

Border Community SERVICE

Special Emergency Response Volunteer Initiative for Community Empowerment

www.niagara.edu/bordercommunityservice

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY

DECEMBER 2009

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CERT: Shelter Operations and Mass Care Training at Niagara University on Saturday, January 9, 2010

The American Red Cross /Niagara County Chapter and Border Community SERVICE will partner from **9am until 4pm on Saturday, January 9, 2010** to offer two courses intended to prepare CERT volunteers for service when meeting the needs of people displaced as a result of a disaster. The course is free.

Shelter Operations is an instructor-led, basic level course designed to give participants and overview of the ARC policies and procedures for setting up, running, and closing a shelter during a disaster. The course includes lecture and group exercises. It is 3 hours in length.

Mass Care Overview involves video segments, instructor lectures and classroom activities and is intended to provide an overview of Mass Care group activities in support of a disaster relief operation. This course is also three hours in length.

All CERT volunteers in the Buffalo-Erie-Niagara region are invited to attend. Please register at <http://www.niagara.edu/mass-care/> or call Steve Morgan at 286-8023 or smorgan@niagara.edu.

BSA Emergency Preparedness Merit Badge Workshop

When: Saturday, December 12, 2009 (9:00am - 4:30pm)

Where: Niagara University, Dunleavy Hall - Room 127

Registration Deadline: Close of business, Tuesday, December 8

Online registration at <http://www.niagara.edu/merit-badge-workshop-registration-2/>

Niagara County H1N1 Flu PODs Announced - Volunteers Needed

Friday, December 11, 2009 at Newfane Elementary School

2909 Transit Road, Newfane, NY 14108, 10 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Volunteers should plan to arrive by 9:00 a.m. if possible. The students will be vaccinated from 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.; the public will be vaccinated starting at 4:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 15, 2009 at Pratt Elementary School

(Barker School District), 1628 Quaker Road, Barker, NY 14012, 10 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

If you can volunteer, please contact Jayne Ferguson (NCHD) at 716-439-7439 or jayne.ferguson@niagaracounty.com. Please remember that CERT Volunteer opportunities are posted regularly at our website: www.niagara.edu/bordercommunityservice. We hope you will check it often and volunteer when you can. NCHD January POD details will be posted soon.

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Border Community SERVICE

Niagara County

Steve Morgan

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A Lot Can Happen in Two Months

I started at Border Community SERVICE a little over two months ago. Since that time I've had opportunities for learning the ropes, meeting people, going to meetings and classes all while trying to wrap my head around citizen preparedness and integration with emergency responders.

I made new acquaintances in the professional responder community and renewed old friendships. I met some awesome volunteers who have the interest and the dedication required to make successful partnerships with emergency responders.

I've met many seniors and parents in my regular lunch time presentation on emergency preparedness. Many had stories, experience or questions that were thought provoking and provided meaningful information for those who have a mind for preparedness.

Even though I have nearly 30 years experience as an EMT (23 years as a paramedic) and just about the same amount of time as a volunteer firefighter on Grand Island, I found that I learned new skills and knowledge during the CERT training class in the Town of Tonawanda. The triage process used in CERT is by far better than any other formal training I have received. Size up practice is always helpful too. Size up is a review for me and acts as a reminder to always be vigilant; always think about "what if" scenarios; always consider contingency plans.

My co-workers have been a great help. Specifically, in understanding how the BCS functions, how to navigate "The University" and also in understanding what has been accomplished before my arrival.

As we approach the New Year, I look forward to working with our many volunteers to increase skills and knowledge and to assist teams in their journey to develop successful missions and organizations. I also look forward to working with leaders in the emergency response community to foster and develop the understanding and utilization of citizen preparedness programs. Skills enhancement trainings in the region, public health events, and public education events are all places that I see as opportunities in the coming year.

To borrow a quote from Robin Williams in the movie *Bicentennial Man*, "One is pleased to be of service". I wish for all of you in the Citizen Preparedness Community and your families a happy, healthy and prosperous holiday season and new year. Please contact me if I can be of assistance in any field of endeavor.

