



The CERT Team EFFORT



Vol. 1, Issue No. 2

April 1, 2015

Teton County, WY Community Emergency Response Team News & More

UPCOMING

- Apr. 15—ICS 100/NIMS 700, 1730-1930
- May 12—ICS 300 (1 of 5), 1800-2100
- May 14—ICS 300 (2 of 5), 1800-2100
- May 16—ICS 300 (3 of 5), 0800-1700
- May 19—ICS 300 (4 of 5), 1800-2100
- May 21—ICS 300 (5 of 5), 1800-2100
- May 26—NWS Weather Spotter Trng, EOC, 1800-2000
- Jun. 16—CERT mo. Mtg, TBD
- Jul. 22—CERT mo. Mtg, TBD

INSIDE

- 2 CERT Plays Active Role in Wildfires Tabletop Exercise
- 3 See TCEM's Full-Color Ad Thanking Volunteers for Effort
- 3 The Inside Story on TCEM's Colorful New Display Ad
- 4 BITSANDPIECESANDITSAND Can You REALLY Cough Your Way Out of a Heart Attack?
- 4 Moosehead Ranch Fire Gets Three CERT Vols for Rehab Station Set-up and Operation
- 4 Smith's Donates 5,000 Smackeroos to JH Fire/EMS
- 5 Learn to Learn in Three Easy Steps, Remember It Forever
- 6 EXCLUSIVE! CERT Teams Take on Tower-Building Task and Triumph—See the Winners

HAPPY APRIL FOOL'S DAY!



Mayor Honors 10 CERT Members in 'Hometown Heroes' Ceremony

It is not often that Jackson's Mayor and Council can proclaim more than 100 area residents to be "Hometown Heroes" in the same ceremony, but that's what happened in February.

That may explain the broad smile that Rich Ochs, coordinator of both Teton County Emergency Management and the county's CERT team, has been smiling a lot lately. Ten of the 101 were CERT volunteers.

"This is a well-deserved honor," said Rich. "All of the first responders who were recognized without hesitation placed the public's well-being above their own—and that is something that CERT volunteers are normally cautioned to avoid."

Last November, according to the Proclamation, "an enormous explosion" wracked the AmeriGas propane facility on High School Road. It was followed by "several fires and other explo-

sions" that destroyed three buildings and a dozen vehicles and required the evacuation of about 150 persons while 2,100 students "sheltered in place" at nearby schools.

Jackson Mayor Sara Flitner, with Council members looking on, said it was "with a heroic selflessness" that the emergency responders from nearly a dozen agencies and organizations confronted the incident "head on." She said their efforts "contained a massive event" that, without the willingness of the new Hometown Heroes to "answer a dangerous call to duty...would have resulted in a devastating outcome."

"It is important to recognize the scale and scope of this particular emergency response," said the Mayor, "because it demonstrates so clearly the skill, expertise, and proficiency Jackson

Hole's emergency responders hold, and provides a certain solace to our citizens."

Prior to reading the Proclamation, the teary-eyed mayor recounted her experience on September 11, 2001, as she listened to reports of the World Trade Center terrorist attack. She said she was emotionally impacted by the thought of so many rescuers rushing selflessly into an unknown situation in an effort to find and save victims, and said the AmeriGas Incident response was similar.

Mayor Flitner said those who responded last November showed "a lasting devotion to this community" and are helping to make it "a better place to live."

(Continued on Page 6)

YEAR/YEAR CERT ACTIVITY NEARLY SAME

Last year Teton County CERT gained a few more members, but the time they contributed to the organization was down somewhat from 2013.

Officially, there were 53 "active" CERT members in 2014 who donated time worth \$17,602. In 2013, the number of "active" volunteers was 62 and their time was worth \$30,866. The hourly rates of \$23.16 in 2014 and \$22.14 in 2013 were obtained from inde-

pendentsector.org.

In 2014, CERT volunteers trained 393 persons in the use of fire extinguishers—almost exactly the same as in 2013, when 394 persons were trained.

