



Homeland Security

# Citizen Corps December Newsletter



## BY THE NUMBERS

<b>Citizen Corps Councils:</b>	<b>2,098</b>
<b>CERT</b>	<b>2,429</b>
<b>Fire Corps</b>	<b>545</b>
<b>MRC</b>	<b>541</b>
<b>NWP</b>	<b>14,791</b>
<b>VIPS</b>	<b>1,468</b>
<b>Affiliates</b>	<b>25</b>

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## The View from HQ

Welcome to the Citizen Corps December newsletter! As we approach the end of the year, we should all make preparations for winter emergencies and flu season. In addition to precautions against seasonal flu, our hot topic this month is planning for pandemic flu. In this issue, you will find a brief overview on pandemic flu, as well as links to more in-depth information to help you prepare.

Also in this issue, the National Office of Citizen Corps had an opportunity to interview President and CEO of the Points of Light Foundation and Volunteer Center National Network, Robert K. Goodwin. The Foundation has been a Citizen Corps Affiliate since 2003, and its Volunteer Centers are active on many Councils around the nation. Check inside for Goodwin's insights on volunteerism and citizen preparedness, as well as examples of local coordination.

On November 27-30, the Office of Grants and Training held a National Conference to focus on A Partnership for Preparedness. Over 1,000 federal, state, and local government and non-profit leaders met in Washington, D.C.

Secretary Chertoff provided opening remarks and announced the Department of Homeland Security's goals for the coming year, one of which is to promote a culture of preparedness through Citizen Corps:

*"Preparedness is not at the end of the day just a government responsibility. The government does not own most of the assets in this country. We don't operate the business, and we don't employ most of the people. That's why it's a civic duty and a personal responsibility for individuals and private businesses all across the country to do their part in personal preparedness. We have to continue to promote a culture of preparedness through the Citizen Corps, which has at this point close to 2,100 councils in every state and which is training hundreds of thousands of people in communities all over the country in preparedness. And I want to thank you for your support and participation."*

## Ready Campaign Introduces New PSAs



The Department of Homeland Security recently introduced new public service advertisements (PSAs) through an effort between the Ready Campaign and The Advertising Council. The advertisements ask individuals to do three key things to prepare for the unexpected: get an emergency supply kit, make a family emergency plan, and be informed about the different types of emergencies that could occur and their appropriate responses. Since it began in 2003, the campaign has developed unique television, radio, print, outdoor and internet advertisements directed toward individuals and families, owners and managers of small and medium-sized businesses, and Spanish speakers. On November 14, 2006, the campaign released new PSAs for individuals and families, which take a documentary style approach using real people with honest, unscripted answers about their family's emergency preparedness plans as well as a new ad featuring First Lady Laura Bush. To view the advertisements or learn how to localize them for your area, visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).

## Flu Tips

Take common sense steps to prevent the spread of flu:

- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve or a tissue. Toss your tissue immediately and wash your hands frequently.
- Encourage employees to stay home when sick, and provide teleworking as an option.
- Plan in advance for child care, in the event that schools are closed.

## Tech Tip:

Help inform others about pandemic flu: Add a link to [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov) to your website's home page.

[PandemicFlu.gov](http://PandemicFlu.gov)

## Sources and useful links:

[www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov),  
[www.fluwikie.com](http://www.fluwikie.com)

[http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian\\_influenza/avian\\_faqs/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/avian_faqs/en/index.html)

[http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/File/MRC\\_Pandemic\\_Influenza\\_Planning\\_Guidance.pdf](http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/File/MRC_Pandemic_Influenza_Planning_Guidance.pdf)

## Hot Topic Pandemic Flu



Dead chickens. Global pandemics. Avian flu outbreaks. Vaccine shortages. In recent months, these topics have been a source of fear in the American public, as well as hotly debated discussion within the medical community. So, what do you need to know about pandemic and avian flu? Let's start with the facts.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, a pandemic is a disease outbreak that occurs globally. In the case of a flu pandemic, a new influenza evolves, for which people have little or no immunity and no developed vaccine. The disease spreads easily among humans, causes serious illness, and can sweep across the country and around the world in a very short period of time. In 1918, for example, a global pandemic killed 50 million people across the world—more than three times the number of people killed in World War I.

