighborhoods and local businesses. The San Francisco program has become a model from which many other cities are drawing ideas and structure.

The concept of community disaster preparedness has spread since Los Angeles first developed their program back in 1985. Today, FEMA's Emergency Management Institute offers train-the-trainer classes in Community Emergency Response Team training or CERT at a national level. There are community programs being conducted all across the country, each geographic area modifying the curriculum to meet the natural disasters that they face. No longer does the program deal strictly with earthquakes but with flooding and storms also.

### The Training

The target audiences for the training are community groups and businesses. The skills taught in the classes does not differ from group to group but the response responsibility does. The training is a combination of classroom type instruction as well as, hands-on skills training and exercises. The training presumes no prior knowledge of disaster preparedness or response skills and is easily manageable by all the participants. The courses are conducted over a six week period and graduates that attend each session receive a hard hat, identification vest and a certificate of completion. The instruct is normally done at a neighborhood school or at the business and is taught by members of the San Francisco Fire Department. An outline of the training my be found at <http://www.slip.net/~nertsffd/index.html>.

### Organizational Structure

In the event of a major disaster, the disaster management for City of San Francisco decentralizes into what are called Emergency Response Districts or ERDs. There are ten ERDs in the City, each having the geographic boundaries of the ten Fire Battalion district. In this decentralized mode the fire Battalion Chief is responsible for all tactical disaster response and management issues within that ERD. These battalion chiefs or ERD leaders report to the Office of Emergency Services where the city department heads and their operational people gather to make overhead decisions and to support the tactical response of the ERDs.

Within each ERD there may be several NERT neighborhood and business team. Each of these teams has its own staging area or place where team members gather to make decisions on actions to take and assist teams in mitigating disaster events. Each team can work independently of each other and independently from Fire Department directions. The first actions the team take is to form a command structure for operations, or Neighborhood Command. This is a basic form of the Incident Command System (ICS) with sections for command, logistics, operations, intelligence and administration. Being a modular system it can grow or contract as needed. The Neighborhood Command exist to support activities in the neighborhood and make decisions that will do "the most good for the most people". The incidents

*Continued on page 6*

*Community Disaster Response...Continued from page 5*

that are beyond the scope of training, collapsed buildings, major fires, hazardous materials spills are immediately reported to the ERD.

There are redundancies built into the NERT communication system. The first choice for communications is the telephone. This may not always be possible because of the amount of phone traffic following a major disaster or the possibility of the system being overloaded by telephone receivers being knocked off the hook by the quake. As a backup form of communications every NERT team has at least one HAM radio operator equipped with a portable HAM radio. The NERT organization also installed HAM radios in each of the ERD fire stations with a base station installed at the Office of Emergency Services. Thus the NERT teams are able to communicate with each other, with the ERD and when necessary with the Office of Emergency Services. If all other systems fail, the NERT teams will default to using written messages and runners to communicate.

To test this system of response and communications, two drills are conducted each year. The spring drill focuses on skills, team building and internal communications. Trained NERTs are brought to a central location, usually a school or other large building with multiple rooms. There is some skills refreshing such as disaster medicine, search and rescue and lifting heavy objects. Then the group is divided into neighborhood teams and these teams are put through several disaster scenarios. The intent of this drill is to have the people practice their skills and inter-team communications in a simulated disaster setting.

The fall drill is a decentralized exercise where each neighborhood team designs their own drill scenario and practices skills at their neighborhood staging area. We also practice the disaster HAM radio net by scripting messages that are sent from the staging area to the Battalion command to the OES.

### **Putting It All Together**

In the event of a real disaster such as a major earthquake, this system of community disaster response operates at different levels. The first level of operation is at the area where the damage is most severe and people are injured and trapped. The individual NERT's will be the true first responders since they will already be on the scene (this is where they live or work) when the event happens. In individual or group effort, they will or-



organize convergent volunteers into teams and direct them in assisting the injured, searching for missing or trapped people, or what ever needs to be done. While they are conducting these lifesaving operations, they are also making notes of the major incidents (large fires, building collapses, natural gas leaks) and sending this information, along with team operational information and needs, to their neighborhood staging area.

A second level of operations happens at the staging area. There, other NERTs are arriving from less damaged areas of the neighborhood and are forming an Neighborhood Command unit, using ICS, to assist activities in the neighborhood, and to communicate with the ERD. The teams in the field are communicating with the Neighborhood Command by use of HAM radios, or if none are available, by written message and runner.