In other categories (2013 figures in parentheses), CERT participated in two exercises with public safety agencies (2), had five activations (1), had 12 training sessions (19), and took part in nine public out-

reach events (9). Although there were 24 new CERT members trained in 2013, last year there were none, since no training sessions were offered. Rich Ochs, Teton County CERT coordinator, said he hopes to schedule a basic training session later in the year, which would increase both the numbers trained and the hours donated.

CERT Plays Active Role in Tabletop

Building your fences after the cows have wandered off is not the best time to do it.

Neither is planning how to handle three large wildfires after they have begun to impact the county.

That's why more than 50 representatives of various governmental and non-governmental units met on March 20: to conduct a four-hour tabletop exercise in coordination. They tested the efforts they would make in the event that first two and then three lightning-set forest fires were to erupt in

this area.

Forty-one of the participants were actual "players," while five others observed and eight planned the "TTX." In all, 28 area outfits sent individuals to the activity—a number that Rich Ochs, exercise director, described as "very unusual" and gratifying, considering the time and effort needed to attend.

Working with huge maps and other documents, the players went through three separate "modules," or stages, holding small group discussions to answer critical

questions that arose as the fires grew, in both size and impact. Their objectives included creating a strategy for prioritization, identifying roles and responsibilities, and assessing risks as the blazes heated up and calmed down.

The "NGO" (non-governmental organizations), for instance, had to consider how to provide temporary food, water, and shelter for both humans and their pets, where those shelters could be found or built, and how to provide adequate health and social service functions dur-

ing a crisis situation.

In previous exercises, CERT representatives would have played the roles of "victims." This time, however, a CERT participant was a designated "player," and took an active role in the TTX. Rich said he hopes to repeat such participation by CERT members in future exercises.

"CERT volunteers have a lot to contribute to these periodic planning events," Ochs said. "This one proved that."



Some of the 54 "players" in "Operation Broken Sword," a tabletop exercise held March 20 in the Teton County Agricultural Extension Office, listen to Exercise Director Rich Ochs as he explains the purpose, the scope, and the scenario

of the four-hour activity. The exercise was based on three simulated area forest fires that had to be managed, testing "core capabilities" of several agencies and organizations.

(Photo by Fred Whissel)



Teton County Emergency Management would like to thank the volunteers of the following agencies for making Jackson Hole a more disaster-resilient community. Without your hard work and dedication we wouldn't be able to provide the critical services the public truly needs in times of crisis.

THE AGENCIES AND WHAT THEY DO ARE:



American Red Cross of Wyoming, Jackson Team

Sheltering and feeding of people in disasters, disaster mental health services, emergency preparedness training for the public, and disaster damage assessments.



Teton County Community Emergency Response Team

Neighborhood emergency response in large disasters, public fire extinguisher training, emergency responder rehabilitation unit, and surge capacity for local emergency response agencies.



PAWS of JH Disaster Animal Response Team

Sheltering, feeding and care of animals during disasters.



Teton County Emergency Operations Center Support Staff

Volunteer staffing of Teton County's EOC during emergencies.



Teton County Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

Collaborative group of critical voluntary agencies that have agreed to assist the Jackson Hole community with unmet needs such as food, clothing, emergency funds, volunteers, crisis counseling, and other services during disasters.

VOAD BOARD MEMBERS: Church of Latter-Day Saints | Cornerstone Church Jackson Capboard | PAWS of Jackson Hole | Redeemer Lutheran Church | Rotary Club of Jackson Hole Teton Valley Seventh-Day Adventist Church

MEMBERS: Community Resource Center | Habitat for Humanity of the Greater Teton Area | JH Community Counseling Center | JH Horse Rescue | National Museum of Wildlife Art | Presbyterian Church of Jackson Hole | Salvation Army | Shepherd of the Mountain Lutheran Church St. John's Episcopal Church | Teton County Community Emergency Response Team | Teton County Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services Teton County Systems of Care | WY Department of Workforce Services - Jackson Workforce Center

SUPPORT: Teton County Emergency Management | American Red Cross of Wyoming | Teton County Public Health | First Western Trust

TCEM AD TO RUN IN JHN&G'S 'VOLUNTEERS' SECTION, PRAISING CERT AND EOC STAFF

You know you must be doing SOMETHing right when you are so busy doing your job that you occasionally forget an important deadline or two.

