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National Association For Search And Rescue To Partner With Citizen Corps

LEESBURGH, Va. -- Chief R. David Paulison, Director, Preparedness Division, Emergency Preparedness and Response Directorate within the Department of Homeland Security, today announced an official affiliate partnership between the National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR) and Citizen Corps. At the 2004 NASAR Conference in Lansdowne, VA, NASAR and Citizen Corps agreed to raise public awareness about emergency preparedness and search and rescue as a critical component of community safety through the state and local Citizen Corps Councils.

Chief Paulison expressed support for the affiliation saying, "NASAR's comprehensive search and rescue training program builds on the introductory training in the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program. It provides citizens interested in search and rescue the opportunity to pursue a greater role in responding to emergencies and disasters in their communities."

The National Association for Search and Rescue is a non-profit membership association dedicated to advancing professional, literary, and scientific knowledge in search and rescue and related fields. NASAR is comprised of thousands of paid and non-paid professionals interested in all aspects of search and rescue throughout the United States and around the world. NASAR has trained over 30,000 responders since 1989 utilizing its internationally respected SARTECH® Certification Program. NASAR is dedicated to ensuring that volunteers in search and rescue are as prepared as the career public safety personnel with whom they work on a daily basis.

Citizen Corps is the Department of Homeland Security's nationwide grass roots movement to actively involve everyone in America in making our community and our nation safer, stronger, and better prepared for emergencies. Citizen Corps provides local opportunities for everyone to participate in hometown security and community/family preparedness through public education and outreach, training opportunities, and volunteer programs to support local first responders. Through a nationwide network of 1,200 local Citizen Corps Councils, Citizen Corps brings together the homeland security expertise of emergency responders with the energy and spirit of volunteers, the private sector and other community stakeholders to engage the whole community.

In addition to the four charter Citizen Corps Programs, Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), Medical Reserve Corps, Neighborhood Watch, Volunteers in Police Service, and the Department's citizen preparedness Ready campaign, Citizen Corps has also partnered with 18 other affiliate programs to help coordinate a range of opportunities in which citizens can participate. As a vital component of USA Freedom Corps, Citizen Corps encourages citizens of America to answer the President's "call to service" and take an active role in hometown security. To find out more about Citizen Corps and to find a local Council nearest you, please visit www.citizencorps.gov. To learn more about NASAR, visit www.nasar.org.

From the Program Coordinator's Desk by Gary Zulinski

Where do I start? Michigan Citizen Corps has added two more councils. Recently signed on are Northville Township and Washtenaw County. Washtenaw County is unique in that the point of contact is Skip Lawver from Eastern Michigan University. This is the first council where the point of contact is an academic institution. The partnership with Eastern will produce many new endeavors and projects that I am excited about. Eastern wants to assist Michigan Citizen Corps in translating the CERT program into Arabic. I have spoken with officials in Dearborn and

they are excited about this project. I will keep everyone posted on the progress.

Eastern also wants help in packaging the CERT program for secondary schools. They are actively going to pursue getting CERT into Washtenaw County schools. If any council is interested in introducing CERT into your schools contact me and I will furnish all with the Eastern model.

We now have 23 county councils and 15 local councils. Michigan Citizen Corps has seen a 192% growth since August of 2003 and the 38 councils serve 77% of Michigan's population.

The National Citizen Corps Conference is schedule for July 27-29 In Denver Colorado. I will be attending and will bring news from around the country. Watch the August E-Bulletin!

Again I want to stress that The Red Cross Blood supplies are extremely low and what a better way than to introduce your council to your community and join with an affiliate like the Red Cross by sponsoring a blood drive. It only takes one disaster to deplete the supply of blood. "Giving blood is the gift of life" Contact your local Red Cross chapter to sponsor a blood drive.

A reminder that on the National Citizen Corps web site there is a discussion forum. All you need to do is log in and access the discussion forum. There are the four program topics along liability issues and general Citizen Corps discussions.