At the staging area the Neighborhood Command unit is gathering supplies that may be needed by the teams and by themselves, are organizing convergent volunteers to assist the teams in the neighborhood as needed, and communicating major incidents, as well as neighborhood status, to the ERD. All of this can work without direction or control of the Fire Department and it is designed to work this way. The response to a major disaster



event will be spontaneous and it is really the first critical hour that community teams can be most effective.

At the ERD the Battalion Command dispatches professional emergency response workers to the site of major incidents as well as communicating this information to

the Emergency Operations Center at the Office of Emergency Services. The EOC has been designed to support all field operations. They are capable of moving resources and staffing from less affected areas to the impacted areas of the City, as well as request additional resources and staffing from the State and Federal Government.

This process of community response is at the core of new the Emergency Operations Plan for the City of San Francisco. They will be first on the scene to assist injured people, they will assist the professional rescuers when needed, and they will communicate major damage to the ERD so they will be a major source of intelligence for the City.

History has shown us that first responders to sudden on set disasters such as earthquakes are always the people on the scene immediately before the event occurs. They are by definition the first responders. This system of training and response attempts to give these first responders skills to make them more effective and a support system to assist them.

*Frank Lucier is a retired Lieutenant from the San Francisco Fire Department. He was the Program Coordinator for the NERT Program from its inception in 1990 until 1997. He is currently on the Executive Board for NI/USR, president of North American Emergency Management and editor of The Connection.*

## CERTs...Bigger than Disaster Response!

Rachel Jacky, Community Emergency Services Manager, Portland (OR) Fire Bureau

All around the United States, fire departments, emergency management professionals and some law enforcement agencies are getting on board with community emergency response team training. We've got CERTs, NERTs (Neighborhood Emergency Response Teams), NETs (Neighborhood Emergency Teams), BETs (Business Emergency Teams), and the list of acronyms continues to grow. All of our programs have a lot in common—primarily the belief that the community's ability to respond immediately after a disaster is essential for effective emergency management. Our various programs also use the same basic curriculum to train civilian response teams and rely on community-minded volunteers who make the time to get trained and organize teams. And we also share the sometimes overwhelming need for ways to keep those volunteers engaged in the program. This need for volunteer maintenance can be turned into an asset of sorts, particularly when CERTs are regarded as a critical resource for disaster response *and more!*

In Portland, the Fire Bureau has been training Neighborhood Emergency Teams (NETs) and Business Emergency Teams for four years. Nearly 650 citizens in our city of 500,000 have joined together to organize 85 NETs. We're only about a third of the way to our goal of a Team of 20 people in each of the city's 95 neighborhoods. Even so, the Fire Bureau has already activated the NETs twice—during a major winter storm in 1995 and the federally declared flood in the spring of 1996. A number of the NETs also self-activated during an ice storm in the winter of 1996.

Even given Team activation during these regional emergencies, let's face it—it's a long time between disasters (especially waiting for the big earthquake that's due any time in the Pacific Northwest). Of course we wouldn't want these events to occur more frequently, but how do you keep the Teams active and engaged when nothing's going on?

Newsletters, advanced training, drills, and exercises seem to help in keeping volunteers engaged in many CERT programs around the country. We've also started looking beyond disaster response at a wider range of Team activities. Here's a sampler from Portland:

**NET Smoke Detector Squad:** The Fire Bureau's Public Education Office provides additional training for NET members on how to install smoke detectors and answer basic fire and life safety questions. When a homeowner calls the "Smoke Detector Hotline" in PEO, the call is referred to the NET volunteers in that area who install the detector within seven days.

**Medical standby at community events:** At neighborhood fairs and parades, NET members staff the first aid booth. At the Rose Festival parade (a major event which attracts thousands of people), six units of NET members work with two para-

medic squads to provide medical coverage along the entire parade route.

**Disaster Preparedness Speakers Bureau:** Team members attend PTA, neighborhood association, and service club meetings in their own areas to present information on household preparedness and NET/BET training. The Fire Bureau provides flyers, maps, and display boards.

**"Victims" in exercises for Fire Bureau personnel:** Given their training and the exercises they've been through, NET members know how to act as victims. It's simple to recruit them for an MCI exercise, for example, and their performance makes it a better exercise for the firefighters.