That might explain why the Jackson Hole News & Guide's "Volunteers" section over the past couple of years has been missing an ad from Teton County Emergency Management praising its more than 200 CERT and EOC Staff volunteers.

But not this year! TCEM Coordinator Rich Ochs had his calendar marked in big bold letters, so he wouldn't

miss running a whole half-page display ad, in full color, praising the contributions of not just CERT and EOC Staff volunteers, but also the members of the American Red Cross, PAWS of Jackson Hole and the Disaster Animal Response Team (DART), as well as the Teton County Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD).

"All of our volunteers contribute a tremendous number of hours each year to help other citizens in Teton County," Rich said. "If you were to put a dollar value

on those hours, it would be in the tens of thousands of dollars. Most of what they do is 'behind the scenes' so most members of the public are never quite informed about what our dedicated volunteers do, such as training, taking

part in multi-agency exercises, taking individual study courses, and more. They truly deserve our thanks, and this ad is just one small way that we can express that."

The special section is scheduled for April 15.



BITS AND PIECES AND BITS AND PIECES AND BITS AND PIECES AND BITS...

One of the worst things about the internet is that you can find so many inaccurate items by browsing.

One of the best things about the internet is that you can (usually) find factual items to refute those.

CERT members work with facts, and it's up to you to determine fact from fiction.

Making the email rounds (again) is a way to give yourself CPR ("cardio-pulmonary resuscitation") if you are by yourself when a heart attack attacks.

Heart attacks are one of the "ABC" (airway, breathing, blood circulation) situations

that are life-threatening. Some symptoms are severe chest pain, nausea, and shortness of breath.

The email author claims you can fight back long enough to get to a medical facility by taking a deep breath, coughing until you can feel your toes in your nose, and repeating. (As any Red Cross certificated CPR performer knows, once you start CPR, you do NOT stop it until professional help arrives.)

Would that REALLY work?

Would extreme coughing really compress the heart muscles enough to expel the right amount of blood, and would the deep breath then send the

right amount of oxygen to the lungs?

Believe it or not, it IS possible—but only under the close supervision of a physician, and then only under certain conditions.

According to the fact-checking website, Snopes.com, physicians at Rochester General Hospital have found the self-serving procedure workable only in "isolated emergency cases," when the victim knew exactly what they were doing and could be talked through the precise steps.

It turns out that there are several kinds of heart at-

tacks, and the cough-and-inhale procedure would not work for all.

The point is obvious: like with fire safety, search-and-rescue, medical operations, or anything else that CERT volunteers do, this is a tool that must be studied well and used properly.

If you read it in the CERT Basic Training Manual, or in some other official publication, you can likely trust it. But if you read it in an email, you might want to get a second opinion. The life you save may very well be your own.

Second CERT Team Call-out for 'Rehab' Was on a Bitterrrrrrr Cold Night

They may not have gotten any Proclamations from Jackson's Mayor and Town Council for their efforts, but the second team of CERT volunteers in just three months performed nearly identical duties to last November's "Hometown Heroes."

On February 24, a building fire erupted at the Moosehead Ranch, and it was not long before Battalion Chief Mike Moyer called CERT Coordinator Rich Ochs (at 2 a.m.!) to see if two to four volunteers would be interested in freezing their fannies off to run a rehabilitation station.

Normally run by professional first-responders rehab stations are a welcome addition at any winter fire incident, but they sap vital manpower. Turning over the task to CERT volunteers frees up more firefighters, allowing the volunteers to serve hot beverages, warm smiles, and snacks.

Despite the bitter-cold morning, Chief Moyer got exactly what he asked for, when three

CERT volunteers showed up.

For the remainder of the morning incident, the strike team not only served smiles, hot coffee, cocoa, and snacks, but also helped firefighters battle frozen lines and frozen hydrants, then helped unload Support 19 back at Station 1.

Chief Moyer said he appreciated Chris Kendzierski, Kimberly Mullikin, and Gloria Courser "coming out in the middle of a very cold night. We appreciate the opportunity to work with CERT members who have been a great addition to these incidents."

