

Final Progress Report

For FY 04 Homeland Security Grant Program ~ Citizens Corps Grant from the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency CFDA # 97.053 1/15/06

This is the final progress report for this grant project and summarizes the activities of the Phelps County Disaster Committee since November 1, 2004 through January 15, 2006.

Project Manager: Joe Council and Buz Harvey

Lead Committee Members: Joe Council, Buz Harvey, Diane Hagni, Ron Smith, Jason Finch, Jodie Waltman and Edna Bridges.

Status of Project

The Phelps County Disaster Committee (PCDC) developed an ambitious scope of work for this project that included: 1) Development of a Medical Reserve Corps, 2) Establishment of weather shelters in the county, 3) Support for Neighborhood Watch groups in Phelps County, 4) Support for the fire safety school education program, 5) Support for the Red Cross on incidents in the county, 6) Development and training for a Phelps County Citizen Corps.

Despite the turnover of some key volunteer personnel who were responsible for taking the lead on some of the programs, the committee accomplished most of what they set out to do in the original scope of work. Five weather shelters have been established in the county. Signs and materials were purchased and distributed to Neighborhood Watch groups. Educational materials were purchased and distributed to Phelps County schools through the Rolla Fire & Rescue Department. Educational materials to promote better preparedness were provided to the Phelps County Chapter of the Red Cross. Training was provided to Phelps County residents through the Citizens Corps training program. Introductory meetings were held to recruit volunteers for the Medical Reserve Corps and through these meetings PCDC has developed an advisory committee to continue working toward the establishment of a Medical Reserve Corps in the county.

In September 2005 Joe Council, who had chaired the PCDC, asked that someone else take over as chairman of the group and Buz Harvey was elected as the PCDC chair. Mr. Harvey then asked the Meramec Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) to get involved with the PCDC in order to get as much of the original scope of work accomplished as possible before the grant deadline of November 30, 2005. A contract for services was developed and approved by both the PCDC and by Jamie Dake at SEMA. MRPC has provided technical assistance and support to the PCDC to help this group move forward. Good progress was made on the scope of work and details of what was accomplished are listed below.

Project Activities

- **Fire Safety.** Funds were provided to the City of Rolla Fire and Rescue Department to purchase handout material for grade schools 2nd through 6th grade. Publications provided included: “Report an Emergency”, “When Disaster Strikes”, “Child Tornado”, “Adult Tornado”, “Child Water Safety”, “Adult Water Safety” and “Emergency Phone Numbers”. Rolla Fire and Rescue personnel did presentations on preparedness and safety in all of the K – 12 schools in Rolla. For all other schools in the county, the materials were either delivered to to the fire chief or the school resource officer (police). These same materials were used for the Home Expo, which was held in Rolla, the Phelps County Health Day, Home Safety Day at the local Lowe’s and Walmart stores and any other events where the fire department sets up informational booths.
- **Incident Support for Red Cross.** Funding was provided to the Phelps County Chapter of the Red Cross for educational supplies and Disaster Action Team supplies.
 - The Red Cross purchased “Master of Disaster Curriculum” and distributed these materials to schools in Phelps County where there was an interest.
 - The Red Cross purchased disaster related brochures and distributed them in schools, at special events held in the communities and civic clubs where the Red Cross provides presentations.
 - The Red Cross purchased identifying vests for the Disaster Action Team so that fire victims, fire departments, etc. will know who they are.
- **PCDC Mapping Project.** The PCDC worked with Chuck Pedersen of the US Geological Survey and with County Assessor Kevin Rasmussen to make maps available to individual Neighborhood Watch groups that would allow them to recognize quickly the perimeters of their watch area and to take an inventory of all resources and threats within their area of concern. The Phelps County Assessor has released aerial photos to the PCDC for training and planning purposes. In September, Pedersen also conducted computer map training tailored specifically for first responders in Phelps County.
- **Neighborhood Watch.** Signs were purchased by the Phelps County Sheriff’s Department for use by Neighborhood Watch groups throughout the county. Sheriff’s Deputy Carmello Crivello and Jason Finch with the City of Rolla Police Department have been distributing these signs on an as needed basis.
 - While chair of the PCDC, Joe Council attended three NW meetings in the county to share information about PCDC and Citizen Corps program.
 - Buz Harvey also attended four NW meetings after becoming chair of PCDC. He has been working with Chuck Pederson of the US Geological Survey to promote the use of a mapping program available on the internet that will benefit emergency preparedness and response planning at the local level. Mr. Pederson

developed and provided training on the software for NW members in December. The training includes the basics on how to use the program, discussions of how it can benefit NW groups and free copies of Phelps County data that participants can use to plug in pertinent information in their neighborhoods.