**Community safety fairs:** Fire station personnel are frequently asked to attend community safety fairs. They often enlist the help of local NET members to coordinate with the neighborhood groups and to provide coverage at the Fire Bureau display if the company has an emergency run during the event. This connection and familiarity between the NETs and the crew at their local fire station can contribute to smoother operations during disaster response, too.

**NET Exercise Swaps:** It seems that the NETs are always interested in refreshing their skills with an exercise, and exercises staged in the Teams' own neighborhoods are ideal. Such exercises are also very time-consuming. "Swaps" allow us to stage more of these events by pairing up two Teams who design, conduct and evaluate neighborhood exercises for each other. The Teams seem to get almost as much out of designing and conducting an exercise as they get from going through an exercise.

All of these projects and activities help keep the volunteers on board. They strengthen individual commitment and team cohesion. But it's worth noting that these expanded Team functions provide a number of other significant benefits:

- With their focus on fire and life safety, these activities *increase public safety*.
- They *raise public awareness of the Teams* and become good opportunities to recruit new program participants.
- Rather than creating more work for Fire Bureau employees, some of these volunteer activities *reduce the workload of NET/BET program staff*.
- Expanding the role of the NETs means that we're capitalizing on our investment in the Teams. This makes sense politically and *creates more credibility with our funders*.

We were happy to join EMI and CERT programs around the country in thinking "outside the box" about training citizens for disaster response. Now we're trying to think creatively about how to sustain what we've started. If you've got any thoughts, please pass them along to [The Connection](#). We can all use more good ideas!

## Kansas C.E.R.T. and Building Collapse

### Bill Schneider, Olathe Fire Department

“911, what is your emergency?” “There’s been a terrible accident in my neighborhood!” the frantic voice screamed into the receiver. “Describe the incident and where exactly are you?” the dispatcher replies. “I’m across the street at First and Main. There was a blast in the 1200 block of Main and the houses are just falling apart! There are people bleeding everywhere! Please send help!” the caller tries to describe as the shockwave is still blowing through the heavily crowded and debris laded streets.

Unfortunately, this scenario has been heard before in various countries and in different languages, but the end result is the same—buildings have collapsed and you are now the first on scene and you are in charge to handle it.

This does not occur everyday but “what if” it happened in your neighborhood? Could you be ready to handle such an incident? Does your emergency services department have the capabilities and training to implement a plan for what will certainly be a long and arduous task of search and rescue? For years there have been situations that have mirrored this scenario and each one has presented various challenges to the first responder. If this happened in your neighborhood YOU, of course, will be the one to start the ball rolling, and quite often the way that the incident unfolds from the beginning will dictate how well the incident progresses.

Let’s go over some of the basics before we get too technical.

#### Have a Plan

Utilize the 5 stages of incident management at the rescue scene of a building collapse.

*Stage 1-The incident has occurred and prior to your arrival there are spontaneous rescues taking place by victims, bystanders, or CERT members.* Upon your arrival you size up, establish the Incident Management System, recon, meet with other CERT members, and remove any surface casualties. Remember to place your triage area away from any hazards and try to treat the injured to the best of your capabilities. Identify and control, if possible, any electrical, gas, or fire hazards. Security to the site should be coordinated with local law enforcement if possible.

*Stage 2-Explore and identify any of the likely survival places.* Try to get some feedback from victims, spontaneous rescuers, and note where some technical searches may be located i.e., external, internal, below grade or above grade. If there is a debris pile try the rescuer hailing systems (Rescuers lying on the pile in a circle pattern yelling into the pile to determine the whereabouts of possible victims). Light to moderate debris removal will need to be implemented and some light breaching and/or shoring may also take place. Breaching, shoring, and lifting heavy objects are some techniques that can assist you greatly, but if you have not been trained properly please don’t attempt it. It would be to your

advantage to estimate how many people were in the structure prior to the collapse and to evaluate if there is a need for any other resources i.e. city, county, state, or federal help. Remember that this is a highly dangerous time for the rescuer and risks should be calculated and evaluated!

This is where prior preplanning on your part can help the most. Try to locate resources within your neighborhood or community that can assist you prior to the rescue. The best people to contact onsite



would be someone from the maintenance division if a commercial structure were involved. They know the “IN’s and OUT’s” of the building like the back of their hand.

Identify what type of collapse has happened—pancake, lean to, cantilever, V-shape, or A-shape. Try to determine the best method to mitigate the structural hazard and upon arrival of the Fire Department or Emergency Services relay any of the pertinent information.

Do you avoid it, remove it, lift it, breach it, or shore it?

