



The CERT Team

EFFORT



Vol. 1, Issue No. 3

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Teton County, Wyoming Community Emergency Response Team News & More

UPCOMING:

JUL 14 — Monthly meeting in Station #7 training room, 1800-2000. Rehab in-depth.

JUL 16 — 0830- (?) Quarterly meeting of LEPC, Station #1.

AUG 27 — Annual picnic & monthly meeting with ICP & multi-module training exercise, 1730-2130.

SEP 1 — National Preparedness Month begins.

SEP 14 — Monthly meeting, 1800-2000. TBD.

OCT 22 — Monthly meeting, 1800-2000. TBD.

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REHAB: It's more than just passing out pizzas!

If you took a survey of Teton County CERT members, asking them to rate the value of their "rehab" assistance to the county's Fire/EMS first responders, you might be a bit surprised.

Some of those CERT members seem to view 'rehab' as an unimportant function, as though the same service could be provided by simply placing cookies and cocoa on a table, heating up some water for coffee, and turning the whole station into a self-serve operation.

And yet, on one sub-freezing afternoon last November, and again in below-zero temperatures last February (when several of those same CERT members rolled out of their warm beds at 3 a.m. to provide the rehab function for firefighters), they still responded to the

call to duty.

That may be why Jackson's mayor and council saw fit to bestow upon the CERT volunteers who responded to last November's "AmeriGas Incident" exactly the same honor given to their more-advanced partners: "Hometown Hero."

While some members of those two CERT strike teams still doubt that they did much to earn such an honor, the truth is, their rehabilitation efforts could have meant the difference between life and death for some Teton County firefighters.

Each year, about 80,000 firefighters around the nation are injured. About 100 more give "their last full measure of devotion" to their chosen occupation or in community service. (When fighting fires, there is not much difference between



CERT team members test out the seats in Teton County's Fire/EMS rehab bus in June.

doing it for a paycheck and doing exactly the same thing as an unpaid volunteer.)

Many of those firefighter deaths and injuries could be avoided. According to the National Fire

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CERT volunteers begin training with new Fire/EMS rehab bus

BY PAT SNYDER

Future CERT strike team members who are called out to provide "rehab" services to Teton County Fire/EMS and other first responders should be much better prepared than in the past.

In mid-June, several CERT members used their regular monthly meeting time to train with a new Fire/EMS trailer and several pieces of new equipment. This month they will follow up that hands-on exercise with classroom work, in which they will gain a much more thorough understanding of rehabilitation.

Teton County Fire/EMS Chief

Willy Watsabaugh introduced the CERT volunteers to his expanded rehab concept and equipment at the June meeting, which was held at the Adams Canyon fire station. On July 14, Chief Watsabaugh will use the CERT meeting in Fire Station #7's training/conference room to go into much more detail about firefighting rehab.

In the past, a spare Fire/EMS truck, crammed with disorganized equipment, has been driven to any fire scene in which rehab services would likely be needed. While that set-up provided basic rehab operations, Chief Watsabaugh

has long wanted to have a dedicated rehab vehicle that is fully stocked with specialized equipment and ready to roll into action.

Also, in the past, the rehab function has been carried out by one or two of the on-scene firefighters—whose skills and training could be much better used for more-important functions. Last November, a CERT strike team that was called out to provide rehab services proved how they could be handled by an auxiliary organization—thus freeing up the Fire/

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)

August CERT meeting will be a REAL picnic!

CERT members who make time to attend this year's annual picnic are in for a full basket of fun-filled activities, including one of the best training exercises of the year.

To be held on August 27---in the Teton County EOC---the meeting will begin with a meal from Bubba's Bar-B-Que Restaurant, provided by Teton County Emergency Management.

While they are finishing their Bubba's burgers, the picnickers will watch a



PowerPoint presentation by Kathy Clay, Teton County Fire Marshal. Last November, Clay served as Incident Commander when a propane delivery truck caught fire at AmeriGas in Jackson, touching off an explosion and fires that set destroyed vehicles and buildings.