While the public often inaccurately identifies pandemic flu as synonymous with avian flu, avian flu is simply one type of potential pandemic influenza. Avian flu is caused by naturally occurring flu viruses in birds, which are normally harmless to humans. What most people think of when they hear "avian flu" today is actually a new strain of virus, known as H5N1, which has killed wild birds from over 80 species and which spreads easily among poultry. Although there are no documented cases of avian flu in birds within the United States, in other parts of the world, particularly Asia, numerous birds have died and H5N1 has passed to humans causing severe illness and death. While the disease is known to have spread to humans who have come in direct contact with the diseased birds, it has not currently been transmitted between humans. The concern is that H5N1 will evolve into a virus capable of human-to-human transmission, which could quickly lead to a pandemic.

These important issues have encouraged many Americans to begin planning for the worst. Due to the global impact of a pandemic epidemic, the entire community must be involved in planning, training, and practicing for a response. The Department of Homeland Security's Citizen Corps brings community and government leaders together to involve all community members in all-hazards emergency preparedness, planning, mitigation, response, and recovery. As an example, Citizen Corps' program partner, the Medical Reserve Corps, has developed Pandemic Influenza Planning Guidance for Medical Reserve Corps units. These units include local volunteer medical and public health professionals who contribute their skills and expertise throughout the year as well as during times of community need.

## 5 Steps You Can Take to Protect Against Pandemic Flu from the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services:

- 1) Individuals, businesses and communities should talk to their local public health officials and health care providers, who can supply information about the signs and symptoms of a specific disease outbreak and recommend prevention and control actions.
- 2) Adopt business and school practices that encourage sick employees or students to stay home and anticipate how to function with a significant portion of the workforce or school population absent due to illness or caring for ill family members.
- 3) As always, practice good health habits, including eating a balanced diet, exercising daily, and getting sufficient rest.
- 4) Take common-sense steps to stop the spread of germs, including frequent hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes and staying away from others as much as possible when you are sick.
- 5) Stay informed about pandemic influenza and be prepared to respond appropriately and calmly. Consult [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov) frequently for updates on national and international information on pandemic influenza.

If your Council or program is involved in local pandemic flu planning, training and exercises, share your best practices. Email them to [citizen corps@dhs.gov](mailto:citizen corps@dhs.gov).

## In Focus

### The Points of Light Foundation and Volunteer Center National Network

A Citizen Corps Affiliate since June 2003, the Points of Light Foundation and Volunteer Center National Network is one of the most influential participants in unaffiliated volunteer management. In a recent interview with Citizen Corps, President and CEO of the Points of Light Foundation Robert K. Goodwin reflects on the Foundation's collaboration with Citizen Corps and the role of volunteers in disaster response.



Founded in 1990, the Points of Light Foundation was at the head of a movement to encourage citizen engagement. "Prior to the Foundation, there were few voices for public involvement," Goodwin says, "but today, it is a different landscape...we have seen an evolution of a mentality that depends on this culture of preparedness and service."

Goodwin is widely recognized for his dedication to volunteer service and has been named nine years in a row as one of the *NonProfit Times*' "50 Most Influential People in the Nonprofit Sector." Over the past 20 years, he has directly contributed to the cultural shift of greater citizen engagement and has helped it gain momentum. Goodwin is optimistic about the nation's progress, saying "We have found that the efforts to increase the sense of personal responsibility strike a chord with the American public. The urge to help is deeply embedded in the American psyche."

Another aspect of the change in citizen engagement is how unpaid volunteers are viewed by federal and nonprofit groups. "Effective use of volunteers is more a matter of will than skill," Goodwin says, smiling. He explains that people are finally learning how to manage a paid and unpaid workforce effectively, and that both the federal and non-profit sectors must apply the same rigor, attention and resolve in their management of paid and unpaid workers.

