

EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERS EARN SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Homeland Security and the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council recently presented special recognition to the Harlingen Community Emergency Response Team.

About 40 volunteers with the Harlingen CERT assist police, firefighters and ambulance personnel in various capacities. The volunteers conduct public education and outreach services and undergo training for emergency preparedness. Recently, the organization participated in the National Night Out sponsored by Harlingen police and partnered with Harlingen firefighters during the International Firefighters Academy training for Matamoros first responders.

“The community volunteers are a tremendous asset for our Harlingen public safety departments,” Fire Chief Rogelio “Roy” Rubio said. “The dedicated individuals work efficiently with city personnel to enhance our operations and their efforts benefit Harlingen residents in many ways.”

Harlingen CERT Team Leader Bill Snyder said that the group plans to expand training and service opportunities to more RV parks. For example, he said the CERT team at Sunshine RV Park has been instrumental in quickly delivering medical aid for residents in that neighborhood by successfully operating the AED (automated external defibrillator) three times to resuscitate people before first responders arrived on the scene.

One of the Harlingen CERT goals is to establish more CERT teams within separate RV parks and similar neighborhoods.

The Harlingen CERT volunteers staffed an informational booth at the recent Congressional Summit sponsored by U.S. Rep. Filemon Vela. Some of the group’s projects include public information about hazard awareness, disaster preparation, recruitment of volunteers, disaster drills, and CPR advanced training.

During or after a disaster, the CERT volunteers work on emergency communications, offer language interpretation, conduct shelter management, and participate in search-and-rescue operations.

“All of our individuals have special skills and we combine our talents to be an effective team,” Snyder said. “We take our responsibilities very seriously and it’s a privilege to serve Harlingen in any ways possible.”

For more information about Harlingen CERT, please contact CERT Coordinator Darrell Loftus at (956) 230-8057 or dloftus@myharlingen.us or contact Snyder at (956) 245-4221 or hgncert@myharlingen.us.