

## **Damascus Emergency Preparedness Team Meeting of 3 January 05**

George Moy reported on a series of e-mail communications that has resulted in a meeting that is scheduled with the Red Cross for Thursday, 6 January. The meeting will take place in the offices of Cathy Matthews at the Upcounty Regional Service Center and will be attended by George and Frank Jacob from DEPT and Mat Swinburne from the Red Cross. The DEPT agenda proposed includes discussions on:

- A shelter survey process to evaluate Damascus area churches.
- A shelter training program to teach and qualify congregants to open their churches as shelters should the need arise.
- A shelter training program to train and certify local Damascus residents to staff and manage the Damascus High School shelter should it ever be activated.

John Miller reported on the grant writing effort of Kay Bougham and relayed questions and suggestions from her regarding the goals and specificities of the grant.

A communication was read from Bill Delaney, Program Manager for the Montgomery County CERT Program, to the effect that no more CERT training will be offered by the County until March at the earliest. Bill has been informed that Damascus volunteers are ready to fill at least one class and probably two.

Chair mentioned that the Salvation Army had expressed their intention to become involved with DEPT after the first of the year and this would be followed up on.

It was pointed out that the on the third Monday in January the Recreational Center would be closed because of Martin Luther King's birthday, and the next DEPT meeting would accordingly have to be either cancelled or re-scheduled. John Miller pointed out that on January 13 the Montgomery County Commission on Health would hold a community forum on public health emergency preparedness at the Bethesda Chevy Chase High School at which a speaker would be Gordon Aoyagi, the new Director of the Montgomery County Office of Homeland Security. John suggested that DEPT members could attend this meeting in lieu of the second January meeting of DEPT... and this was agreed.

The excellent work done by Joe Corey in preparing a phone tree and associated map for Damascus CERT team members was passed around and discussed. There was discussion about expanding the list to include any and all DEPT members who might wish to be included and how to do this. Further, it was suggested that in any communication distributed to ask DEPT members if they would like to be included... to also ask for them

to list emergency resources they might provide, such as chain saws and 4-wheel drive vehicles. Joe will get the existing list to DEPT Webmaster Collingwood Harris who will research how to password protect this information on the DEPT website.

There was discussion regarding the dual roles of CERT and DEPT, and how each might be activated. It was re-affirmed that the county could of course activate CERT team members, but only the Chief of the Damascus Volunteer Fire Department could activate DEPT.

Collingwood Harris pointed out that Chair was still delinquent in providing two previous DEPT meeting reports for the website.

Doug Noble gave a Communications Committee report on the Salvation Army Saturn radio network. This report suggested that the Salvation Army provides more disaster help during an emergency with less bureaucracy. Doug will join Saturn. He also answered questions regarding radio types and the ease in obtaining an amateur radio license from the FCC.

Ray Gustin noted that the local privately owned airport has in the past been used as a staging area for disaster efforts, and suggested that DEPT contact airport management to investigate possibilities of how that facility might be useful to the community in times of emergency.

Bob Gladhill mentioned that local church groups had responded with help and manpower during the La Plata tornado incident, and Ken Phillips offered to contact La Plata authorities to investigate what that community learned from their local disaster that might be important for DEPT to know to better prepare our own community.

There was a general discussion on how to motivate and involve high school students in DEPT. Suggestions were made that school authorities be contacted to certify DEPT participation for community service credits, that the Rotary and Lions Clubs could involve their high school groups, and that emergency preparedness education for families might be targeted to high school students.

**The next regular meeting of DEPT will be held at the Damascus Community Recreation Center on Monday, 7 January, at 7 PM.**