*Stage 3-Selected debris removal.* At this stage you are now implying that what can be done with your people resources should be replaced by heavy equipment. Back hoes, bulldozers, cranes, front loaders, and other equipment should be brought in to systemically de-layer and reduce the size of the hazard. In Haysville, Kansas a huge vacuum was brought in to remove grain that had filled tunnels where victims were thought to be. **This stage should only be handled by advanced technical rescue personnel!** The CERT member can be of great assistance to the Incident Commander being runners, site coordinators, security, etc.

*Stage 4-General debris removal.* The ultimate factors here is that it has been determined that there are no more viable victims to be rescued. The structure must be demolished and bodies should be

*Kansas CERT and Building Collapse...Continued from page 8*

sorted from the debris and removed.

*Stage 5-Post incident review.* It would be recommended that each jurisdiction, agency, CERT group hold their own review as well as having a review for all of the agencies that responded. Areas to be covered should include but are not limited to: What was your assignment? What did you do and how did you do it? How could we improve if we had to do it all over again? What did we learn from the experience?

There should be made available to each rescuer some type of stress management program.

These stages are only guidelines to help you through an incident that probably won't ever



occur in "your neck of the woods". Ultimately, we must realize that even if you don't have the training, or the fancy technical rescue resources, that the burden of handling this incident will be placed on your Com-

munity Emergency Response Team and/or your Emergency Services Department. Through prior training, preplanning, and resource allocation you should be able to function as a team and make a difference in the end. **Be prepared, work as a group, and stay safe!**

*About the author: Bill Schneider has 16 years of fire service experience and is currently a Fire Apparatus Operator for the Olathe Fire Department in Kansas. He is an adjunct instructor on Technical Rescue for the University of Kansas and the University of Missouri Fire Service Training Divisions. In 1997 he was appointed as a Rescue Team Manager with the FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Team (MOTF-1) out of Boone County, MO. He is also a certified EMT, HazMat Technician, and instructor on CERT.*

### From The Editor *Continued from page 1*

The basis of all these programs is the concept of training community people in basic disaster skills, something that most of us have forgotten since the pioneer days. Then building on these skills to develop a disaster response system within the community. The skills taught in programs across the country don't differ much. They are basic skills that are commonly used following most types of disasters. The response system does differ because of the type of disaster the community faces, the commitment of the local government to support the program, and the vision and creativity of the person overseeing the CERT program.

The intent of *The Connection* is to give a voice to community preparedness. We anticipate a semiannual editions of this newsletter and

## Hurricane Nora Threatens Michael L. Browning, Fire Marshal, Mohave Valley, Arizona

Mohave County Arizona: In the fall of 1997 Hurricane Nora threatened many of Arizona's rural counties. Within hours, many of Mohave County's Emergency Services were preparing for the onslaught of a major hurricane which could bring heavy rains to the dry southwestern deserts.

Many of Mohave County's small communities have volunteer fire services, which are very limited in local resources. Many of these small communities rely on each other for help during emergencies and with the threat of heavy rains, could be cut off from each other for several hours if not days. With Noras arrival, little damage was reported from emergency services throughout the county. Other parts of Arizona received more than 4 inches of rain overnight. Days just after Noras impact on Arizona, brought many of Mohave County Officials together to review the problems of Nora and how to better prepare for future disaster threats with the upcoming 1998 El Nino.

In November of 1997, the Mohave Valley Fire District located south of Bullhead City Arizona, implemented the first known Arizona Community Emergency Response Team. The first C.E.R.T Class graduated in January of 1998 during a record rain fall for many parts of Arizona. El Nino brought much needed rain to Arizona which in turn created new fire hazards during the summer.

Local C.E.R.T Team volunteers assisted with fire crews during a wildland fire located upon the Havasu Wildlife Refuge in July. Volunteers from C.E.R.T and Amateur Radio Emergency Service worked hand in hand with local fire agencies during the wildfire with daytime temperatures over a 115 degrees.

The long term goal for the Mohave County C.E.R.T Program is to penetrate each rural community with disaster education and assist in the development of other C.E.R.T Teams through out the county.

all old editions will be archived at the internet site <http://www.naem.com/connection.html>. *The Connection* depends on input from those creative people out there who are involved in community preparedness. We encourage you, if you are involved in this type of program, to write an article for the next edition and send some pictures along. Thank you for your support.