Goodwin finds the relationship between the Points of Light Foundation and Citizen Corps "not only a philosophical fit, but a truly symbiotic relationship." He points to Citizen Corps' integration of state and local governments as an important means of extending the Foundation's own reach and helping to educate local leaders and first responders about the value of citizen engagement. Citizen training is another promising area of collaboration, which improves the effectiveness of volunteer surge and helps local first responders understand how to integrate and leverage citizen assistance during an emergency.

One current example of collaboration is a Cooperative Agreement between Citizen Corps and the Points of Light Foundation to strengthen community preparedness by promoting collaboration between local Volunteer Centers and local Citizen Corps Councils. Five sites—the states of New Jersey and Alabama; the cities of Seattle, Washington and Jacksonville, Florida; and the region of Greater Baltimore, Maryland—have been selected to improve their community's disaster preparedness capacity and to strengthen planning and tools for managing spontaneous volunteers.

Looking forward, Goodwin advised Citizen Corps Councils to pay close attention to seniors and youth—two groups that, if properly trained and integrated into emergency plans, will further advance the culture of preparedness that Citizen Corps and the Points of Light Foundation are fostering. The movement to increase citizen engagement will also grow through public/private partnerships, Goodwin adds. "Cultivating and combining the resources that these groups represent will help advance the broader adoption and practice of preparedness as a way of life." Goodwin sums up by stating, "One of the most important questions of this generation is 'whose responsibility is [preparedness]?' The answer is 'Everyone's. Every individual has a role in preparedness.'"

After 15 years of service, President and CEO of the Points of Light Foundation, Robert K. Goodwin, has announced his retirement and upcoming transition into the private sector.

"Today it is a different landscape...we have seen an evolution of a mentality that depends on this culture of preparedness and service."



Robert K. Goodwin  
President & CEO  
Points of Light Foundation

### Working together to strengthen communities

The Points of Light Foundation through its Strengthening Communities VISTA program has approximately 35 VISTA members in Volunteer Centers throughout the country focused on Homeland Security and disaster community capacity building. All of these VISTA members recruit volunteers for Citizen Corps programs and many are actively involved in the coordination of their local CERT and Medical Reserve Corps programs.

In Ohio, all Volunteer Centers take an active role in the recruitment and, in some cases, management of the Citizen Corps program volunteers. The Volunteer Centers have even modified their Volunteer Reception Center to work more closely with the needs of Citizen Corps programs.



# Citizen Corps Newsletter: December 2006

***Congratulations to the Medical Reserve Corps program, which reached 500 MRC units last month!***

## **Fire Corps Seeks New Director**

The National Volunteer Fire Council in Washington, DC, seeks a Program Director to manage its national Fire Corps program.

Interested? Cover letter and resume can be sent to [slee@firecorps.org](mailto:slee@firecorps.org) or faxed to 202-887-5291. You can also mail it to National Volunteer Fire Council, Sarah Lee, 1050 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 490, Washington, DC 20036.

## **Start Planning!**

Citizen Corps will hold its first National Conference in Washington, DC, in Spring 2007.

Look for the date and venue in our January newsletter.

Ideas for the conference may be submitted to [citizen-corps@dhs.gov](mailto:citizen-corps@dhs.gov), with "conference" in the subject line.

## **Program Partner & Affiliate Highlights**

With more than 307,000 members in more than 5,500 squadrons in all 50 states and nine foreign countries, this month the **Sons of The American Legion** celebrates the organization's 75th anniversary! \* In recognition of **Civil Air Patrol's** 65th anniversary, Governor Bob Riley of Alabama signed a proclamation declaring December 1-7 'Civil Air Patrol Week.' \*The 8th annual SKYWARN Recognition Day (SRD) took place December 2. This event is co-sponsored by the National Weather Service and Citizen Corps Affiliate, **American Radio Relay League** as a way of saying "thank you" to Amateur Radio operators for their commitment to helping keep their communities safe. During the day event, operators will visit their local National Weather Service office, set up Amateur Radio stations, and work as a team to contact other ham radio operators across the world.