City of Buffalo

Dana Estrada

716.851.4299

Household Hazardous Materials

The December 3rd presentation at Medaille College by Pati Aine Guzinski of the Erie County Department of Health on the topic "Household Hazardous Materials" was attended by members of City of Buffalo, Amherst and Greater Niagara County CERT. The presentation included a basic introduction to household chemicals and a review of basic chemistry. Participants learned how to properly contain, dispose of and identify alternatives to common household hazardous materials. The information spurred some great conversation among the group members and provided attendees an eye-opening new look at the common household chemicals in use daily. To access the Household HazMat course as an independent study, please visit <http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/is55.asp>

Holiday Safety: An Ounce of Prevention

The biggest impact we can have in emergency preparedness is becoming oriented toward prevention. The old truism goes, “An ounce of prevention IS worth a pound of cure”. As we plan our celebrations this season, please take a moment to review some health and safety that may help you to avoid being a “Holiday Horror Story”.

Electrical overloads: *Do Not Overload Electrical Outlets.* According to the U.S. Fire Administration, you should not link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet. Make sure to periodically check the wires – they should not be warm to the touch and holiday lights should never be left unattended.

Trip and fall hazards: According to the Lynne Beattie of the National Council on Aging, an “older Americans” sent to the hospital every 18 second due to the effects of a fall. The causes of these falls are not complex: slipping on a loose rug, tripping over a cat and getting dizzy when standing up are some of the more common causes listed. In addition to removing household hazards, moderate exercise and regular eye exams can help reduce this \$19billion dollar per year epidemic.

Christmas tree safety: The U.S. Fire Administration reports that Christmas trees account for 200 fires annually, resulting in 6 deaths, 25 injuries and more than \$6 million in property damage. Typically shorts in electrical lights or open flames from candles, lighters or matches start tree fires. Well-watered trees not only smell better, but the also reduce the risk. Dry and neglected trees are a higher risk and also subject to spontaneous combustion.

Candles: Many people don’t heed warnings and safety rules when using candles and many who know the rule think “it can’t happen to me.” This sense of complacency was shown to be misplaced more than 15000 times last year. According to the National Fire Protection Association, the nation averages 15,600 candle-caused home fires each year. These fires result in 1,270 are injuries and 150 deaths. Among the rules of candle safety are:

- 1) Do not leave candles unattended (even for a moment)
- 2) Do use containers such a cans, heat resistant globes and other holder for all candle
- 3) Do keep candles safe distances from plants, draperies and overhead shelves & cabinets.

Plants and other common poisons: Keep common baking ingredients such as vanilla and almond extract out of reach. They contain high levels of alcohol and may be harmful to young children if swallowed. Some beautiful, but poisonous seasonal plants include azalea, Christmas cactus, Christmas rose, crown of thorns, English and American ivy, and Jerusalem or jimson weed. Holly and mistletoe berries also are poisonous. These plants would be used with the safety of pets and children in mind. It’s also a good idea to keep the phone number for poison control nearby, or, if in doubt, call 9-1-1 right away.

There are many more hazard prevention issues of which to be aware. Many tragic events occur though out the year, but tragedies during the holiday season seem to have an added punch of sadness. With a little effort and attention we can all avoid being “front page news”.

Happy Holidays to our wonderful
volunteers and
community partners!

Things to Consider Before Winter Storms and Extreme Cold Arrive

As fall ends and the winter season approaches, here are some things to consider in addition to your regular routine for winter emergency preparedness.

Add the following supplies to your disaster supplies kit:

- Rock salt to melt ice on walkways
- Sand to improve traction
- Snow shovels and other snow removal equipment.