Speaking of liability-House Bill 5416, an amendment to include Citizen Corps trained volunteers in Public Act 390 "Emergency Management Act". Has been passed by the House and is presently in committee in the Senate. It is expected the bill will be passed by the end of summer. You can access the bill at <http://www.michiganlegislature.gov/> and track its progress. Michigan Citizen Corps has been working hard on this effort to protect the Citizen Corps Councils of Michigan and my special thanks to Bill Lukens of the Red Cross and Nicole Gee for your efforts in this matter.

Al-Qaeda plans U.S. attacks

By Kevin Johnson and Mimi Hall
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON -- Attorney General John Ashcroft cited "credible intelligence from multiple sources" indicating that terrorists plan to "hit the United States hard" in the next few months. He expressed concern that some operatives may already be in the USA preparing to strike.

Ashcroft and FBI Director Robert Mueller displayed photographs of seven people associated with al-Qaeda whom they are seeking. The seven are not linked to any specific threat and are not believed to be working together. Six had been previously identified; the seventh, Adam Yahiyeh Gadahn, an American convert to Islam from California, was a new face. "They all should be considered armed and dangerous," Ashcroft said, urging Americans to be vigilant.

Some of the seven have spent considerable time in the USA, Ashcroft said. "We are not able to say with certainty where they are at this particular time," he said.

The attorney general provided little new information about how attacks might be launched. Some of the information lacked the specificity that triggered the most recent major threat warning at Christmas, resulting in the cancellation of numerous international commercial flights.

Instead, Ashcroft cited claims, published after a train bombing in Madrid killed 191, that al-Qaeda's plans for new attacks in the USA were 90% complete. And officials reiterated their fears about possible attacks on what Ashcroft called "attractive targets." They include Saturday's dedication of the National World War II Memorial in Washington, expected to draw about 125,000; a meeting of world economic leaders in Sea Island, Ga., on June 8-10; the Democratic National Convention in Boston on July 26-29, and the Republican National Convention in New York on Aug. 30-Sept. 2.

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge said the warning from Ashcroft and Mueller is "a reminder that law enforcement leaders . . . are coordinating their work to combat terrorism." He said there are no

plans to raise the national threat level from yellow to orange, indicating a high risk of attack. That could cost state and local governments millions of dollars. "We don't have to raise the threat level to raise our level of security," Ridge said. He said extra precautions could be taken where the threat may be greatest without subjecting less vulnerable places to the same costly deployments.

Citizen Corps Highlights Successful Councils

C. Suzanne Mencer, Director of the Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness within the Department of Homeland Security, today announced new resources for Citizen Corps Councils available on the Citizen Corps website. Ten communities from around the country provide their shared view of how to start a Citizen Corps Council and profile their own activities. The profiles provide case history on developing, implementing, and sustaining a Citizen Corps Council and include on-line links to supporting materials.

"The information captured here will be extremely useful to communities around the country who are working to bring Citizen Corps to their area," said Ms. Mencer, "Many thanks to the communities included here for their willingness to share information and for their unfailing support of Citizen Corps."

The experience of these Councils exemplify important considerations for all Councils: the importance of connections and relationships in forming the Council; the need to be flexible and adaptive while staying focused on the mission; and that there is no one right way, but that we can learn from each other as we develop what works best in each community.

These profiles also highlight how the national Citizen Corps mission is tailored to each community and demonstrate local creativity and flexibility in designing an approach to accommodate the unique attributes of the community, including size, geography, and population diversity. Examples of local activities conducted by these ten communities include:

