

PRESSRELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Community Emergency Response Team Training Begins

Michigan City, IN (September 15, 2003) – John Jones, Director of Michigan City's Emergency Management, announced that CERT training will begin on October 25th.

"Each year, many communities are rocked by severe weather, such as tornadoes, floods, winter storms, or by 'man made disasters,'" said Jones, "and the damages can affect everyone. Disasters can severely restrict and overwhelm emergency response resources, communications, transportation and utilities and can leave individuals and entire neighborhoods cut off from outside emergency support."

"We are offering Community Emergency Response Team courses," Jones continued, "to train people to take care of themselves and then to help others in their communities for the first three days following a disaster. This is when debris-clogged or damaged roads, disrupted communications, or high volume of calls may prevent access by traditional emergency response personnel. The purpose of CERT training is to provide citizens with the basic skills required to handle virtually all of their own needs and then to be able to respond to their communities' needs in the aftermath of a disaster. CERT members will self-deploy in our neighborhoods for up to 72-hours until traditional help can arrive."

The CERT course consists of 21 hours of training, held from 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays, October 25th, November 1st, 8th and 15th in the lower level of City Hall. Classes are taught by emergency responders, including firefighters, emergency medical and law enforcement personnel from the community.

The course agenda includes disaster preparedness, disaster fire suppression, disaster medical operations, light search and rescue operations, disaster psychology and terrorism overview.

"One of the most important functions of the CERT team during a disaster," Jones said, "will be managing and directing the untrained volunteers who arrive at a disaster scene and want to be of assistance. During the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attack, hundreds of thousands of volunteers appeared at disaster sites, police and fire departments, hospitals and Red Cross offices. While their help was needed, the trained emergency responders were needed to do the rescue work rather than to train those who wanted to help. The CERT team volunteers will help those untrained volunteers be productive while allowing the first responders to do their work."

Jones said, "Our goal is to establish CERT teams in each of Michigan City's neighborhoods. They'll be

empowered to respond to disasters that affect their families and neighbors. We've received a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant to start these classes, and as additional funds are available, we'll develop more teams."

Men and women 18 years or older who are interested in becoming a Community Emergency Response Team member should call John Jones at 219/873-1499 or contact him via email at jjones@emichigancity.com for a registration form. Training applications can be picked up at City Hall from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday in the Clerk's Department. More information on CERT teams can be found on the FEMA website at www.fema.gov/emi/cert.

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