Seeing that the incident was going to extend over several hours, Clay requested a call-out of about a half-dozen CERT members to set up and operate a rehab station in the southwest corner of Smith's parking lot. Within minutes, more CERT volunteers than could be used came rushing to the scene, after being summoned by Nixle text messages and emails from Rich Ochs, Teton County CERT and Emergency Management coordinator.

Despite sub-freezing temperatures all afternoon, the CERT strike team functioned well enough to encourage Teton County Fire/EMS Chief Willy Watsabaugh to follow through with his plans to provide special rehab training for CERT members and to stock a dedicated vehicle with both old and new equipment. That vehicle has now been obtained, and the

training has begun.

After the AmeriGas incident, Clay prepared a half-hour presentation about how a command post is set up and operated which she will show to the CERT picnickers. She and Ochs will then review what the members just saw and prepare them for a training exercise that will simulate several of the same techniques. The incident will involve search and rescue, fire control, medical triage, first-aid, and

practice using the communications protocols that they studied last winter. In addition, team leaders will also sign out both equipment and supplies from the newly re-organized CERT trailer, practicing their requisitioning and inventorying skills.

"This should be an excellent, very comprehensive exercise involving several CERT disciplines," said Ochs. "We will soon appoint a committee of members to work out the many details, so that everything is as realistic as possible, and very much like what our volunteers would encounter in almost any type of incident. We especially want to improve their skills in following the standard procedures for using radios at various venues."

Rich said he is hoping to obtain the same realistic "fake wounds" that were worn by "victims" during Teton County's last full-scale exercise, and perhaps a machine that produces "smoke." Depending on the number of "victims" who sign up, some of the "injured" may have to be the same small puppets that CERT members have rescued and treated in previous exercises. (All CERT members are being asked to volunteer their young-

er brothers and sisters or other family members to serve as "victims.")

Rich said CERT's popular BullEx fire extinguisher training tool will be used to simulate a real fire in the parking lot of the Adams Canyon fire station center. In the nearby "training tower" for firefighters, searchers will have to find and triage several "injured" victims, who will be taken to a predetermined site for first-aid treatment.

Throughout the "incident," Clay will act out the role of Incident Commander, following a set scenario but also answering any questions that the CERT volunteers may have about incident command "This will be an amazing exercise," Rich said, "made all the more realistic by having Kathy stay around after her presentation and perform the same functions that any incident commander would go through. We really appreciate her assistance. This will not only allow our CERT members to see what an incident commander actually does but interact with her as well, just as they would in a real incident."

A brief "hot wash" review of the incident and all activities will conclude the training exercise, Rich said, not to criticize any miscues but to show everyone how they might improve.



The CERT Team EFFORT is a quarterly publication of Teton County Emergency Management, 3240 S. Adams Canyon Dr., Jackson, WY 83001. Any opinions expressed may not be held by TCEM or the Teton County Citizen Corps Council, which guides and primarily supports the Teton County CERT team. To comment on our articles, suggest story ideas, or to contact us for any other reason, please email us at em@tetonwyo.org.

Is Teton County **HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH?**

Just how hazardous is Teton County?

Well, if you ask Barb Beck, of Beck Consulting, the one-word description might be “very.”

Beck is charged with gathering public input on all of the assorted natural and manmade hazards that exist in Teton County, in order to update the county’s “Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan.” That title, in itself, might suggest that Teton County is not the safest place in the world (but certainly has to be in the running for one of the most beautiful).

Updating the county’s plan for identifying and mitigating hazards is not a local, state, or Federal requirement, according to Rich Ochs, Teton County Emergency Management coordinator, “but it is highly recommended.”

Actually, such a plan IS required, from the standpoint of applying for and receiving mitigation grant money from the Federal Emergency Management Administration—and also has to be approved by the State of Wyoming.