**Would you like to submit an article to  
The Connection  
See Details on page 3**

## What's an "East Coast CERT"?

### Kerry Bludworth, City of Orlando Fire Department, Retired

In 1994 I was made aware of a concept that turned out to be the most dynamic and effective public education and training program that I had ever seen....CERT. Most of you that may be reading this already know the value that the CERT Program brings to a community. But back in 1994 I only knew that my biggest problem as an emergency management coordinator was getting the general public to understand that when I gave them a warning message – I meant for them to take some kind of action. Funny thing though, they would always wait until the last minute to take any action, and that was usually to call and expect us to tell them what to do. I know this has never happened to you!



Before I go into how we use CERT on the East Coast, let me tell you a little about the situation down here. I live in Florida, and we face a whole different set of problems than people in other parts of the country. We're not as concerned about earthquakes, volcanoes, avalanches, blizzards and tsunamis to name a few; no we look forward each year to the six-month period that offers us the opportunity to experience an equally exciting means of mass destruction – hurricanes. These "Bad Boys" (or girls) are created when Mother Nature sees a need to remove heated water out of the tropics. Yep, (*that's Southern for Yes*) an area of the ocean or Caribbean Sea starts to get a little warm and the next thing you know this swirling motion starts to occur and a tropical depression is formed. Sometimes these things start way out in the eastern Atlantic and move across the ocean with the tradewinds, and other times they just sort of appear anywhere along a line north of the equator that can run as far west as Central America.

Now what's interesting about these rascals is that the longer they are exposed to warm water the more they develop into this huge circular weather system. As they encounter even warmer waters,



like that around the coast of Florida and in the Gulf of Mexico, they start to sort of "get mad". The warm air over the water starts rising faster and faster in the center of this storm and it

tries to head back down again. This all sets up a cycle that gets the winds in the center of the storm moving faster and faster until it actually creates an "eye", signaling the formation of a hurricane.

Now most of you reading this have probably experienced severe thunderstorms before....lots of windswept rain, lightning, maybe some high gusting and damaging winds with hail and Oh Yeah, a tornado or two. Well, I'm here to tell you, think of those conditions lasting for hours on end. Imagine facing a storm that measures 600 miles across and packs winds of 74 to over 155 mph. Those of you that live on the coast think about a surge of water from 5 feet to over 20 feet coming toward your waterfront exposure. Try to guess how many tornadoes a system of this size produces in the waves of "feeder bands" that race across the landscape in advance of the approaching eye. All of us have seen, through the media, the damage these storms can cause.

About the only saving grace with a hurricane is that we almost always have warning that one is approaching, and in fact, we are very fortunate to have that opportunity. This warning time, as a matter of fact, is what the "East Coast CERT Model" is built around.

The only major difference between the "West Coast" and "East Coast" programs is the way we structure the information taught in three of the seven classes. We maintain the same course structure as programs out West with regard to Disaster Medical, Fire Suppression, and Light Search & Rescue. What we changed was the content of Classes 1, 6 & 7. We took the best information out of those classes and added things that residents of the East Coast need to learn.

Citizens that take our Class 1 will learn about:

- The hazards that threaten Florida (and other East Coast states),
- The type of damage that can be done to the infrastructure,
- What citizens can do to make it through the first 72 hours,
- What the emergency management system is and how it is activated,
- And how citizen teams fit into the system.

Classes 6 & 7 were renamed to "Pre-Storm Operations" and "Post-Storm Operations". In the Pre-Storm classes our students are taught,

- Long-term planning considerations such as,
- Strengthening the home, what survival gear to have, and what they need to do when we issue certain warnings.
- When to evacuate, what to have on hand, what to take with you, and what not to.

- What to teach your kids, what they will need, and when it's time to go camping!
- We also teach our students how to track and, within reason, how to predict the path a storm may take and when to expect tropical storm conditions.
- Forming neighborhood teams
- Short-term actions such as the "Neighborhood Inventory", who's home, who's not, who's evacuating, who has special skills, special equipment, or special needs.

### Disaster Psychology

We actually put our students through a hurricane tracking and planning exercise using a video tape that the State of Florida produced for the annual Statewide Hurricane Exercise. They are also given a real time "Neighborhood Command Post" exercise to help them learn how to prioritize problems and make decisions. And of course there is an exercise at some point after the training where students get to practice their response skills. Now we also cover many of the other types of problems Florida residents can experience, but we try to show our people that many of the actions they would take in preparation or response to a hurricane are appropriate for these other incidents.