In response, Gloria said "at first I felt a little unnecessary, but I quickly realized that even just a friendly face and smile while helping pour coffee went a long way. In such cold temperatures it was nice to have the firefighters keep their gloves on while we opened packets of cocoa and other snacks."

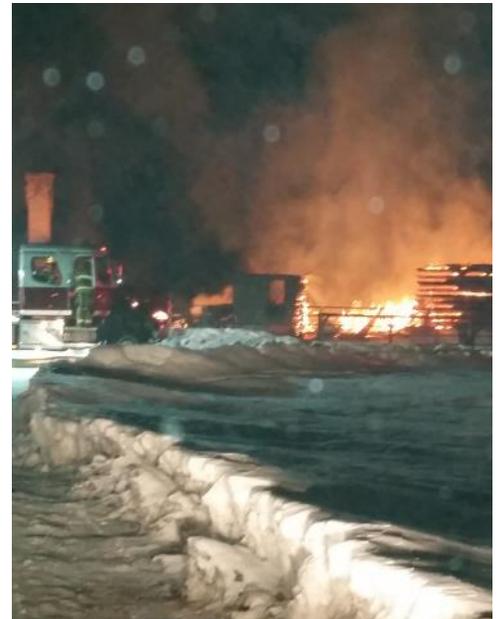


PHOTO BY GLORIA COURSER

The Teton County Emergency Response Team (CERT) is guided and primarily supported by the Teton County Citizen Corps Council.



THE CERT Team EFFORT is a quarterly publication of Teton County Emergency Management, 3240 S. Adams Canyon Dr., Jackson, WY 83001. To comment, or to contact us for any other reason, please email us at em@tetonwyo.org.

Smith's Honors 'Hometown Heroes' for November Assist

How does a huge supermarket chain reward a small group of dedicated first-responders for possibly saving its only local store (and jobs!) from major damage or total destruction?

In about 5,000 ways—if you are the grateful executives of Smith's Food and Drug. On March 19, the Utah food outfit flew in a team of executives with an oversized check for \$5,000 signed by Jay Cummings, Smith's president.

Made out to Jackson Hole Fire/EMS, the check will be used to purchase snacks to be served at future training sessions, said Battalion Chief Kathy Clay, who accepted the check from Marsha Gilford, Smith's public affairs vice-president; Jim Dye, district manager; and Joe Shaw, director of the local store.

The check and ceremony rewarded the work of some 101 members of nearly a dozen town, county, state, and Federal organizations last November, when a large, propane-fueled fire and explosions erupted behind Smith's store, quickly spreading an oily black cloud of smoke along High School Road from Highway 89 to South Park Loop.

Fire Marshal Clay was "Incident Commander" of the "AmeriGas Incident," in which both paid and volunteer responders spent a whole afternoon in sub-freezing temperatures battling blazes, containing the spread of propane, and evacuating both employees and residents of area businesses and apartments. Some 1,200 students at nearby

schools were either evacuated or "sheltered in place" and vehicle traffic was re-directed. Three buildings and a dozen vehicles were destroyed, but no major injuries occurred.

Smith's was not one of the damaged buildings, but Shaw said he feared the worst when both employees and customers heard a big boom and saw a massive fireball roll over the roof. Chief Clay soon called for a CERT strike team to be activated in Smith's parking lot to set up and operate a "rehab" station. Normally manned by fire professionals, the rehab station was turned over to CERT to free up the pros. A total of nine CERT volunteers reported.

Several of the CERT volunteers joined two nose-to-nose fire trucks, Jackson Mayor Sara Flitner, nearly two-dozen

Fire/EMS responders, the Smith's executives, and even appreciative onlookers in photos.

After the outside ceremonies, the first-responders were invited inside to Smith's deli area, where employees had prepared some food, including a white sheet cake that read "Heartfelt Thanks to Our Jackson Fire/EMS Heroes for Saving Our Store." (The same sentiment had appeared on a large outdoor banner.) The responders also received a bag full of Smith's goodies.

"This incident had a successful outcome thanks to inter-agency partners knowing how to work together in the midst of chaos," Clay declared. "Emergency responders worked together and it saved lives and property."