Teton County’s current mitigation plan expired in February, and Beck has been accumulating public input about what kinds of hazards exist in the county and what can be done to lessen their impact. In May, a public brainstorming session was held at the Teton County Public Library, and last month Beck took her whiteboard show on the road, making a presentation at the regular quarterly meeting of the Teton County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), one of 3,000 similar organizations that were created by Congress to plan for hazmat emergencies. (More than 100 local organizations are represented on the Teton County committee.)

Teton County’s Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan was last updated five years ago, in 2009. It has a goal of lessening the possibility of loss of life, injury, or property damage in the event of a disaster. By increasing public awareness of the kinds of haz-



ALL TALK, NO ACTION?— Not quite! Teton County Local Emergency Planning Committee members listen to Barb Beck (center) describe her update work on the county’s “Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan” Public comment was made in May at the Library, and a draft plan should be ready in August. The purpose of the plan is to both identify hazards and ways to mitigate them if and when they occur. (PHOTO BY FRED WHISSEL)

ards local communities must contend with, planning officials hope to improve their overall preparedness level, and when a disaster does occur, having a plan in place to deal with them speeds up the receipt of Federal funds to assist in recovery. Moreover, mitigation projects that are proposed for funding in advance of a disaster are more likely to be approved with such a plan in place.

Based on public input, Teton County has about every kind of potential hazard possible, short of a hurricane, typhoon, tsunami, or other oceanic-oriented event. The area is subject to drought, dam failures, floods, earthquakes, hail, hazmat spills, landslides, lightning strikes, snow avalanches, tornadoes (on rare occasions), wildland fires, winter storms, and even terrorism. (You aren’t hallucinating when you think everything is out to get you: it probably is!)

Ochs said the original intent of the plan preparation was to identify natural disasters, but man-made threats are now included. Because hazardous areas compete for

Federal funds on the basis of several criteria, including population, Wyoming is at a disadvantage by having settlement centers that are so few and far between, so it must pool together for certain funding that only entire states may apply for.

In the current plan, Teton County set four goals and proposed 45 mitigation projects, some 18 of which were funded and completed, while some are still ongoing. Leading the current list of priority projects is remodeling and expanding Station #1, Teton County Fire/EMS’s main facility, which has problems with diesel fumes, a lack of space for fire apparatus, and a lack of shielding against seismic events. At the LEPC meeting, Beck outlined several other proposed projects that have been identified either by the public or by the organizations involved. This month she will return for a more in-depth review, and will follow that up with the preparation of plan in August that will be presented at a joint town/county meeting.

NWS spots a ‘Hole’ new group of weather watchers

Look! Up in the Sky! Is it a bird? Is it a plane?

No, with any luck it will just be that “strange visitor” from another county, who is “faster than a speeding” pullet, “more powerful” than a loco automotive mechanic, and able to leap tall ant hills “in a single bound.”

Right. Chris Jones is his name, and forecasting weather is his day vocation game.

Periodically, the National Weather Service’s leading stand-up comic travels to Jackson from his office in Riverton to do a two-hour routine for a whole new audience—and always leaves ‘em laughing.

Officially, Jones is the Riverton office’s “Warning Coordination Meteorologist,” or second-in-command behind Meteorologist-in-Charge Kevin Lynott, but he just can’t seem to keep his “day job” in mind. He would rather be out in the field, training still another group of citizens to become amateur weather reporters, or giving them magnetized refrigerator cards with the catchy slogan “When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!”

(So whaddya expect? Keep in mind who we’re dealing with here.)

It’s Jones’s job to travel around the western corner of Wyoming and teach common citizens such things as the difference between a shelf cloud, a wall cloud, and a drugstore shelf in Wall, South Dakota.

Actually, what Jones wants everyone to know is how to use whatever communication means they have available to report the what, when, and where of local weather events to the National Weather Service, so that this information can be used to prepare weather alerts.

Perhaps the easiest way for weather spotters to report their spottings is to call Riverton forecasters directly, at 1-800-211-1448. They can also go to www.weather.gov/riv and use a form that has been designed for less-urgent reporting.