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) and **Fire Corps** were profiled on ABC's *A Better Community* website, in conjunction with the airing of ABC's popular *Extreme Home Makeover* show. The show featured a firefighter's family who received a new home after theirs was destroyed by a tornado. ABC's *A Better Community* website features related organizations that viewers can contact to get involved in community service efforts. \* Fresno Citizen Corps hosted its second annual Disaster Skills Day last month. Thirty **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)** volunteers practiced their after-the-disaster survival skills and gained hands-on experience during the CERT continuing education "urban wilderness" training. The course included instruction in water purification, sanitation and latrine construction, shelter building techniques for winter and summer, hypothermia prevention, radio communication, and more. The volunteers also prepared and sampled a wide variety of survival rations and meals ready to eat (MREs). \* The Florida Keys **Medical Reserve Corps** unit helped support the Monroe County Health Department at the Florida International University special needs shelter in Miami following Tropical Storm Ernesto.

## **Announcements**

### **IAEM Awards Volunteers for Citizen Corps Projects**



We are pleased to recognize our Citizen Corps winners at the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) annual awards program!

IAEM held a Media Contest at its 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference & EMEX 2006 Expo at Orange County Convention Center in Florida. Open to the emergency management community, the contest recognized exceptional publications/newsletters, scrapbooks, and audio visual entries.

Tom Smith from Palatine, IL Citizen Corps/EMA won first place for the newsletter "Hometown News" and first place for the "Palatine Emergency Management Agency website." In the Special Publications category, Robert Lafaye of the Rowlett, TX, Citizen Corps Council, won first place for the Rowlett Emergency Preparedness Guide, and David Maack from Racine, WI, Emergency Management won third place for his "Citizen Corps Display." Congratulations to all the winners!

### **Citizen Corps Approaches Five-Year Anniversary**

In just one month, Citizen Corps will mark its five year anniversary! Help us show the country how far Citizen Corps has come in just five years by sharing your accomplishments with your community. We encourage you to reach out to your local media outlets, congressional representatives, and public officials to educate them about Citizen Corps and current efforts in their communities.

We are also looking for good stories from you, our Councils and partners, telling us about milestones you have reached or experiences you have had since your Council or partnership with Citizen Corps was established. We will share some of your experiences in our newsletters throughout the year. Already, we have received several good stories from Councils in response to last month's newsletter, some of which are included here. Keep them coming!

## Good Story

### Carnation-Duvall Citizen Corps



Flooding in Washington State

In November, the Carnation-Duvall Citizen Corps of Washington State helped open a Red Cross shelter at Cedarcrest High School, housing 37 residents who were forced out of their homes by flash flooding. Carnation's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) also mobilized to hand out flyers to residents and answer questions. "People seemed grateful – and a few were impressed – to get the information," said CERT member Barb Powrie. "Several gave us a special 'thanks for doing this,'" she added. At the request of the Duvall Fire Department, the Carnation-Duvall Amateur Radio Club also activated. They set up communications at the fire station in Duvall, and maintained communication with the Red Cross shelter. They also posted signs at local stores indicating where the shelter was located.

## Send us your good stories!

If your Council has a good story or lesson to share, send it to [citizencorps@dhs.gov](mailto:citizencorps@dhs.gov) for consideration, with "NEWSLETTER" in the subject line.

Story guidelines:

- Please send your submissions by the 15th of each month.
- Submissions should be under 150 words.
- If you include photos, please send as a JPEG, TIF or GIF attachment (not in the body of the message.) Don't forget to tell us who is in the photo, where and when it was taken, and what it shows. All photos are assumed to be approved for publishing.

## Looking Ahead: January Calendar

- **National Sheriffs' Association Winter Meeting**  
January 31 - February 4  
Washington, D.C.  
[www.sheriffs.org/conf-midwinter.shtml](http://www.sheriffs.org/conf-midwinter.shtml)
- **VIPS and Disaster Response**  
January 25  
Atlanta, GA  
[www.policevolunteers.org](http://www.policevolunteers.org)

If you would like to submit a national event for the monthly calendar, please send the name, date, location and website to [citizencorps@dhs.gov](mailto:citizencorps@dhs.gov) with "NEWSLETTER" in the subject line.

