

## **CONNECTICUT**

### **Highlights of State Council Activities**

The Connecticut Statewide Citizen Corps Council Advisory Committee was established by a formal vote of the Connecticut State Emergency Management and Homeland Security Advisory Council at its regular monthly meeting on February 10, 2005. Chief Bill Austin, Fire Chief of West Hartford, Connecticut was appointed chairman by Commissioner James Thomas with instruction to establish and implement Citizen Corps and its component programs throughout the state. The committee is charged with recommending statewide policy concerning funding distribution formulas, response standards, performance requirements, agency interface, statewide credentialing, and regionalization efforts for Connecticut.

### **Highlights of State Activities**

#### **Public Education and Outreach**

Connecticut Governor M. Jodi Rell in concert with the Departments of Public Health, Emergency Management and Homeland Security, provided a preparedness guide titled "Connecticut Guide to Emergency Preparedness" in the Sunday newspaper across the state including a preparedness checklist, information on planning for people with special needs, writing a preparedness plan, what it means when an emergency has been declared, information on natural and manmade disasters, the state's public water drinking supply and public health preparedness.

The State Citizen Corps Office has partnered with the state American Legion to use Posts for preparedness training locations and promoting Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and other citizen preparedness activities in the municipalities.

#### **Training and Exercises**

The state Citizen Corps Council has established a goal of training more than 2,000 residents with CERT training by the end of 2007. Currently, there are 800 residents who have completed training, thus far. Also, the state Citizen Corps Office is working with the following organizations to provide CERT training: the 1<sup>st</sup> Connecticut Governor's Foot Guard, 2<sup>nd</sup> Connecticut Governor's Horse Guard (Newtown), 2<sup>nd</sup> Connecticut Foot Guard (New Haven) and ESPN Headquarters.

During the past year, over 25 Connecticut CERT members have completed the CERT Train-the-Trainer Course allowing the state to offer more CERT training to its citizens. The state Citizen Corps Office developed a CERT Instructor Workshop held in April 2006 that included adult education, examples of CERT best practices and retention techniques.

Citizen Corps experienced vast growth in 2005, with an increase of over 20 percent in the number of citizens completing the CERT training.

During the spring, Torrington Citizen Corps volunteers worked with fire, police and EMS personnel during the TOPOFF 3 exercise. Over 30 volunteers participated in the mass decontamination component of the exercise.

### **Volunteer Programs and Support**

Both the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and CERT programs have experienced tremendous growth in 2005. The Connecticut Citizen Corps Office is partnering with the 1<sup>st</sup> Connecticut Company Governors Foot Guard, which has approximately 75 people, to have volunteers participate in the MRC program.

Local CERT programs, such as Manchester, East Hartford, and Southbury, have trained their volunteers as ham radio operators. These local programs have found having a ham radio operator on hand has been a tremendous asset to their response capabilities. In addition, the Manchester CERT program assisted with organizing the Manchester Road Race, which is held Thanksgiving Day and attracts over 10,000 people.

### **Support for Hurricane Katrina Response**

The State of Connecticut and partner agencies provided services to over 600 people from Gulf Coast areas that relocated to Connecticut. The Connecticut Citizen Corps prepared to staff reception centers, but since evacuees were located throughout the state, services were provided primarily through the Red Cross and state agencies. Citizen Corps worked with residents and students from the University of Connecticut to increase CERT training in response to an increased interest in community preparedness.

### **National Preparedness Month**

In recognition of National Preparedness Month, a CERT Conference was held at the Connecticut Fire Academy located in Windsor Locks. To maintain the skills of Connecticut CERT members, a two-day event was held to practice some of the skills they had learned. Activities included fire extinguisher use, cribbing, home safety check training, and a maze confidence course. A guest speaker from the Office of Domestic Terrorism spoke about creating general public awareness within the private sector and provided descriptions of potential terrorist indicators and suspicious activities.