“Often times, we just don’t know what is occurring,” Jones told a group of spotters-to-be at the Teton County Emergency Operations Center in May. Due to certain limitations caused by distance, terrain, or other factors, the NWS’s Doppler radar-based antennas simply cannot “see” all of the sky’s weather phenomena. So the weather forecasters depend upon the receipt of field reports from its “eyes in the field.”

“But this isn’t ‘Twister’ 101,” Jones explained. Hopping in your truck and trying to outrun a tornado before it spins you into the sky “is not what we are asking you to

do.”

What the NWS needs, Jones said, are just the basic facts about what kinds of weather phenomena are passing through your area, so that they can issue an “Outlook” (good for one to seven days), a “Watch” (good for one to six hours), or a “Warning” (good for only an hour or less). Stated differently, he noted, those three types of alerts mean to “Be Aware!” or “Be Prepared!” or “Take Action!!!”

Jones said the newly crowned spotters should report:

- Any tornado, funnel cloud, waterspout, or “wall” cloud
- Hail of any size (“pea-sized” hail measures one-quarter inch in diameter, 1” hail is the size of a quarter, golf-ball-sized hail is 1.75” in diameter, a tennis ball is 2.5” and a grapefruit is 4”)
- Damaging winds (usually greater than 50 m.p.h.)
- Flash flooding

Ironically, less than two weeks after Jones played Jackson, flash floods tore through the tiny town of Lusk, WY, causing widespread damage that literally washed away many homes and businesses. Several Teton County residents, including Teton County Emergency Management Coordinator Rich Ochs, were on the scene for days, helping with recovery efforts.

Jones’s standard presentation—filled with jokes that slip up on you like a finger of fog—is full of facts and photos that show a wide variety of western weather conditions. Many of the photos have been taken by amateur observers and posted on social media websites like Facebook, using high-resolution cell phones “which have really changed the way we do business,” Jones said.

Among the typical weather phenomena that are found in Wyoming’s western mountains, but seldom elsewhere, are periodic “microbursts,” or a type of windstorm that can wipe out several acres of loosely anchored aspens or similar trees in just a few seconds. On the other hand, western Wyoming seldom experiences tornadoes.

What’s the difference between a “tornado” and a “funnel cloud”? That is one of the distinctions that is still often reported incorrectly on televised weather programs, Jones said. (If the funnel never actually touches the ground, it never becomes a tornado.)

Jones also taught the class how to tell the difference in tornado strengths, using the

“Enhanced Fujita Scale,” which considers the life (in minutes) of the touchdown, the length of the path, and the velocity of its spinning wind. Around 69 per cent of all tornadoes, he said, are classed EF 0 or EF 1, while the strongest and most-destructive tornadoes are EF 5, with paths of 50 miles or longer and wind speeds of 165 miles per hour or more. In Wyoming, the strongest tornado on record is an EF 4 (winds of 65 to 110 miles per hour) that slammed through Yellowstone National Park on July 21, 1987.

Along with his magnetic refrigerator cards and “Skywarn” weather spotter certification cards, Jones distributed copies of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s “Basic Weather Spotters’ Field Guide,” an 18-page manual that tells spotters everything they need to know about weather reporting but were afraid to ask. (The NWS is a branch of the NOAA.) Additional copies are available from the Riverton NWS office.



THE WHETHER MAN — Stand-up comic Chris Jones of Riverton’s National Weather Service office “clicks” again with his very punny performance and spotter training class in Jackson.

(PHOTO BY FRED WHISSEL)

Pizzas...

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Protection Association (NFPA), 43 per cent of America’s annual firefighter deaths are due to “sudden, cardiac death,” while 34 per cent are due to “internal trauma.” The remaining causes of death involve stroke, asphyxiation, burns, gunshot, and “other.”

Fighting fires is hot, dangerous, strenuous work, and periodic breaks are not only recommended but required, in order for firefighters to cool down, warm up, rehydrate, or relieve some of the inevitable physical and mental stress that they must deal with.