- **Arlington County Citizen Corps Council** (VA) used focus groups to find out more about the needs of special populations, and discovered that Arlington's elderly hesitated to leave their homes to refill prescriptions during the sniper shooting of 2002.
- **Belvidere Citizen Corps Council** (IL) tapped into the City's unusually high youth population to create Belvidere's Youth Citizen Corps, which operated car washes to raise funds for local Citizen Corps affiliates and volunteered thousands of hours to address a wide range of community needs.
- **Fresno Citizen Corps Council** (CA) formed an effective community network by building strong working relationships among a diverse array of key community stakeholders, and provided training programs in Spanish and several Southeast Asia languages for its diverse residents.
- **Harris County Citizen Corps Council** (TX) expanded their communication reach to the community with a 211 phone system which keeps residents up to date on impending weather problems and also linked its Web site to the Harris County Office of Emergency Management to provide real-time radar pictures and current rainfall totals.
- The Kansas City area already had an existing umbrella organization, the **Kansas City Metropolitan Community Organizations Active in Disaster** (MO), to coordinate critical services to individuals and families in times of disaster. So its members jumped at the opportunity to build on this existing structure, rather than building a new Council from the ground up.
- The **King County Citizen Corps Council** (WA) designed a process for conducting community needs assessments, focused on aggressive CERT training, and drafted an amendment to Washington's Good Samaritan law to protect volunteers from potential emergency-related lawsuits.
- The **Lancaster Citizen Corps Council** (PA) brought technology to the job without breaking the bank by soliciting contributions

from area companies and public-sector entities to provide safe school planning and information sharing tools and software for the Medical Reserve Corps.

- The **Orlando Citizen Corps Council** (FL) tapped into the range of experience and the breadth of interest in the community leadership by rotating the Council leadership every two years. They are also supported by an elite group of Hometown Security Volunteers who are trained in four different Citizen Corps Programs to take the reins at the neighborhood level.
- The **Citizen Corps Council for Homeland Security of Southern Arizona** (AZ) keeps volunteers on the cutting edge of bio-terrorism planning by running mock attacks and response drills. They assembled a crew of 50 nurses for their Vaccination Strike Team, and worked with state licensing boards to reduce the cost of maintaining licenses for retired medical professionals.
- The **Tulsa Project Impact Citizen Corps Council** (OK) put structure to their efforts with a seven-step action plan led by interdisciplinary Safe and Secure Teams to help neighborhoods, businesses, and other organizations become better prepared through assessment, education, and preparedness projects.

In profiling these ten communities, we also recognize the hundreds of other Councils who are doing their part to ensure we fulfill the mission to engage everyone in America to prepare, train, and volunteer!

Homeland Security from Citizens' Perspective

Washington, DC--When it comes to ideas and actions to improve the nation's homeland security, the American people--our most important resource--have plenty to say.

Their concerns and suggestions set the agenda for nearly 50 recommendations for national action in a new Council for Excellence in Government report,

We the People: Homeland Security from the Citizens' Perspective.

Among the recommendations:

The President should direct the Department of Homeland Security to convene leaders from federal, state and local governments, the private sector and civic organizations to update the National Strategy for Homeland Security, with input from citizens.

State and local governments, schools and workplaces should update and practice their plans, with direct involvement of citizens, parents and employees.

Local governments should produce index cards of critical information in a user-friendly format that can be distributed in multiple languages through many channels to homes, workplaces and schools.

Local officials should set up one telephone number (similar to 311 or 911) for citizens to report homeland security threats and emergency information; and offer citizens a service that will send emergency information to phones, cell phones, email addresses, pagers and other personal communications devices.

The President should designate the month of September, as "Homeland Security Preparedness Month" and governors, mayors and other leaders should plan events to amplify the effort. The National Strategy on Homeland Security should set the goal of a seamless network for authorized public safety officials to share information and talk to each other at a level of reliability and security that can withstand the demands of a national emergency. The recommendations reflect an unprecedented conversation with people across the country and nine months of broad-ranging activities by the Council to look at the entire homeland security enterprise through citizens' eyes. The effort included seven major town hall meetings (St. Louis, Miami, San Diego, Houston, Fairfax, Boston, and Seattle) and national polls which were reviewed by expert working groups to identify ideas and activities--at the national, state and local levels, in the public sector, private sector and in communities and homes across America-- for individual and collective action.

"These homeland security recommendations are truly of, by and for the people," said Patricia McGinnis, President and CEO of the Council for

Excellence in Government. "Our hope is that leaders within the homeland security enterprise--as well as everyday peoples--will use them as a blueprint to make the citizens' homeland security vision a national reality."

