Cuyahoga CERT Association

General Meeting Notes

Monday, September 22, 2014
7:00 pm to 8:45 pm
(1900-2045 Hours)

Independence Public Library
6361 Selig Blvd.
Independence, Ohio 44131

1. Training and Exercise

a. USAR Exercise – GPS Training (Handout)

Two volunteers have registered for the exercise. Six are needed for the volunteer component of the exercise to be retained. Volunteers need to register before Monday, October 5. Volunteers will act as responders, not victims. Volunteers will be part of the USAR search teams. They will document and report the location of victims using GPS units and ICS forms. Other USAR teams will then follow the search teams to perform the rescues. Volunteers will not be part of the rescue teams. They will have an opportunity to observe Base operations when not in the field.

b. Just-in-Time Training from Disaster Resistant Communities
http://www.drc-group.com/project/jitt.html

This site has short videos on a variety of subjects that can be used for training just prior to deployment or for planned training sessions. Meeting attendees watched the video about pumping out flooded basements. Topics are added and deleted continuously.

c. Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Overview

At the June meeting, attendees expressed an interest in learning about HSEEP, which is the national system for designing and evaluating exercises. An overview of the system will be presented at the next meeting. We will determine at that time if anyone wants to participate in more detailed training.

2. Credentialing Update

a. Ordinances

There is still some confusion about the purpose of an ordinance. By-laws, Policies and Procedures, and Standard Operating Guidelines are not substitutes for an ordinance. An ordinance is a municipal law that gives CERT legal status. Legal status is necessary to determine responsibility for such things as liability and medical expenses. Legal status is especially crucial to a CERT's ability to function outside of its home jurisdiction. The National Association of Volunteer Programs in Local Government states as follows:

Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures are an extremely important part of the volunteer program, and provide overall guidance and direction to program participants. The policies that are adopted must adhere to all federal, state, and local laws and provide formal written policies and procedures governing the involvement and treatment of volunteers. In addition, program policies and procedures should describe steps that must be adhered to when there is a problem within the program concerning volunteer issues. By establishing procedures at the beginning, a volunteer manager can be proactive in tending to possible problems and issues that the program may face in the future. A county ordinance or policy, approved by the county's elected board, will provide the framework for a volunteer program. The ordinance should include:

- Preamble or general policy statement endorsing the concept of the volunteer effort in the provision of public services
- Definition of a volunteer and any classifications of volunteers
- Description of how a person becomes a volunteer and reasons and procedures for dismissing a volunteer (These procedures might include completing an application form, receiving a job description, signing a contract or agreement concerning services and confidentiality requirements, maintaining records concerning service, conducting periodic evaluations, completing a medical examination, or other similar requirements).
- Description of the benefits available to volunteers and how they differ among classifications of volunteers.
- Description of worker's compensation or liability insurance offered to volunteers, and any insurance deviation between classes of volunteers.
- Conflict of interest or financial disclosure policies that may be applicable to volunteers.
- Risk management procedures and techniques that will be used to limit liability.

http://www.navplg.org/docs/VolunteerToolbox-2012.pdf, page 11.

b.   Ohio Responds

The Good Samaritan law does <u>not</u> protect CERT volunteers. Ohio Responds registration is necessary for emergency volunteers to enjoy the limited liability protection provided by the State of Ohio. (The protection is "limited" because it applies only to official training sessions and deployments.) Please continue to encourage volunteers to register with Ohio Responds. Personal records are protected from public disclosure. Also, please remind volunteers that they need to post only <u>one</u> training every three years and upload the certificate. They do not need to post every training course they take.

c.   Background Checks

A background check to the national level will be required, and it must comply with the guidelines of the American Red Cross and the National Commission on Children in Disasters (handout attached). The method to be used for the background check and the means of payment is at the discretion of the municipality. CERTs that are by ordinance part of the city government should be able to get the background checks through the same means as city employees.

d.   **Loyalty Oath**

At the June meeting some attendees objected to the Ohio Revised Code requirement for taking a loyalty oath and also objected to the wording of the oath. I forwarded these objections to the Ohio Emergency Management Agency (OEMA) who forwarded them to its legal counsel. I have heard nothing further. A loyalty oath is also a federal law (Stafford Act).

e.   **Training**

    i.   **CERT Basic Training**

Quad City announced that they will be holding a CERT Basic Training course. Anyone may attend the entire course or individual units. Teens were included in their last training program. An e-mail was sent to program managers with details.

    ii.   **700, 100, 200**

Classroom versions of these courses will be provided. Simplified versions of the courses are in development for individuals who do not like, want, or understand the online courses.