According to the NFPA, much of the danger to firefighters is due to the combination of having to work hard in a hot environment, while wearing heavy protective equipment that makes it difficult to cool down by sweating. As a result, dehydration occurs, heat builds up, and the body’s core temperature rises, causing stress.

And that’s where “rehab” comes in. Firefighters must follow certain guidelines to make certain that—after a “time out”—they are physically and mentally able to resume their challenging duties in protecting both people and property.

For instance, after draining a full “self-contained breathing apparatus” (SCBA), or after 20 minutes of “intense work” without wearing a SCBA, a firefighter MUST “self-rehab” for at least 10 minutes. That means rehydration with rest. As the work level goes up, so does the need (and complexity) for “rehab,” which also becomes more detailed.

At some point, firefighters require far more than cookies, cocoa, coffee, pizza, and bathroom breaks. They have to have a cool (or a warm) place to remove their personal protective equipment, a means to rehydrate and restore the lost fluids that regulate body temperature, the ingestion of more-nourishing foods—and even a medical evaluation every 10 minutes.

It may come as no surprise that many of those trained medical evaluators are EMS volunteers. But did you know that CERT rehab volunteers are likewise expected to make medical assessments?

Working under a firefighter coordinator appointed by the Incident Commander, CERT strike team members have to

follow specific guidelines in siting, setting up, and operating rehabilitation centers: “NFPA 1584 Standard on the Rehabilitation Process for Members During Emergency Operations and Training Exercises.”

In fact, a four-hour “module,” using a 40-page manual, has been prepared for use in training CERT members interested in serving on a rehab strike team. In this month’s regular CERT meeting, Teton County Fire/EMS Chief Willie Watsabaugh will cover those details and mandates, including “CERT members will continuously monitor a firefighter’s physical state when he or she is in the rehab area, as it can change suddenly.”

To prepare for the meeting, CERT members are encouraged to download and read the manual at www.fema.gov. (Do a Google search for “CERT Firefighter Rehab Participant Manual” and choose the “PDF” entry.)

The module manual covers several other aspects of rehab, such as these: CERT volunteers will NEVER self-deploy but will mobilize only upon request by an Incident Commander; they will arrive at the site in full Personal Protective Equipment (including reflective vest, gloves, and helmet); they must log in (and out) all firefighters at the rehab area; they must help firefighters remove their heavy gear; and they must evaluate firefighters both as they enter the area and before they leave. Among the medical indicators monitored by EMS personnel are blood pressure, pulse, respiration, temperature, and hydration/nourishment. CERT volunteers are expected to both assist the EMS evaluators by recording their findings and make their own observations of each firefighter’s “mental status,” as well as notice and report any “signs of distress.”

(In Teton County, CERT members and others involved in making such assessments have a “Responder Peer Support Team” to join and obtain information about how to go “from regular life to emergency mode in a very short period of time” without themselves becoming overwhelmed by stress. The team is headed by Anpeytu Raben, a CERT volunteer, who issues a newsletter on “Critical Incident Stress Management.”)



Kyle Carmichael assembles a propane-fueled hotpad-type heater during the first rehab training session in June.

Does that mean a CERT rehab volunteer has the power to prevent an obviously dehydrated or stressed-out firefighter from going back into the heat of the action? No—not even more-skilled EMS evaluators have that power. But both EMS and CERT rehab personnel are charged with a responsibility to call a firefighter’s sub-par condition to his or her supervisor, not only for the individual’s well-being but for the good of all.

“Providing full rehab services for our firefighters involves a lot more than just passing out pizza and hot chocolate,” said Chief Watsabaugh. “The CERT volunteers who undergo our rehab training will perform a very vital and much-appreciated function during emergencies that would otherwise tie up the highly trained manpower and skills that we always need elsewhere.”



FIREFIGHTER REHABILITATION BY DEFINITION:

“Firefighter rehabilitation is the process of providing rest, rehydration, nourishment, and medical evaluation to members who are involved in extended or extreme incident scene operations.”

