

Volcano CERT Minutes

Sept. 2, 2017 monthly meeting

Team Leader Nancy Lakin convened the regular monthly meeting shortly after 9 a.m. at Cooper Center. Also present: Hank Schwartz, Claudia Zirolì, Patti Pinto, Bob Becker, Sher Glass, Dennis McCartin, Sharon McCartin, Chris Corley, Paul Lakin, Snookie Mello, Doug Wilson and Leigh Critchlow.

Nancy asked team members to let CERT admin know if they will be able to attend the Hawaii County CERT Conference Friday and Saturday, Nov. 3-4, at the Keaukaha Military Reservation next to Hilo Airport. "We'd really like for you to attend," she said. Because food will be provided for all meals, coordinators need to get a pretty firm head count so they can plan accordingly for dinner on Friday night and breakfast and lunch on Saturday, when training and exercises will continue throughout the afternoon. Patti said participants are invited to bring "snacks for the snack table," however. She will be sending out a list to participants of what they'll be expected to bring, such as PPEs, for example.

Nancy noted that check-in will be from 3:30-4:30 p.m. on Friday, with activities expected to wrap up by 4 p.m. on Saturday.

The next Basic CERT training will be held at the Keaau Community Center Oct. 14, 21 and 28 and Nov. 4. The practice exercises and exam will be held, as usual, for certification on the last day. CERTS who attend the whole Nov. 3-4 conference will be allowed to recertify on that date.

Doug said the next FCC Amateur Radio Technician License Class will begin Nov. 2, running in the early evenings for five weeks at the Keaau Community Center.

Other announcements: Claudia -- folks can access www.training.safeandready.org to find out about Sept. 12-14 prepping-related webinar offered by the Safe and Ready Institute. She recommends it and will be participating. Also, there is a local LDS ladies' group which is going to stage a 24-hour "food epic" event focusing on preparedness. Another opportunity for us to learn and practice sustainability and resiliency skills. Patti -- Project 360 will be coming out soon with its Hawaii County-Centric Emergency Preparedness Booklet. She said it's going to be a terrific tool. Sher: On Sept. 17, at the Sunday Volcano Farmers' Market, the public is invited to get free Hep C tests. Aimed primarily at Baby Boomers, who may have had the disease for decades without knowing it, the testing is simple and involves a small finger prick.

September educational program

Doug conducted this month's program, focusing on Emergency Communications. Elements included "how to program your 2-meter radio," the ACS (Auxiliary Communications Service), "pro words" used in on-air transmissions to simplify and standardize communication, and how to work our Volcano CERT base station radio.

He suggested that it would be a good thing, even if we don't participate, to listen and experience how the traffic flow goes on emergency nets during the Oct. 21 SET, or Simulated Emergency Test, sponsored

by ARES, Amateur Radio Emergency Service. ACS will be part of the exercise.

He discussed and gave step-by-step basic rules for programming our handheld radios. We learned a lot, including the very true fact that the PL tone is "the key to the kingdom."

ACS is a volunteer organization created by Hawaii County Civil Defense Agency to serve as a "dispatch" between the EOC (Emergency Operations Center) at Civil Defense and amateur radio groups facilitating emergency nets throughout the community. ACS makes sure only information that is pertinent and/or requests that can be facilitated by the EOC get through to the EOC. Other needs -- less dire and/or more routine -- can be handled at a lower rung on the EmComm ladder.

Pro Words include such examples as "affirmative" instead of "yes"; "say again" for "repeat your last transmission"; "Roger" for "I copied your last transmission" ...

Doug opened up the ammo can mobile base station radio he designed just for Volcano CERT. All the components fit "just so" and Doug unpacked and connected and operated the radio in AC and battery modes while connected to a telescoping antenna he had set up outside. He went through the steps and procedures slowly, answering our questions, and getting us ready to use the 20-watt unit in an emergency.

He discussed the four categories of emergency traffic that travel to and from EOC during an emergency: EAM, RFA, RFI and SitRep. That is: Emergency Alert Message; Request for Assistance; Request for Information and Situation Report.

Patti noted that as long as the Internet is up, there is a SitRep function on the Hawaii County CERT website: hawaiiCERT.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Leigh Critchlow, secretary