    iii.   *CERT Emergency Communications*

Chief Raffin, CERT Association Director from Westshore, and Westshore CERT objected to the use of the *CERT Emergency Communications* course for radio training. They preferred a shorter, simpler course. A conference call for interested parties was held on August 11. Six people attended and unanimously decided in favor of a shorter, simpler course. Sharon Nicastro provided a PowerPoint presentation of radio basics that attendees agreed would serve the purpose. Sharon will develop a course based on the PowerPoint. The course will be distributed to CERTs for comment by their subject matter experts; a pilot group will test the course; revisions will be made; and the course will be distributed to CERTs for implementation. Use of this standardized course will facilitate interoperability among the CERTs and qualify members for the NIMS credentialing.

    iv.   **Damage Assessment**

CERTs have two options for performing Damage Assessment: Rapid Assessment (RA) and Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA). CERTs were previously trained for RA only, which involves determining damage classification while driving by the properties. PDA adds interviews of residents regarding home occupancy and insurance status. The training for both of these options is in development. Ohio EMA subject matter experts will review the course before classes will be scheduled.

v. **First Aid**

Ten CERTs expressed interest in having CPR/AED, First Aid, and/or Bloodborne Pathogens classes. Sharon Nicastro is scheduling courses with CERTs in the order in which their interest was expressed; however, response to scheduling requests has been slow. These classes will be offered for a limited time only, so CERTs who wish to take advantage of this no-cost-to-you offer are encouraged to consider their scheduling needs now, so they will be ready when Sharon contacts them. If a response is not received within a week, Sharon will move to the next CERT on the list.

vi. **POD Training**

Four POD Training sessions were held. Instructor Karen Seidman offered to hold additional sessions but program managers who expressed interest have not responded to her scheduling requests.

vii. **Sheltering**

All but one of the Red Cross courses required for credentialing are online. The culminating course is the in-person Shelter Fundamentals Exercise. The last time it was offered in Cuyahoga County was before the credentialing project began. It is being offered in a rotation among the other Red Cross chapters in the northeast quadrant of Ohio, so it is not likely to be in Cuyahoga County again for a while. The Red Cross said it will hold a course specifically for CERTs if we have a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 24 people. Sharon Nicastro will survey the CERTs to determine if a sufficient number of people are ready for the Exercise.

viii. **Traffic/Crowd Management**

CERTs have been conducting training for their volunteers with training that they created themselves. There does not appear to be a CERT that has used the FEMA course for traffic/crowd management. Attendees were concerned about the level of risk involved with traffic management, so it was decided that the training would be at the awareness level rather than the performance level. Sharon Nicastro will look into the availability of such a course.

ix. **Wide Area Search**

Metroparks has agreed to be an official provider of Wide Area Search training. Metroparks will schedule and conduct the training with the CERTs and send the rosters to Sharon Nicastro, who will issue certificates for NIMS credentialing. Sessions have been conducted over the years without issuance of certificates. Sharon Nicastro will work with Metroparks to get the rosters for those trainings and issue certificates.

xi.   Equivalent Training

If CERTs have had training that they think is equivalent to the courses specified for NIMS credentialing, they can submit their training for consideration by subject matter experts. Submissions would include a copy of the course curriculum and qualifications of the instructor.

3.   Citizen Corps/CERT Core Capabilities (Handout) – Working Group

At the June meeting Mark Christie from the County OEM discussed the Homeland Security Core Capabilities and the County's determination about which capabilities CERT could contribute to. The CERT Association will be forming a working group to discuss how to achieve these capabilities. The working group will also review all of the capabilities to determine if CERT can contribute to any of the capabilities not designated by the County. Please notify Sharon Nicastro if you are interested in participating in the working group.

4.   Emergency Support Functions (National Response Framework)

a.   Overview

The FEMA IS-800 course discusses the functions that would be needed for a response. There are 15 Emergency Response Functions (ESFs). One agency at the federal level is designated as the primary agency in charge of that function, and supporting agencies are also designated. Cuyahoga County also uses the ESF model. Citizen Corps is currently assigned to ESF #14 Long-term Community Recovery because of the CERT role in Damage Assessment. An organization can be assigned to more than one ESF.

b.   Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities

The County OEM and Citizen Corps Council will be looking at the roles and responsibilities that CERTs and other volunteer groups can assume within the ESFs. CERTs, for example, will most likely be assigned to ESF #8 Public Health and Medical Services because of their role in POD operations. The Red Cross is assigned to ESF #6 Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Temporary Housing, and Human Services because of their role in sheltering.

5.   Republican National Convention

Lt. Terry Bindernagel of Cleveland Fire and Cleveland OEM gave a brief overview of the last Republican National Convention to impress upon the attendees the scope of the event and the extent of planning that must take place. 10,000 volunteers were used at the Tampa event, but we do not know the functions they contributed to. The Republican National Committee comes to Cleveland in January to begin official planning for the event that will take place in June or July of 2016. The U.S. Secret Service has complete authority over the event. The Convention is considered a National Special Security Event (NSSE), so the FBI, FEMA, and many other agencies will be involved also. Special credentialing will be required of all participants.