The recommendations are targeted at all levels of government, from the President, the Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies, the U.S. Congress, and state and local governments to schools, the first responder community, private employers, managers of privately-owned critical infrastructure facilities, industry and trade associations, the local and national media, and families and individual citizens.

Topic areas for the recommendations cover a wide landscape— collaboration, informed and engaged citizens, strategic/appropriate uses and sharing of information, and innovation and rigorous evaluation. Other recommendations propose that: State and local governments include reporters in homeland security training exercises as active participants.

Citizens view their personal information as a valuable asset and learn how government and businesses collect, use and store it.

The Federal Communications Commission issue a frequency "re-banding" ruling to deal with public safety radio interference.

The President and the Congress call for an independent review of the Privacy Act and related legislation.

The U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate consolidate authorization and oversight of homeland security programs into a single committee. "These ideas represent the citizens' agenda and will significantly improve the nation's capacity to prevent, prepare for, and respond to terrorist attacks as well as other emergencies and natural disasters," McGinnis added.

The recommendations were presented to U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge and will be distributed to governors, mayors, members of Congress, industry leaders, trade and professional organizations and civic groups immediately.

Medical Reserve Corps Is On Call

Dallas Morning News (TX)
By Debra Dennis

As a registered nurse, Nicole Hines is accustomed to battling medical problems brought on by disease. Ms. Hines, 33, is now preparing for a more precarious enemy – terrorism.

"I wanted to be able to lend my skills in a crisis situation," Ms. Hines said.

"It's the unknown that makes people fearful," Ms. Hines said. "We're trying to prepare through practice so the more practiced we are, the less fearful we are."

Ms. Hines, who works in the epidemiology division of the Tarrant County Public Health Department, has placed herself on the front line of defense. The Keller mother of two has joined the Medical Reserve Corps – medical professionals who volunteer to respond to possible health emergencies, reduce panic and coordinate treatment.

"My family has mixed feelings," said Ms. Hines, who holds a nursing degree from West Texas A&M University. "They're very proud but very anxious as well."

The new medical corps is a regional effort of volunteers whose skills go far beyond first aid and basic CPR – like dentists, doctors, nurses and pharmacists.

"Everything we're doing is preparing us to be in a stronger place," said Lou Brewer, director of the Tarrant County health department. "A large part of our response is being ready. This has really helped us prepare for a large-scale emergency. We feel really poised and ready."

"Safeguarding our community against new public health threats requires innovations and skills that were not part of public health's toolkit," Ms. Brewer said.

Tarrant County officials are operating the unit, which includes medical professionals from Denton County.

A second unit has been established in Dallas County.

A total of 100 medical workers have joined the corps, officials said.

"This gives us some standardized roles to take so in a crisis situation there's no guesswork," Ms. Hines said.

In March, Ms. Hines joined other medical professionals at a disaster training conference in Dallas. Training consists of trauma response techniques, the use of specialized equipment and crisis management.

"We're on the front lines and for me it's kind of personal," said Ms. Hines. "I'm three generations military, so this was kind of the way for me to contribute without actually having to be in the military. It's just an enhanced version of what I do every day."

Last month, Tarrant County was recognized for its emergency preparedness – the only county in the state to receive the honor.

The National Association of County and City Health Officials commended the county for its work in three categories: individual worker competence, drills and exercises, and planning.

The corps was created in response to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The corps is open to retired or working medical professionals. It works with area police and fire departments.

North Richland Hills Fire Chief Andy Jones said his city is not only working on disaster preparation with the county, but it is training some of its residents. North Richland Hills is among the 13 member cities of the Northeast Fire Department Association, which provides response teams for hazardous materials and explosives.

"We've only got a finite amount of resources and if we have widespread injuries, we won't be able to get to everybody right away," said Chief Jones.

"Everyone should have a plan."

For more information about Michigan Citizen Corps, contact the Program Coordinator, Gary Zulinski at (517) 241-3867 or zulinskig@michigan.gov.

***We all have a role
in Hometown Security***

Citizen Corps asks you to embrace the personal responsibility to be prepared; to get training in first aid and emergency skills; and to volunteer to support local emergency responders, disaster relief, and community safety