

# Witherbee Residents Urged To Take Advantage Of Disaster Training (CERT)

By Larry Frisch

Margo Mckendree, Emergency Volunteer Coordinator for Volunteer Partners, has announced that a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training class will be available for Witherbee residents the weekend of Nov. 18, 19, and 20.

The CERT class I attended earlier this year was extremely interesting and rewarding. Taking about 20 hours, the course started Friday evening and ended Sunday afternoon with a simulated disaster. We learned how to prepare for disasters, assess structure damage, use basic fire suppression techniques and resources, assist emergency responders, conduct light search and rescue, set up triage areas, apply basic medical techniques, and help reduce survivor stress among other things. The emphasis was always on safety.

The CPR/AED class was conducted by the Red Cross and took one Saturday. Completion of this course leads to certification for both adult and child CPR.

The CERT concept was developed and implemented by the City of Los Angeles Fire Department in 1985. They recognized that citizens would very likely be on their own during the early stages of a disaster. Thousands of citizens have since been CERT trained in Los Angeles. The program was so beneficial that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) felt the concept could be carried nationwide. The goal of the training is to prepare people to help people. FEMA, through grants to local agencies is committed to supporting the training of local CERT teams across the nation.

Local CERT training got a big boost in January 2005, when Mayor Seng announced the formation of the Lincoln-Lancaster County Citizen Corps Council. Citizen Corps activities are funded by a Homeland Security grand administered through Lancaster County Emergency Management and operated by Volunteer Partners.

Volunteer Partners assisted in the processing of over 3000 volunteers and documentation of 20,000 hours of vol-



Freshly trained CERT team receives details of a simulated disaster at the State Fairgrounds. They will organize into specific task teams and use their newly acquired skills to deal with the "disaster".

unteer work during the relief effort following the Hallam/Lancaster County tornados last year.

Within the boundaries of the Witherbee Neighborhood, hundreds of children at Hawthorne School, and residents at Tabitha could be vulnerable in a disaster. We as good neighbors need to be able provide appropriate assistance if needed.

The free, no obligation, class is limited to 25 individuals on a first-come basis, so early sign-up is recommended.

Many retired people are especially suited to CERT training. Visit [www.WitherbeeNA.org](http://www.WitherbeeNA.org) for sign up form.

For more information contact Margo McKendree, Volunteer Partners, 435-2100, or Larry Frisch, 486-9380 or 560-4565. Web sites of interest: [volunteerpartners.org](http://volunteerpartners.org), [citizencorps.gov](http://citizencorps.gov), [ci.lincoln.ne.us](http://ci.lincoln.ne.us).

*"We, as good neighbors, need to be able to provide appropriate assistance if needed."*

Witherbee  
NA

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