I think the thing that impresses me most about the CERT program is that,



in addition to building a bond with the public that we never really had before, they really do change their behavior with regard to disaster preparedness. This program goes quite a bit farther than just making people aware, it actually gets

them interested in taking "mitigative" steps to protect themselves, their family and their property; not to mention spreading the word to neighbors and bringing them closer together.

We here in Florida owe a great deal to the forward thinking people in the City of Los Angeles Fire Department that developed this program and came out to teach it to us. This is by far the greatest public safety tool I think I have ever been exposed to in my 25 years in the fire and emergency services.

*Kerry Bludworth is retired from the City of Orlando Fire Department. He now works as an emergency management consultant and teaches CERT Train-the-Trainers for the states of Florida and North Carolina Division of Emergency Management.*

## BAYNET Are We Selfish?

Chris Wimmer

Supervisor, Emergency Preparedness Services  
Chevron Real Estate Management Company

BAYNET.... the acronym for the BAY area Neighborhood Emergency Teams is an outgrowth of the Train the Trainer programs for Neighborhood Emergency Response Teams. This is often also referred to as CERT or, Citizens Emergency Response Teams.

Chevron supported the San Francisco Fire Department in recruiting and then financially supporting the training of Chevron employee citizens living in San Francisco to be integrated into the Neighborhood teams. Five separate class units were held with 25-30 Chevron employees in each unit. These employees were integrated into existing San Francisco NERT's. This was only the start. Chevron desired to leverage this training into other Bay Area communities. Many communities did not have any programs like NERT available for their citizens. We then worked with the SFFD to provide a Train The Trainer class at Chevron's Concord California office complex. (about 35 miles East of Downtown San Francisco).

As the three day class was drawing to a close, it was determined that many of the participants desired to continue meeting on a periodic basis to brainstorm and support each other. Thus the birth of BAYNET.

BAYNET and Chevron... so, why do we do this...Chevron provides meeting space at the same Concord facility for BAYNET to meet on a quarterly basis. Full audio visual, printing and other support services are available for the participants. Additionally, Chevron provides a continental breakfast, full lunch and afternoon snacks for all of the participants. So, again .. why does Chevron do this you ask?... It's simple, Chevron employees live in many of the cities and neighborhoods that need to be protected through NERT/CERT.

When the next major earthquake occurs, Chevron desires to return to business as soon as possible. We have major operations in the Bay Area which requires specific talent in the form of our employee base. If our employees can help the community recover quickly, then they also will be able to return to work earlier. There are clear financial gains to the companies that return to business as soon as possible after an earthquake. On top of all of these wonderful business reasons, other benefits include the ability of having our employee base be directly involved in the community doing valuable emergency work and the need for our product to be supplied to emergency responders (Gasoline, Diesel and Propane). In essence, we are an infrastructure provider.

Whichever reason you choose, it is important to realize simply that Chevron feels that this support of NERT/CERT and BAYNET is just the right thing to do.

**“EXPANDING THE ‘ JEAN ‘ POOL -  
Battalion Chief Don Schoenbein,  
Emergency Operations Manager, City of Englewood, Co.**

The concept of citizens helping themselves and their neighbors during a significant emotional and physical event is not new, but now it's organized. The Community Emergency Response Team training program is the vehicle that emergency response agencies have been able to give the public to better prepare them for a catastrophic event that we all hope will never come. The City of Englewood offered the first CERT program in Colorado. It has been in place since 1994, and the number and diversity of participants has been astounding.

Like most cities, our firefighters had been teaching classes at the local high school for years, particularly to the health science classes. Fire extinguishers, basic first aid, safe lifting and carrying techniques were a regular part of the public education program. When the CERT program began training was offered to the school's teachers, as a group, with the assumption that they could function as a team in the event of an incident in or near their school. Unfortunately, there was little interest in that program. However, the lead instructor for the Health Occupation Services program became interested and CERT training was offered to Arapahoe / Douglas (Counties) Area Vocational School (ADAVS) starting in the fall of 1994.

Since then, over two hundred high school juniors and seniors have completed the course. The program is identical to the citizen training program with few exceptions. Since students reside in a two county-wide area where, in most cases, there is not an active CERT team, the opportunity for them to function as part of an organized team is limited. Therefore the focus for their training is less team oriented and more life skills oriented. We stress that the skills they learn in the course can help them in any situation and anywhere they go, not just in a major disaster. The other difference is the student involvement in the mock disaster drill. The students are utilized as victims for the citizen team drill. This allows them to experience the effects of care and treatment and experience the sights and sounds of an incident from a victim's perspective.

