



Memorandum

TO: BUILDING STRONG
NEIGHBORHOODS COMMITTEE

FROM: Frannie Edwards

SUBJECT: SAN JOSE *PREPARED!* UPDATE

DATE: 09-19-05

Approved

Date

RECOMMENDATION

That the Building Strong Neighborhoods Committee accept the report on the San Jose *Prepared!* program.

BACKGROUND

San Jose *Prepared!* is the community emergency response team (CERT) for San Jose. Started in 1996, San Jose *Prepared!* has trained more than 3,000 residents of San Jose in emergency preparedness tasks and skills based on the Federal CERT program. Today there are just under 2000 San Jose *Prepared!* graduates living in San Jose and still active. The members live in 142 of the City's 429 identified neighborhoods, including 12 of the 20 Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI) neighborhoods.

ANALYSIS

1. San Jose *Prepared!* has training opportunities designed for everyone in the community. Some residents are able to take the complete 20-hour Federal program and become team leaders. At present we offer the classes in several formats: five four-hour sessions; combination of two modules into two day-long classes with the third session as the third meeting; and the new capability for residents to take the classroom work on the FEMA internet site, and then complete their practical training through one San Jose *Prepared!* class.

Classes may be offered on a citywide basis, or as requested by any neighborhood or community group with 12 students or more at their location. In that case, timing of the class offerings is coordinated with the requesting group. Classes are scheduled to meet their preference for number of modules offered each day, day of the week and time of day, and language of instruction. A bi-lingual instructor is available for Spanish language classes. Other languages can be accommodated through UN-style simultaneous translation with earphones.

2. Community disaster preparedness training is also available in shorter classes and presentations. San Jose *Prepared!* staff members will provide talks varying in length from 15 minutes through several hours for community groups. The book, *It's a Disaster*, is distributed to community members to enhance their knowledge and motivate their preparedness outside of a class session. This book is distributed to all San Jose *Prepared!* members, as well as to people who attend any of the staff presentations.
3. San Jose *Prepared!* members are provided several opportunities for continued development each year. A newsletter is sent periodically to all members with updates and new emergency preparedness information. Leadership Forums are held to highlight topics of special interest to the San Jose community, or to the team members.

Other cities in Santa Clara County also have CERT programs. The Emergency Managers Association sponsors an annual joint exercise where all the teams can work together on a scenario. San Jose State University has hosted the event, including a session on August 6, 2005. The exercise enables CERT members to work together across jurisdictions, and to take refresher training on skills.

4. The work plan for the coming year includes the continuation of all existing services and outreach, and two new initiatives. First, the San Jose *Prepared!* portion of the city's website needs more frequent updates of the class schedule to support on-line registration. Since the Information technology Department has limited capacity for website support, the San Jose *Prepared!* Coordinator has taken training to upgrade the website. More news items and seasonal updates will be added. In addition, a system has to be developed to reply to those sending registrations, so they know their application was successful, to prevent multiple messages from the same person.

Second, staff will actively promote the use of the FEMA on-line self-study course. Residents have the option of taking the class at times of their choosing. Successful completion of the on-line course results in a certificate from FEMA. Students can present their certificate and get the hands-on training and practice through San Jose *Prepared!*, limiting their classroom time to one four-hour module, yet resulting in team leader status. This format should make the complete suite of training more accessible for more community members.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

1. Staff members work closely with the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative programs, the Neighborhood Housing team, and the Neighborhood Development Center to provide information and training to community members. City employees have received information on the availability of free San Jose *Prepared!* classes through the training catalog and fliers.

2. Community outreach also takes place through homeowners associations, civic organizations, schools and colleges, businesses, and religious organizations. Services are provided to those and any other organized group of 12 or more residents or employees.

COORDINATION

CERT is a program of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. San Jose works closely with the fifteen cities in the County that also have local versions of the CERT program. Within the City, San Jose *Prepared!* has a close working relationship with the City Council District offices, and the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, Police and Fire Departments.

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