Keeping Your CERT Team Energized

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Presentation Overview

1. Overview of Wilton CERT
2. Clearly define your CERT Team’s mission parameters (what services you will provide)
3. Provide regular training in those areas
4. Ensure that you have the appropriate equipment and PPE to deliver those services
5. Market the Team’s skills so that callouts/activations take place
What is Wilton CERT?

- Formed as a team in 2004
- 100+ Members, >60 active
- 20+ activations per year
- Average of 13+ members per call-out (same or higher during the work day)
- Recognized as one of the top CT CERT teams
- Regular Train - Local, regional and state level
- Funded through Town/FD budget, plus private donations and state grants
What Do They Do?

- Provide Support to Emergency Services:
  - Scene security – Incidents and wires down
  - Traffic control – Road closures
  - Pedestrian/crowd control – Town events
  - Emergency sheltering
  - Missing person search
  - EOC Support
  - Emergency water and food distribution
What Do They Do?

- Provide Support to Emergency Services (continued):
  - Accountability/credentialing
  - Deploy specialized equipment
    - Emergency traffic signage
    - VMS signs
  - Light towers
  - Scene lighting
  - Damage assessment
  - Mutual Aid assistance to Bridgeport, Westport and New Canaan Teams
Social Media & EOC Support

- CERT members maintain the Social Media accounts for **Wilton CERT** and **Wilton Emergency Management**
- Emergency and Community Preparedness

Scribe, WebEOC and social media monitoring/posting at EOC
Wilton CERT Resources

- 2 Shelter Trailers
- 1 CERT Trailer
- Light Towers
- Variable Message Signs
- Three pop-up tents
Wilton CERT Resources

- Use of Town vehicles, when available (magnetic signs)

- Fire Department
- Police Department
- Potential use of vehicles from health and other departments
Wilton CERT Resources

- **Response Vehicle**
  - Part of long term plan
  - Purchased in 2014
  - Paid for with Town funds (2/3) and donations (1/3)
  - Major impact on morale and Team member commitment
Keeping Them Energized

- Common problem – Team members seem to lose interest

- What do we mean by “Energized”?
  - Equates primarily to “attraction and retention of members”
  - Key to each facet of unit success is essentially and primarily dependent on **frequent, responsible and valued activity**
  - Everything that follows is what produces that result

- It is possible, but it takes some work
Ideas & Best Practices

➢ Need support from the town leadership
  ➢ Provide opportunity to build & display their skills and competence levels
  ➢ Having the right town liaison to CERT is key to the success of the team
  ➢ Include CERT representatives in planning meetings and make them feel part of the emergency services team
  ➢ Must have adequate, but not significant amounts of funding
Ideas & Best Practices

- Earned recognition and respect
  - Town Leaders
  - All First Responders
  - The general public
  - The media
- Numerous examples of each impacting favorably on Wilton CERT
- Need a multi-year plan, with milestones
Ideas & Best Practices

Activity, Callouts & Activations

- Training and sheltering alone will not be enough to keep the Team members motivated and engaged.
  - Start by using the Team in low hazard situations (i.e., large public events assisting other Public Safety agencies).
  - Will promote team organizational and skill building.
  - Cross train with other cert units, learn best practices.
  - Use a activation/notification system (i.e., Yahoo Groups, CodeRed, etc.)
Ideas & Best Practices

➢ The Team needs a strong leader & organizational structure

➢ Key areas include Operations, Administration, Tactical Communications, Social Media/Public Relations, Logistics, etc.

➢ Leadership must identify each member's areas of interest and qualifications, then train/delegate related duties accordingly.
Wilton CERT Organization

First Selectman & Board of Selectmen

Police Chief

Fire Chief

Emergency Management Director

Executive Director
Wilton CERT

Operations Officer

Director of Training

Logistics Officer

PR & Social Media

Deployment Captains & CERT Members

Management positions are predicated on experience, performance, and reliability of response
Ideas & Best Practices

- Operations Officer
  - Effectively communicate with field and command level emergency responders
  - Understand incident objectives and deploy assets & Team members in accordance with the IAP
  - “Without Operations Officer TG Rawlins, Wilton CERT would be nothing”
  - “Attendees at the CCM Conference deserve to hear his name and learn of his extraordinary contributions to any success we enjoy”
Ideas & Best Practices

Marketing & Public Relations

- Be sure that you put the right person in charge of this critical area
- Become best friends with the local newspaper editor (needs free advertising)
- Social Media –
  - Frequent and relevant postings are essential, especially during emergencies
  - Monitor postings by public to help refine your social media messages and content
Ideas & Best Practices

- **Visible proof of recognition and reward**
  - **Stuff** – The trailer, response truck, equipment, etc.
  - **Recognition** – Recognize Team as often as possible for their commitment and actions
  - **Space** – A place for the Team to meet at least monthly (community center room, FD/PD training room, etc.)
  - **CERT Clothing & Apparel** – Prompts conversation while out in the public

These tell our members they are noticed and valued & that Wilton CERT is a organization with which people will wish to be affiliated
Sometimes You Get Lucky

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

POLICE: MYSTERY SOLVED IN MISSING COUPLE CASE

CNN

CERT

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM
Summary

1. Define – Clearly define your CERT Team’s mission parameters (services you will provide)
2. Training – Provided regularly in mission areas
3. Equip – Ensure that you have the appropriate equipment and PPE to deliver those services
4. Plan – short & long term
5. Market Team qualifications & skills
   a. Improves recognition & respect
   b. Ensures that callouts/activations take place