## A Safe and Happy Holiday Season

**Hanukkah - 12/16-12/23**

**Christmas - 12/25**

**Kwanzaa Begins - 12/26**

Before important religious holidays in December, meet with your local religious leaders to discuss the importance of emergency preparedness. Encourage them to create emergency plans and direct them to authoritative sources of information to share with their congregations. Consider volunteering to visit each place of worship in your area to speak with citizens about how they can help their community and protect their family and their congregation. Encourage "Gifts of Safety," such as emergency supply kit items, flashlights, crank radios, car safety kits, and first aid kits and manuals.

**New Year's Eve - 12/31**

Resolve to be prepared in 2007. Start the new year by planning what steps you and your family will take to increase your safety and security in 2007. Don't forget to change batteries in your smoke detectors and replenish perishable supplies. Last but not least, update or create a family communication plan, so you know how to stay in contact with your spouse, children and other family members if you get separated during an emergency.

# Citizen Corps Newsletter: December 2006

## Question of the Month

**Q. How do I download Citizen Corps logos?**

**A. Citizen Corps and CERT logos are available for non-commercial activities supporting the Citizen Corps mission, such as recruiting and public education. There are two ways to obtain logos:**

1) If you **do not** have administrative rights to our Web site, you can download logos by filling out and submitting the form found at:

<http://www.citizencorps.gov/citizenCorps/tmusepermission.do>.

2) If you **do** have administrative rights, sign into the Web site, then go to the 'Councils' button and click on 'Download Logos.' Logos and instructions for downloading them are posted on that page.

Logos are available in several formats. If you plan to use it for a printed publication, select the EPS version of the file for highest quality resolution. Note: the EPS files can only be opened with a graphic design program.

## Special Topic: Pet Safety

When disaster strikes, people are not the only ones affected—house pets and other domesticated animals need help too. As you prepare for winter storms and other potential emergencies, take some time to plan for your furry friends' safety, and reach out to neighbors who might need assistance with their own pet safety plans.

“As a general rule of thumb: If you need something, chances are that your pet needs something of a similar nature.”

Have ready an emergency kit for your pets as well as your family. As a general rule of thumb: If you need something, chances are that your pet needs something of a similar nature, such as a 72-hour supply of food and water, medications, identification and other necessities.

If you have any information on how you helped with pet safety during a time of emergency—for example, plans for sheltering animals, outreach to pet owners, or disaster animal rescue teams—please submit them to [citizencorps@dhs.gov](mailto:citizencorps@dhs.gov). By sharing your experiences, Citizen Corps can

become more effective in helping animals caught in disastrous situations

## Contact Us

Have a question for Citizen Corps?

- For web related questions, email us at: [ccwebmaster@dhs.gov](mailto:ccwebmaster@dhs.gov)
- For questions about the CERT program, email us at: [cert@dhs.gov](mailto:cert@dhs.gov)
- For all other questions, you can reach us at: [citizencorps@dhs.gov](mailto:citizencorps@dhs.gov)

## HELPFUL LINKS

### CITIZEN CORPS

[WWW.CITIZENCORPS.GOV](http://WWW.CITIZENCORPS.GOV)

### FIRE CORPS

[WWW.FIRECORPS.ORG/](http://WWW.FIRECORPS.ORG/)

### CERT

[WWW.CITIZENCORPS.GOV/](http://WWW.CITIZENCORPS.GOV/)

[CERT/INDEX.SHTM](http://CERT/INDEX.SHTM)

### MRC

[WWW.MEDICALRESERVECORP.S.GOV/HOMEPAGE](http://WWW.MEDICALRESERVECORP.S.GOV/HOMEPAGE)

### VIPS

[WWW.POLICEVOLUNTEERS.ORG/](http://WWW.POLICEVOLUNTEERS.ORG/)

### USAONWATCH

[WWW.USAONWATCH.ORG/](http://WWW.USAONWATCH.ORG/)

### USA FREEDOM CORPS

[WWW.FREEDOMCORSP.GOV](http://WWW.FREEDOMCORSP.GOV)

### FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

[WWW.FEMA.GOV](http://WWW.FEMA.GOV)

### READY CAMPAIGN

[WWW.READY.GOV](http://WWW.READY.GOV)



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