



LAKES AREA CITIZEN CORP COUNCIL INFORMATION DOCUMENT



The upper Midwest is not immune from disasters and emergencies and in Southwest Minnesota we see extremes in temperatures, tornadoes, and other disasters. In 40 years our area has seen two F5 tornadoes (Tracy & Chandler) causing massive damage and loss of life. Murray County has a vested interest in disaster preparedness for its citizens and businesses.

Three main areas of hazards in Murray County are:

1. Weather Hazards (Severe Weather, Tornadoes, Wind)
2. Chemical Hazards (Farm chemicals and transported chemicals)
3. Pandemic Illnesses or Health Hazards

WHAT IS A CITIZEN CORP COUNCIL?

Major disasters in a community can overload the capability of first responders, especially during the first critical 12 to 72 hours of the event. The job of Citizen Corps is provide the community with a well-trained, readily available pool of local people who know their community and who can help during this critical time when outside assistance may have not yet arrived.

The purpose of Citizen Corps is to develop a systematic efficient and effective method for providing public education and training opportunities, stimulating wide-spread participation, and organizing volunteer programs to increase the safety of the community.

MAKE OUR FAMILIES AND OUR COMMUNITIES SAFER THROUGH:

Personal responsibility: Developing a household preparedness plan and disaster supplies kits, observing home health and safety practices, implementing disaster mitigation measures, and participating in crime prevention and reporting.

Training: Taking classes in emergency preparedness, response capabilities, first aid, CPR, fire suppression, and search and rescue procedures.

Volunteer service: Engaging individuals in volunteer activities that support first responders, disaster relief groups, and community safety organizations. Everyone can do something to support local law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services, community public health efforts, and the four stages of emergency management: prevention, mitigation, response and recovery efforts.

Local Citizen Corps Councils will:

- Promote and strengthen the Citizen Corps programs at the community level, such as Volunteers in Police Service programs, CERT teams, Medical Reserve Corps units, and Neighborhood Watch groups.
- Provide opportunities for special skills and interests;
- Develop targeted outreach for the community, including special needs groups;
- Provide opportunities of training in first aid and emergency preparedness;
- Organize special projects and community events;

- Encourage cooperation and collaboration among community leaders; and
- Capture smart practices and report accomplishments and
- Create opportunities for all residents to participate.

Starting a Citizen Corps Council in the Lakes Area (Lake Shetek & Lake Sarah) will help create the groundwork for the long-term security of our neighborhoods, our communities, and our county.

WHO SHOULD BE ON THE LAKES AREA CITIZEN CORP COUNCIL?

The Lakes Area Citizen Corp Council should have representatives from all served agencies that provide services to Lake Shetek & Lake Sarah along with citizens that live at the two lakes.

REPRESENTATIVES ON THE COUNCIL:

- Murray County Sheriff's Office
- Murray County Emergency Management Department
- Murray County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES)
- Lakes Area First Responders
- Tracy Fire Department
- Tracy Ambulance Service
- Balaton Ambulance Service
- Slayton Fire Department
- Murray County Ambulance Service
- Currie Fire Department
- Residents (Seasonal & Full time) of both lakes
- Lutheran Bible Camp Representatives
- Shetek Bible Camp
- Boy Scout Camp
- Schreier's Campground

WHAT DOES A CITIZEN CORP COUNCIL DO?

1. CREATE AN ACTION PLAN for a local *Community Preparedness Campaign* that involves the community in prevention, preparedness, and response activities.
 - a. Volunteer Management of programs.
 - b. Outreach, Planning and Partnering for Special events, such as summer events at the lakes.
 - c. Partnerships with Faith Based Groups and Places of Worship to have an active and vital role in the community disaster preparedness and response.
 - d. Regional Partnerships for CERT Training to Persons in the lakes area.
 - e. Create a Financial plan for managing costs for the council and programs.
 - f. Coordinate with County Emergency Management plans.
2. EDUCATE the public on safety - help citizens take an active role in protecting themselves, their families and their neighborhoods from harm, and teach citizens what to do in the event of a crisis.

3. Offer citizens new and existing VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES - educational information, and training courses to address crime, terrorism, and natural disaster risks.
4. PROMOTE all Citizen Corps programs and mobilize the community in a large scale event in the community.
5. RECOGNIZE ALL ACTIVITIES that promote prevention, preparedness, and response training as a part of Citizen Corps.
6. SUPPORT to first responders, if requested – match the needs of first responders with the skills and abilities of volunteers to make their families, homes, and communities safer from threats of terrorism, crime and disasters.
7. WORK WITH NEIGHBORHOODS – in the community to design a systematic way educate and encourage the public to participate in Citizen Corps.
8. ORGANIZE SPECIAL PROJECTS AND COMMUNITY EVENTS that promote Citizen Corps as well as utilize volunteers.

The Council reaches citizens where they work, live, play, and worship. They also promote the Citizen Corp programs thru media outlets, County Fairs, and other avenues to educate the citizens of Murray County and the Lakes Area on emergency preparedness and how they can help their neighbors.

THE LAKES AREA CITIZEN CORP COUNCIL WILL FORMULATE THE VISION FOR LAKE SHETEK & LAKE SARAH PROGRAMS:

There are five main programs within the National Citizen Corp program:

1. NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM: This program addresses crime and safety issues such as personal safety, home security and neighborhood watch.
2. COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT) volunteers take action in a disaster to help others until professional first responders arrive. These volunteers assist their families, neighbors, and co-workers by helping to assess damage and administer first aid, conduct search and rescue, and organize spontaneous volunteers.
3. MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS recruits active and retired medical professionals to help the medical and health communities during emergencies and to provide year round public education services. With the help of the local county health department and emergency medical services authority, the Medical Reserve Corps mobilizes, trains, and manages these volunteers.
4. VOLUNTEERS IN POLICE SERVICE (VIPS) assist the Murray County Sheriff's Department by performing various duties, including staffing the Crime Stoppers anonymous tip phone line and conducting handicapped parking patrols, to free up police officers for other frontline duties.
5. FIRE CORPS: The Fire Corps promotes the use of citizen advocates (volunteers) to support and augment the capacity of resource-constrained fire and emergency service departments at all levels: volunteer, combination, and career.

The first two programs (Neighborhood Watch and CERT) would be the place to start for the Lakes Area. The other programs can be developed over time and do not have to be created right away.

JOIN THE LAKES AREA CITIZEN CORPS

We hope you see the importance and need for developing a Lakes Area Citizen Corps program in Murray County, Minnesota and would like to join the team.

For additional information you can contact the Murray County Emergency Management office or visit the web site below.

MURRAY COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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Lakes Area Citizen Corps Web Site: www.LakesAreaCitizenCorps.org