The reaction to the program from the students has been phenomenal. It has one of the best attendance records of all classes offered in the school and every CERT class offered has been filled to capacity. The CERT program has been incorporated into the Occupational Health curriculum at ADAVS and has spawned a Fire Service Internship Program, allowing students seeking a career in the fire service to attend training sessions and ride-alongs at the Fire Department. The students receive a grade for both programs and attendance is required to pass.

This partnership has been mutually beneficial to the city, it's citizens and the students. It has built a bridge between the providers of today and the providers of the future, as well as ensuring that when a major disaster or a minor emergency strikes, the chances of having a trained responder ready to help are better than ever. The connection has been made.

**Washington State includes “C.E.R.T.” skills training  
in State Conferences  
JoAnn Jordan, Education Coordinator  
Bellevue Fire Department, Bellevue Washington**

Two outstanding conferences are planned for Washington State. The “Partners in Preparedness” conference is sponsored by Western Washington Emergency Network, Washington State Department of Emergency Management, Washington State Emergency Managers Association, State Emergency Response Commission and Private Sector Sponsorship. This conference is the largest of its kind in the State, with an attendance of over 500 participants last year. The conference planning committee is made up of members of both public and private sector and provides conference training opportunities for business and industry and public, private and non-profit agencies.

The conference provides 60 separate classes. Attendees can choose classes that cover a diverse range of topics such as disaster planning, employee training; disaster stress management; hazardous materials threats; communications; mutual aid contracts; media relations; the threats of terrorism; volcanoes; sheltering; emergency operations center development and management; and assisting people with disabilities. Hands on training modeled from the **Community Emergency Response Team** program, covering disaster medical procedures, simple search and rescue, and fire suppression techniques will also be available for attendees. This year's conference will also feature table top exercises to allow participants to actually practice their new knowledge and skills.

The “Partners in Preparedness” Conference will be held on March 30 through April 1, 1999 at the Bellevue Double Tree Hotel in Bellevue Washington. For more information, contact Shad Burcham at King County Emergency Management at (206) 205-8106.

This is the third year that a team of state and local agencies has sponsored a disaster preparedness conference for schools. Each year the conference has gotten more diverse in scope and audience. This year the conference will focus on violence in the schools. The goal of the conference is to learn from national experience and to draw from local experts on preparing for and reducing the hazard of violent events in our schools. The conference will also offer courses in planning, hazard identification, damage assessment, psychological and emotional recovery from unusual occurrences and hands on skills training modeled from the CERT program. This year will be the first time the conference will offer a 3 hour course on the Incident Command System for Schools.

The “Disaster Preparedness for Schools” Conference will be held on April 8 and 9, 1999 at the Shoreline Conference Center in Shoreline Washington. For more information, contact Barb Thurman at the Kind County Office of Emergency Management at (206) 205-8110

## USING COMMUNITY RESPONSE TEAMS IN SCHOOLS

Janet Gibbons, Davis County School District, Utah

After a major earthquake or other emergency, fire, police, and other emergency response agencies may be overburdened and may not be able to reach your community immediately. District employees may have to take initial emergency response action and fend for themselves for at least 72 hours. Past earthquakes have shown that the first rescuers on scene are usually volunteers. Untrained volunteers can endanger their own lives, as well as the lives of those individuals they are trying to assist.

The idea of training volunteers from the community to assist emergency services personnel during large-scale natural disasters began in Los Angeles in 1985 with studies of earthquake preparedness and response.



The Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) developed a pilot program to train multi-functional volunteer response

teams to perform basic fire suppression, light search and rescue, and first aid. The first team of 30 neighborhood watch organization leaders that completed training in early 1986 demonstrated that the concept was viable.

The purpose of the Community Response Team program is to improve, through training, community self-reliance and survival ability in the event of a large natural disaster. The earthquake scenario is used because recent California history has proven that emergency resources will be depleted to the extent that some individuals or neighborhoods will need to rely on themselves within the first 24 to 48 hours.

Training consists of seven sessions spread out over seven weeks for a total of 21 hours of instruction. Classes cover personal and family preparedness, non-structural hazard mitigation, the Incident Command System, size-up, disaster psychology, hazardous-materials identification, fire suppression, search and rescue, recognizing and treating life-threatening emergencies, and a simulated exercise. Select groups of volunteers are trained and will form teams capable of taking care of basic self-help emergency functions until help can arrive.