What's a duck? (What you do when an asteroid is aimed at your nose!)

It's too late now, but you probably forgot to celebrate Asteroid Day.

Never heard of it?

Neither had we—until a story popped unexpectedly into our reading path a month or so ago. And suddenly we were thinking about the world's largest emergency preparation project.

It seems that more than 100 leading scientists (Bill Nye the Science Guy), astronauts (Apollo 9's Rusty Schweickert), business leaders (Peter Norvig of Google), rock stars (Brian May of Queen), and other concerned residents of our rather puny planet—in the greater scheme of things—are lobbying their governments and taxpaying populations for a slight increase in the amount of money that is being spent to detect and monitor asteroids.

In case you may not know the difference between an asteroid and an asterisk, the former is one of those mysterious, rock-like bodies that suddenly show up in deep space, and appear to be aimed right at our nose—until some obscure scientist calculates that it will actually miss us by a mere country mile.

(For you non-farmers, that is about the distance from the Earth to the Moon—or less. In space-speak, it is anywhere from 150,000 miles to less than the orbital elevation of some satellites.)

Unless a newly discovered asteroid is larger than almost anything that you would call a three-car garage, unless we first see it so far away that it is nearly invisible, and unless it burns up as it bullets through our atmosphere during entry or bounces off it entirely, there is no real need to be concerned.

A year ago, an asteroid smoked through the atmosphere over Tunguska, Siberia, and the only damage it caused was the complete destruction of an area the size of a major metropolis, about 800 square miles.

In 1917, a slightly larger asteroid skidded through the skies over another barren area in Siberia and exploded before landing, but took out an entire, fortunately unpopulated forest.

And way back in the Dinosaur Period, some millions of Jurassic Park years ago, a slightly larger asteroid dived into the Gulf of Mexico and threw enough ash and other debris into the atmosphere to block out the Sun's rays for months, or at least long enough to cause the extinction of almost all life on Earth.

Hardly worth a second thought. But more and more residents of this Big Blue Marble are realizing that we have always been—and will always be—a sitting-duck target for such everything-ending asteroids, and they want more done to prevent (or at least mitigate) it.

Thus was conceived "Asteroid Day," which on June 30 commemorated the first anniversary of the Tunguska wipe-out. Its found-



ers want to stimulate significantly more interest in finding and deflecting asteroids. Specifically, they believe a mere one-hundred-fold increase in worldwide spending on asteroid searches should be enough to keep us all alive.

The aim is to detect all asteroids of a significant size that are still far enough away from Earth for us to be able to deflect them, by at least enough to whiz by the Earth at a safe distance. We have the technology. We can rebuild him. We (*Oops—sorry, wrong story*). We already have magnetic deflectors able to lock on to the iron particles in an asteroid and—over millions of miles—slightly shift its orbit.

Given mankind's propensity for avoiding the issue and then botching the ball on the first time around, spending more money on the project may not be possible. Whether or not the world's governments get behind efforts like the "100x Declaration" may depend on convincing the potential victims (Guess who?) of the finality of failure. That, in turn, may require us to use every tool available to publicize Asteroid Day.

Which is why you have just read about it in a CERT newsletter.

Not really appropriate in a CERT newsletter?

Well, can you think of any other GREATER emergency preparation project than one that involves the life or death of every single human, animal, or vegetable organism in the world?

Neither can we.

GTNP observes 90th anniversary

This year's Grand Teton National Park training day and park clean-up day occurred just one week after the 90th anniversary of one of the Park's most storied events.

On June 23, 1925, one whole section of Sheep Mountain slipped downhill at a speed of 50 m.p.h., dumping some 50 million cubic yards of debris into the valley below. In less than five minutes, the geologic phenomenon created the Lower Slide Lake Dam and left a scar on the mountain that is still visible today (that big bare spot on the mountain as you look eastward from U. S. Route 26 near the Gros Ventre intersection.