- Buz Harvey has also talked to the local emergency planning committee-- MREPC—and informed them of the activities of the PCDC, as well as his vision of using the PCDC as a model for other county disaster committees around the region.
- **Citizen Corps.** Joe Council has taken the lead on the Citizen Corps program in the county.
 - Several press releases and articles were submitted to The Rolla Daily News for publication, and subsequently published, encouraging citizens to become involved in safety and emergency preparedness in their homes, businesses, and community. A web page (at <http://www.rollanet.org/~disaster>) was established to assist in information dissemination and exchange. An electronic mail list of participants and interested persons was developed and has been used to directly inform those persons of important events and issues relevant to emergency preparedness and response.
 - In 2004 and 2005 the PCDC staffed an information booth at the Rolla Volunteer Fair, at which brochures and flyers were made available to the public on the topic of household and personal safety, emergency preparedness, and disaster mitigation. The brochures consisted of locally-developed material as well as material from the Salvation Army, American Red Cross, Missouri State Highway Patrol, Citizen Corps, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), and other programs.
 - Following the hurricane Katrina and Rita disasters, the PCDC provided support for the Phelps-Pulaski office of the American Red Cross by assisting with the setup of workstations to process displaced families arriving in the region.
 - PCDC sponsored a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training session on January 21 and 22, which was free and open to all Phelps County residents. This training was attended by 24 individuals. An effort to formally organize Phelps County CERT was not successful, but will be continued in the future.
 - PCDC sponsored a National Weather Service Severe Weather Spotter seminar on March 9 2005, which was free and open to all Phelps County residents and public-safety personnel. This seminar was attended by 24 persons from the private and public sectors, including Missouri State Highway Patrol, County Sheriff, municipal police, and fire & rescue personnel.

- PCDC sponsored a Family Emergency Preparedness Forum on April 23, 2005 at The Centre in Rolla. The event was free and open to all Phelps County residents who were interested in learning more about preparedness during a disaster. Speakers included representatives of the Phelps County Health Department, Red Cross, Neighborhood Watch Program, CERT, Rolla Fire and Rescue Department and PCDC.
- **Weather Shelters.** Diane Hagni, who was with the Salvation Army until October of this year, was in charge of establishing short-term weather shelters in Phelps County. The committee chose to focus on areas outside of the City of Rolla—smaller communities such as Edgar Springs, Newburg and St. James.
 - Potential shelters, such as churches and schools with basements, were located and contacts were made to determine if the people in charge of the facilities were interested in serving as short-term weather shelters for their communities. Numerous contacts were made and after several follow up conversations, five sites confirmed their interest in serving as shelters. Letters of Understanding were developed by MRPC and distributed by Ms. Hagni to the weather shelter host organizations.
 - In addition, a kit of short term shelter supplies was developed, items procured and distributed to the shelters. A kit includes a weather radio, first aid kit, bottled water, cups, trash bags, “Weather Shelter” signs to post outside the building and fliers to distribute in the local community. Copies of the fliers and the Letter of Understanding are attached. The fliers include a list of the designated shelters.
- **Medical Reserve Corps.** This was a project that suffered when the original lead person left their position with the Health Department mid-year. However, several key issues were addressed on this project. A list of equipment needed in case of a local disaster was developed. The list was submitted to SEMA for their review and the following items were approved for purchase: two wireless laptops, two sets of two-way radios and a digital ID card system. Procurement was completed and the laptops and radios have been purchased.
 - The digital ID card system proved to be problematic. SEMA asked that the PCDC make sure that any system they purchased would be compatible with a statewide digital ID card system that is under negotiation. MRPC staff met with Matt Buydos, a representative of Elliott Data Systems, Inc., the company working with SEMA. Mr. Buydos provided an excellent presentation on the capabilities of the digital badging systems his company provides. However, the cost of this system (\$6,000 to \$7,000) was significantly higher than the committee had originally planned for, and it was decided that the PCDC would forego purchasing this equipment at this time.
 - MRPC staff met with Gary Brown, the Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator for Region VII EPA to find out more about MRCs around the state and nation. The

PCDC directed MRPC to do a public information meeting on MRCs and send out invitations to all the licensed medical professionals in Phelps County. Staff developed a list of these professionals, created a flier and mailed out a letter of invitation, with the flier to post in medical offices and hospitals to all the physicians, hospital facilities and ambulance districts in the county. Copies of the flier and letter of invitation are enclosed.

- Two meetings were held—one at 3 p.m. and one at 6 p.m. on November 15 at the Centre in Rolla. Gary Brown provided a presentation on MRCs and provided ideas on the form that these organizations can take in a community. Buz Harvey, chair of PCDC and Jodi Waltman with the Phelps County Health Department talked about the PCDC and their expectations for a MRC in the community. Edna Bridges, the Phelps County Chapter of the Red Cross talked about what kinds of training the Red Cross could provide to volunteers. Attendees at the meetings included local physicians, psychologists and representatives of the St. James Ambulance District and University of Missouri-Rolla retirees association.
- Buz Harvey asked the attendees to serve on an advisory committee that would look at the county's needs for medical assistance during a disaster and provide a plan for addressing those needs through a MRC. Mr. Harvey developed an outline for the next steps to take in establishing a MRC and that document is attached.