Hurricane Hugo, the flooding of the Mississippi River, the San Francisco and Northridge earthquakes recently have demonstrated the devastating potential for broad-based destruction that natural disaster can inflict on mankind. Prudent risk management does not allow the fire service to maintain personnel and resources on a full-time basis to cope with such large-scale disasters.

**WE NEED TO RELY ON OUR OWN RESOURCES.** Studies have shown that most people are not killed by an earthquake. They are usually killed by things falling on them, fires, poisonous fumes, or flooding. Things that are normally available to you, (telephones, utilities, and roads), will be damaged in an earthquake. The Whittier Narrows earthquake was a 5.9. It resulted in only 3 deaths, but within 40 minutes, all the ambulances were taken, and half the fire engines were out fighting fires! You may not be able to get help for 72 or more hours. Preparing employees to function on their own is imperative.

Utah was one of the first states in the nation, outside of California, to recognize the value of the Community Emergency Response Team Program to its citizens. CERT is not only an outstanding vehicle to enable a population to take care of themselves in the immediate hours following a major disaster, but also a program that would bridge the gap between the lay public and the emergency management community.

Davis School District was the first school district in Utah to provide this type of training for their personnel as an on-going in service program. For those taking CERT training, 1 1/2 semester credit hours of in service credit will be granted on the completion of this course. Six people trained from each elementary and special schools, twelve people trained from each of the junior and senior high schools, and employees from other buildings within the District, should assemble enough skilled people to meet the needs of the safety of student and employee populations.

As employees train to be CERT members, not only will safety needs be met at the schools, but also those of the communities. When the earthquake or other disaster hits, school may not be in session. If this were to happen, trained CERT members will be available to help in their community. CERT members will be receiving the same training that is being provided throughout the county.

All efforts are coordinated through the Davis County CERT Association. The Association brings together the primary responders (sheriff, police, and fire) from all municipalities within the County.

### C.E.R.T. Conference *Continued from page 1*



Until our next conference, I encourage people to look around and see what civilian training programs are near them. Give each other a call and take some time to hold your own gathering. It is a great way to share ideas, look for solutions and get energized.

**The Handshake of 1998**  
**Greg Owyang, Program Coordinator**  
**San Francisco Fire Department**

While attending the first annual national CERT conference sponsored by FEMA in September, a question that was raised was “ How can we get the fire suppression personnel involved with the citizen disaster preparedness training?”

As the San Francisco Fire Department NERT program coordinator, I had an opportunity to share what is being done in San Francisco to the help the right side (fire suppression side) shake hands with the left side (civilian side) in a union of assisting one another in the event of a major disaster.

This past year, over 1200 students have attended our NERT training at 34 different training sites. We took this unique opportunity for these graduates to personally meet their San Francisco firefighters. With the key support of Chief of Department Robert Demmons, the following administration policy was inaugurated this year:

1. The local Battalion Chief is present at the last training class and they present each NERT graduate with their Award of Achievement certificate. In addition, a fire engine or truck company is also present and the entire crew observes and becomes familiar with the skills taught to the NERT teams. The physical presence of two fire suppression units greatly enhances our community relationship with the NERT's and shows how much we support their completing the invaluable 18 hours of disaster preparedness training.
2. At each of our Fire College class of recruits, I give a 30-minute introduction and overview of the NERT training program. This is probably their first time (and hopefully many more times) they will hear the “NERT”

name in their firefighting career. This gives them a basic foundation of the disaster training that is offered by their department to the citizens of San Francisco.

3. The NERT newsletter is distributed four times a year to each of our 42 fire stations as reading material to keep the firefighters informed of the activities taking place in their local fire districts/community. The newsletter features a neighborhood coordinator's article, the upcoming neighborhood training session, the staging site, and the disaster care facilities in their respective fire community. This periodic reminder keeps the NERT name in front of the firefighters and demonstrates that the NERT program is very active in SF.

These three actions by the Fire Department helps establish and maintain a positive working relationship with the NERT members, who will play an integral role in assisting with our emergency operations in the time of a disaster. The firm handshake started this year with a closer bonding of SF fire personnel and the civilian NERTs.



**The intent of this newsletter is to support community disaster preparedness efforts through the sharing of information and ideas.**

**The articles in The Connection are the opinions and experiences of the authors.**

**For information on how to comment on existing articles or submit an article for the next edition please see page 3**