(U.S. PARK SERVICE PHOTO)

Fire/EMS rehab trailer training rolled out...

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

EMS responders to carry out those more-critical functions.

“Rehab” is shorthand for rest and recovery. First responders on break need a place to rest, warm up (or cool off), and replenish their spent energy with food, liquids, and perhaps heat or fan-cooled air. The rehab location must also serve as a place where trained medical personnel can evaluate responders involved in extreme or extended operations, to make certain that they are not overdoing it.

Last November, during the AmeriGas Incident (in which a propane truck caught fire and ignited several nearby vehicles and buildings), a CERT strike team was called out to set up tables and chairs in Smith’s parking lot, make and serve hot coffee, cocoa, cookies, and even a couple of dozen donated pizzas. They also secured three propane “hurricane” heaters (on-loan) to warm weary firefighters during an afternoon of sub-freezing temperatures.

A similar fire early one morning last

“...they are providing a truly worthwhile service,” —*Rich Ochs, Teton County Emergency Management Coordinator*

February brought another CERT strike team to the rescue—and proved to Watsabaugh that his concept of having a dedicated and stocked rehab vehicle with a trained rehab team would work. All he had to do was find a vehicle—and a place to park it—, purchase some new equipment, and train a team in how to set up and operate everything.

Jackson Hole Security gave its support to the effort by providing both a bus and a place to store it, and Chief Watsabaugh obtained funding for new equipment from the Teton County Local Emergency Planning Committee in January. At the June CERT meeting, team members unpacked the new equipment, set it up, tested it, and packed it in the vehicle. A brainstorming session followed, to obtain ideas

about what additional equipment (such as a tent) might be useful. Further testing of the new equipment will follow in July, along with the classroom session and exercises in which CERT members simulate being on-site at various emergencies.

Once the rehab bus is fully functional, and CERT members are fully trained, it will be made available to other organizations as needed, Chief Watsabaugh said.

Rich Ochs, Teton County’s Emergency Management and CERT Coordinator, said the new rehab operation concept shows just how valuable trained CERT volunteers can be to area service organizations such as Fire/EMS:

“By substituting trained CERT volunteers for the more specialized members of their organization, everyone benefits. Those skilled firefighters will now be available to perform more-critical tasks elsewhere, the CERT volunteers will now know that they are providing a truly worthwhile service, and Teton County’s taxpayers will get even more for their dollars.”



ALL REHAB PHOTOS BY PAT SNYDER



Rehabitat for Humanity? Members unpack, assemble, test, and store new Fire/EMS equipment in the organization’s “new” bus at the June team meeting. They will continue training this month.

CERT volunteers meet critical community needs

One of Teton County's most-active emergency volunteer organizations—certainly one of its most-visible—is the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). With their fluorescent green vests, white or green helmets, and blue latex gloves, it's hard to miss them as they assist professional first-responders in all kinds of emergency events.

But Teton County's CERT volunteers also take part in "non-response" activities throughout the year. They may be seen at the county fair or at K-Mart's annual "Safety Days," showing locals how to use standard fire extinguishers in their homes and businesses. They help Jackson Hole Fire/EMS distribute and demonstrate child car seats, and even provide basic first-aid services at local concerts.

Most recently, several CERT members were declared to be "Hometown Heroes" by Jackson Mayor Sara Flitner and the town council, joining dozens of other emergency responders in receiving that honor. All spent a sub-freezing afternoon last November responding to what became known as the "AmeriGas Incident," in which a propane tank explosion and surface fires at the namesake High School Road business destroyed three buildings and a dozen vehicles.

"Our CERT volunteers do a fantastic job whenever they are called upon to assist professional emergency crews," said Rich Ochs, the county's Emergency Management Coordinator, who also manages the CERT program and is responsible for the training of its members.

Rich said some 65 area residents—not all of them living in Teton County—are listed as "active," although the program has trained nearly 300 locals in such skills as light search and rescue, fire safety, and the provision of basic emergency medical services. Each person undergoes about 24 hours of training over a two-week period, including both classroom study and a final six-hour disaster simulation.