6. **Water Emergencies**

   a. **Agencies/Organizations**

   The County OEM is working with the Ohio EMA to plan for a water emergency like the one in the Toledo area. The lead agency for the response could be the Water Department or the Board of Health. The Red Cross assisted in Toledo by delivering water to individuals who were homebound based on records from Meals on Wheels. The Red Cross reported that many volunteers were used to manage the emergency, but we do not know the volunteer organizations that participated or the tasks they performed. Sharon Nicastro has asked for this information from the Ohio EMA but has not yet received a reply.

   b. **Points of Dispensing vs. Points of Distribution**

   There has been speculation that the County's POD plans might serve for water distribution. This may or may not be the case depending on the individual plans. CERTs are encouraged to review their POD plans to determine if they would work for water distribution (or distribution of other goods). There is a FEMA Independent Study course (IS-26) that describes a Point of Distribution plan (as opposed to a Point of Dispensing for medications).

   c. **Physical/Medical Fitness**

   Be aware that distribution of goods and dispensing of medications require different physical/medical fitness. Considerable lifting and moving of goods will be required for a Point of Distribution. Volunteers on whom you depend as your base of response might not have the fitness level for some of the tasks at a Point of Distribution.

7. **Available Resources**

   a. **Lanyards**

   When the County OEM was moving to its current facility, boxes of CERT lanyards were discovered. They were intended for use with ID badges. Because they are not breakaway lanyards, they present some risk and will probably not be used; however, they will be distributed to CERTs who are willing to assume the risk. Notify Sharon Nicastro if you are interested in taking some of these lanyards. They are green with yellow lettering and are approximately 3/8" wide with silver metal clips.

   b. **Animal Response Manuals**

   Animal Emergency Management is a big issue in Cuyahoga County as it is elsewhere. The County plan for pets/livestock is in development, and volunteers are expected to play a part. In the meantime, if your CERT has a qualified animal response instructor and is holding *Animal Response I and II* classes, manuals are available. Contact Sharon Nicastro.

c.   Badging Equipment

Ideally, local badges will become a thing of the past and all CERT volunteers will have PIV-I cards; however, if a CERT does not wish to be integrated into the national system, badging equipment to create local badges is available. This is the badging equipment that was used by the County before the NIMS credentialing began. The badges produced by this equipment are <u>not</u> equivalent to or a substitute for the NIMS PIV-I card. The equipment will be delivered to you and picked up. An operator will not come with the equipment. Instructions and supplies are included in the case. There is no cost to you. Supplies are limited. Contact Sharon Nicastro if you are interested in using this equipment.

8.   Wish List

a.   Neighborhood Disaster Supply/Equipment List (Handout)

See the attached handout for a sample supply/equipment list for CERT trailers.

b.   What should we add to the regional caches?

The regional caches (Fairview Park, Cleveland Heights, Maple Heights, and North Royalton) are growing. In addition to the MURS radios, the caches will now have microphones for the radios, GPS units (2 per cache), and breakaway traffic vests. If you have identified other items that could be added to the caches, notify Sharon Nicastro. There is no funding available at this time, but we need to be able to respond quickly if funding does become available. Items must be approved by the Ohio EMA and must have a regional focus.

9.   Recognizing Volunteers – Best Practices – How do you recognize volunteers?

Cleveland recognizes volunteers with awards for specific incidents. Volunteers are honored at the same ceremony as paid responders.

Garfield Heights uses the President's Volunteer Service Award program. Sheila Roman will bring samples of the pins to the next meeting. Information about the program is at http://www.presidentialserviceawards.gov/.

10.   Citizen Corps Monthly Themes – http://www.ready.gov/citizen-corps-monthly-themes-2014

If you are looking for ideas for meetings or projects, FEMA developed monthly themes for 2014. The videos for Just-in-Time training (#1b above) could be used in conjunction with these themes.

11.   Other Business

North Royalton's Medical Director, Dr. Meges, will present information on the Ebola virus on Wednesday, September 24, 2014 at 7:00 pm at the North Royalton Police Department. All are welcome.

Results of the survey regarding a Citizen Corps webpage for Cuyahoga County are attached. At present we would have a page on the County website but would eventually like to have a separate website that would be more robust. Sharon Nicastro will be working with Serena Steele at the County OEM to start revamping the current site.

Sharon Nicastro will look into awareness training about the Strategic National Stockpile, which is where medications for dispensing at PODs comes from.

12. Next Meetings

Given our current schedule of quarterly meetings, the next meeting would fall in December. There was general agreement to have the next meeting in January, which would put us on a meeting schedule of the first month of each quarter – January, April, July, October.