Prepare your home and family

- Prepare for possible isolation by having sufficient heating fuel; regular fuel sources may be off.
- Winterize your home by insulating walls and attics, caulking and weather-stripping doors and windows, and installing storm windows or covering windows with plastic. Winterize any other structure that may provide shelter for your family, neighbors, livestock or equipment. Clear rain gutters; repair roof leaks and cut away tree branches that could fall on a house or other structure during a storm. Insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic and allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing.
- Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them. House fires pose an additional risk, as more people turn to alternate heating sources without taking the necessary safety precautions.
- Learn how to shut off water valves (in case a pipe bursts).
- Know ahead of time what you should do to help elderly or disabled friends, neighbors or employees.

Prepare your car.

- Check or have a mechanic check the following items on your car:
 - Antifreeze levels - ensure they are sufficient to avoid freezing.
 - Battery and ignition system - should be in top condition and battery terminals should be clean.
 - Brakes - check for wear and fluid levels.
 - Heater and defroster - ensure they work properly.
 - Lights and flashing hazard lights - check for serviceability.
 - Oil - check for level and weight. Heavier oils congeal more at low temperatures and do not lubricate as well.
 - Thermostat - ensure it works properly.
 - Windshield wiper equipment - repair any problems and maintain proper washer fluid level.
- Install good winter tires. Make sure the tires have adequate tread. All-weather radials are usually adequate for most winter conditions. Maintain at least a half tank of gas during the winter season.
- Place a winter emergency kit in each car that includes a shovel, windshield scraper and small broom, and extra hats, socks and mittens.

Dress for the Weather

Wear several layers of loose fitting, lightweight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. The outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent. Wear mittens, which are warmer than gloves, and a hat. Cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs.

Receive Personalized Regional Traffic and Border Crossing Information on your Mobile Device or Computer

As the winter months approach, travel in the region can become more difficult. To help manage your travels through the region and across the international border, the Niagara International Transportation Technology Coalition (NITTEC) is pleased to announce the availability of MYNITTEC.

MYNITTEC is a personalized subscriber system jointly developed by NITTEC and the University at Buffalo (UB) that will provide real time traveler updates directly to users computers, mobile devices and cell phones. This service is provided free of charge to assist regional travelers in improving mobility, making travel more reliable and avoiding incidents and congestion on the regional expressway network and border crossings. Through collaboration with the UB School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, NITTEC is providing the system to enhance traveler information in the region. "The cooperation and collaboration between UB's Transportation Systems Engineering Laboratory and NITTEC provided a good opportunity to utilize the knowledge and skills learned at UB in working on a real-world project, while providing benefits to the community", said Shan Huang, Principal Project Developer and a Ph.D. student working with Adel Sadek, associate professor in the Department of Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering at UB.

Users can register for MYNITTEC from the homepage or Crossroads map page of the NITTEC website www.nittec.org. By completing the no cost registration, users are allowed to customize the traveler information received either by email or text or both. The individual routes by direction and segment of expressway or specific border crossing can be selected to reflect the registrants travel patterns. Notifications will be received only during the particular time frames selected.

"This service has been developed to help ease your daily commute by providing information on the condition of the transportation system. We want to help drivers make decisions that reduce their time in congestion," said Tom George, Executive Director of NITTEC. "This is another example of regional transportation partners working together to improve mobility through real time information sharing."

The MYNITTEC system will notify travelers of incidents and congestion on the regional transportation system. Users can also choose to receive notifications for alternative routes to their normal travel patterns. By receiving information on multiple expressways and bridges, the user can make informed decisions on route selection as conditions change.

"The Thruway Authority believes that providing customers with targeted traveler information will enable them to better plan their trips on the within the region," said Thruway Authority Executive Director Michael R. Fleischer. "As technology continues to evolve and provide transportation officials with better real-time information, we, in turn, are able to inform customers about major unscheduled incidents that may affect their travel. That being said, it is important that everyone arrives at their destinations safely - motorists are reminded to leave extra time for travel, wear their seatbelts, and keep their attention on the roadway."

Travelers registering for this service are reminded of the restrictions on the use of mobile devices in vehicles. The system utilizes technology to improve travel in the region, but should not be used in a fashion that is illegal or would create unsafe conditions.

For additional information contact:

NITTEC

www.nittec.org