"Our objective is to train individuals in the skills that they need to help first themselves and then their families and their neighbors in the event of a local disaster. That relieves some of the pressure on professional first-responders. Program graduates are not required to join our CERT team after completing the Basic Training Course, but we encourage them to do so."

In 2014, CERT volunteers logged a total of 760.5 donated hours, worth nearly \$18,000, and took part in two exercises with public safety agencies, five activations, 12 training sessions, and nine public outreach events. They also taught almost 400 members of the public how to use fire extinguishers—one of their services that is most in demand.

The CERT program originated in 1986 in Los Angeles, in response to earthquakes, and soon went nationwide, with a goal of training and organizing community members to assist professionals in emergency situations and perform basic first-aid services until professionals arrive. Since 2003, CERT has been part of the Individual and Community Preparedness Division of the Federal Emergency

Management Agency (FEMA), and a partner program in the Citizen Corps Council.

As Emergency Management Coordinator, Ochs has his office in the county's Emergency Operations Center on Adams Canyon Drive, where agency policy makers gather to assist and support on-site crews during emergencies. Along with calling out CERT volunteers, Rich can activate about 25 town and county personnel (some of whom are also in CERT) who have been specially trained as EOC Staff members. They may serve as message runners, answer phones, fill simulated positions during exercises, and perform other duties during both real and simulated emergencies.

"Whether as CERT members or EOC Staffers, these volunteers contribute greatly to Teton County's emergency preparedness and response efforts," Rich added. "We are very fortunate to have so many volunteers who devote so much of their time and effort to helping others. They are truly dedicated to what they do, and it shows in their outstanding performance."

New CERT course in September?

With some 80 individuals on his list of would-be enrollees in a new CERT basic training class, Coordinator Rich Ochs said a new class is being planned for either September or October. If you are also interested in signing up, please contact him by calling 307-732-8594.

CERT trains GTNP employees on use of extinguishers (again)

Each year, 100 or so employees of Grand Teton National Park gather at their headquarters in Moose for three hours of training in such disciplines as the effective use of bear spray, providing first-aid assistance to Park visitors, and putting out small fires.

In groups of 15 or so, park rangers, administrative employees, and others who deal daily with the Park's native wildlife and thousands of human visitors sharpen their skills in horn-controlled sessions of strictly 15 minutes, shuffling from one training venue to another.

For the past several years, Teton County CERT volunteers have been an integral part of that annual training, by teaching those Federal employees how to use the dozens of small fire extinguishers that are posted around

the Park.

This year's GTNP training day was on May 30, and coincided with another annual Park event, "Clean-Up Day," during which a "Green Team" of Park employees joined concession workers and other "partners" in picking up the pieces of refuse and other items that have been left behind by careless visitors. (This year's winner for the "most interesting" trash title was a "zen garden"—whatever that is.)

Led by Teton County Fire Inspector Mike Vogt, CERT volunteers David "Huck" Henneberry and Fred Whissel managed to train 98 Park employees in the proper way to put out trash-can-sized fires that are fueled by such things as paper, cloth, combustible liquids, and electrical shorts. In previous years, CERT teams have run as many as 138 Park personnel through

the three-hour training sessions.

Instead of the normal, chemical-based extinguishers, the CERT trainers start a space-restricted fire with the team's BullEx apparatus. Based on pressurized water, it leaves no nasty residue to clean up, and also times the put-out effort of each trainee—allowing informal competitions with each other and also with their own times. (This year's record was 2.2 seconds, scored twice by the same person.)

In both group lectures and hands-on individual sessions the trainees learn proper extinguisher aiming techniques, the use of the "buddy system," which extinguishers are appropriate for which kinds of fires, and when to back off from a fire that they cannot put out. But the main message is always to call 9-1-1 and report a fire before trying to fight it.



**FLOODING
A COMMUNITY**

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