Smith's ceremony photos by Pat Snyder, Rich Ochs, and Fred Whissel



LEARN TO LEARN!

One of the things they teach you at the National Emergency Management Center in Emmitsburg, MD, when you go there to take the on-campus CERT classes, is how to learn.

Oh yeah, we ALL think we did that many decades ago, somewhere between kindergarten and high school. But did you really? Do you know that it usually takes three impressions before we learn new material? (How long we retain it is another subject!) And do you know that we all learn in different ways? Some of us need a strong visual impression, others need an audio one, and others need a tactical (kinesthetic) impression.

Stated simply, we need to see it, hear it, or do it—as in a tabletop exercise. (Some argue that there is a fourth way to learn: by teaching it.)

Regardless of the WAY we learn, we all are stuck with a neat little gizmo in the brain called a “hippocampus.” Think of it as a traffic cop. As information comes in, it figures out exactly where it should be stored, on a long-term basis, and then sends it on its way.

What happens if there is too much information coming in at one time for the hippocampus to process? Well, it simply shuts down, doesn’t send anything anywhere, sends it to the wrong storage area, or otherwise screws up. (Sort of like my hard-disc drive.)

For most of us, the hippocampus can temporarily hold only about 10 minutes worth of new material at a time. Then it acts exactly like a glass of water: if we keep pouring the water information in, eventually the hippocampus will allow it to overflow and—like too much water—the information is gone.

So the learning process is very simple. Look at, listen to, hear whatever you can when you have a block of new information thrown at you. Then stop. Play around with the information, try to use it in different ways, ask yourself questions about it (and answer them, of course). Use the information in ways you never thought possible. Discuss it with your friends or family. Then go on to the next 10-minute block of information.

Try it! It may not work for you, but how would you like to have everybody thinking of you as Einstein’s smarter brother or sister?

(Continued from Page 1)

Mayor Honors Ten CERT Members...

Among the CERT volunteers honored were Nancy Berlin, Lori Corcilius, Ron Davison, Chris Kendzierski, Krystine Kendzierski, Mary Lou Klene, Pat Snyder, Alicia Whissel, Fred Whissel (team leader), and David Henneberry, who served in the nice, warm EOC.

CERT Team Towers Over Competition in Monthly Meet Activity

What do you do if life gives you lemons? You make lemonade.

But what if you get a Kraft-paper bag that contains 20 pieces of standard spaghetti (uncooked), one yard of string, one yard of 1” masking tape, a pair of scissors, and—oh, yeah—a nice, firm marshmallow?

If you had just heard Fred Whissel’s comments on Teamwork, Working Together, and Leadership at CERT’s March monthly meeting, you do as instructed. Over the next 18 minutes, you and the other members of your team try to see just how tall a tower you can build from those materials alone. A FREESTANDING tower. One that can’t be leaned up against something else, suspended from anything, or held.

This is a well-known corporate world activity to teach teamwork and the importance of working together. The normal team of four, in 18 minutes, builds a tower about 20 inches high. (The record is apparently 39 inches.)

A team comprised of Craig Kirkpatrick, Pat Snyder, Sylvia Raumaker, and C.J. Burt managed to build a rock-solid tower of 22.25 inches, somewhat higher than the next-highest mark of 18 inches. Two

teams other teams worked valiantly, but built towers that, well, just didn’t measure up (and soon fell down).

Rich Ochs, CERT team coordinator, said he was “amazed” to see how much intra-team discussion, planning, and execution went into the towers by all of the teams. He was particularly pleased to see the 14 meeting attendees walk away in a spirit of camaraderie.

For their efforts, each member of the win-

ning team got a 1-day, 1-person emergency kit and the misfortune of having their celebratory photo appear here.

One more thing! That marshmallow had to be at the very top of the tower—and nobody was allowed to do any munching on it until after the judging.

The exercise forced individuals on a team to quickly get to know each other, choose a team leader, make a plan, try some prototypes, and then put it all together very, very carefully!



THE WINNERS!

It took this team of four CERT engineers only 18 minutes to build the tower shown—which might have been able to withstand an 8.0 earthquake! Even rocking the table didn’t topple it. Well done, TEAM!!