

Volcano Community Emergency Response Team

July 7, 2018 regular meeting minutes

Team Leader Nancy Lakin convened the Volcano CERT monthly meeting shortly after 9 a.m. at Cooper Center. Also present: Sher Glass, Norman Walcott, Debra Chaffin, Bob Becker, Ting Ortiz, Teresa Evangelista, Doug Wilson, Duane Nakanishi, Ellen O'Dunn, Carole Slattery, Claudia Zirolì, Paul Lakin, Chris Corley and Leigh Critchlow.

As Nancy will be away, Chris will coordinate our Aug. 4 meeting. Program focus is under discussion.

Ellen reported that she spoke with Mayor Harry Kim following this week's community meeting in Volcano. On behalf of the Volcano Emergency Response Team, she asked him for assistance in getting funding to allow more training opportunities for area residents to ensure "more boots on the ground" in the form of volunteers helping during disasters..

"I was approaching it as we need more training up here (for Volcano-ites)," she explained. She will coordinate the training funding request with Patti Pinto, our county CERT volunteer administrator, who has a similar goal. Ongoing disaster response has just about worn out CERT volunteers in hard-struck areas.

Nancy thanked everyone who has been helping out with disaster relief, as well as those who volunteered with the Tropic Care free medical care program staged by the Army Reserve, the state Department of Health and Hawaii County. The massive operation had been planned well before the volcanic eruption destroyed 700 homes and huge swaths of residential and farming areas in lower Puna. The free health services turned out to be a special boon to many evacuees.

The island CERT conference planned for September is up in the air, due to ongoing overreaching emergency conditions, but we still are encouraged to continue taking the online NIMS courses. Bob noted that classes 100, 200, 700 and 800 are considered the basics for us to complete. Two of the four have been updated and now are labeled IS-100.c and IS-700.b.

Claudia noted a special upcoming program of service to the community, and encouraged us to spread the word. On Monday, July 23, at 6:30 p.m., Mountain View Library will host an Evening of Family Emergency Preparedness. Topics include creating your ICE (In Case of Emergency) recovery notebook, Family 72-hours kits, Disaster Preparedness and the Hawaii County CERT program. All are welcome, and admission is, of course, free.

Nancy thanked everyone who volunteered their time and talents to making the Volcano Fourth of July festivities a big success.

After a far-ranging discussion focusing on what needed to be handled differently, what worked and what really needs to be changed, from our CERT vantage point, the general consensus was that a formal Incident Action Plan is needed. Such a plan, administered by a standing committee of the Volcano Community Association, would go a long way toward ensuring cohesive staging and production of the annual event. And the important by-product would be a lot less wear and tear on the folks tasked with carrying out the myriad duties in any given year.

Bob described how the Incident Command System, once established, can make running any sort of an operation a smooth endeavor. And Incident Action Plans can be revised, as needed.

Carole and Nancy, both of whom have served as VCA presidents and parade chairs, will be on point with the VCA and Cooper Center Council. Carole, who earlier put together the first comprehensive compilation of Fourth of July elements, volunteered to work on coming up with a draft Incident Action Plan.

Bob and Chris noted it's important that we get all entities together to assess this year's event.

The "after-action review" pinpoints what went well, as well, said Bob. Because what worked, and "what you want to institutionalize" is equally or more important than what went wrong.

Duane noted that such a review, with broad participation from all involved, also lets the various entities become aware of problems encountered by other key participants.

Representatives from our Volcano CERT team will attend the upcoming Cooper Center Council meeting to discuss this further.

One of the key issues which has been problematic for years is parking, in particular access for physically challenged folks who want to view the parade and participate in the festivities afterward at Cooper Center. Suggested improvements: special shuttle service, more handicapped parking stalls, greater emphasis on promoting advance registration for special parking areas.

Also, parking along roadsides in certain areas renders streets to barely one-lane access, making it difficult, if not impossible, for an emergency vehicle to pass through.

Nancy shared an old draft of a Volcano CERT Code of Conduct and asked current team members to review it and suggest changes as needed.

Paul noted that the Department of Health wants to keep emergency stashes of the N-95 masks in the Volcano area. Some will be stored at the firehouse.

Sher is coordinating a Health and Safety Fair to be presented from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Oct. 7, following the Sunday Farmer's Market at Cooper Center. She invites folks to participate and/or attend. Contact her for more details as event planning continues. On tap, so far: demonstrations of AED and CPR; ICE binder demo; go-bucket mini workshop; hep-C testing; info about rat lungworm disease and mosquito-borne diseases.

As CERTs, we want to help the community, but we first must make sure we are prepared ourselves, as individuals and families, Nancy noted.

Duane reported that he has begun communication process with Civil Defense Administrator Talmadge Magno regarding the need for stress-management outreach efforts for residents emotionally affected by the ongoing volcanic emergency and related earthquake activity.

Respectfully submitted,

Leigh Critchlow, secretary