

## **Damascus Emergency Preparedness Team Meeting of 23 August**

A CERT training report opened the meeting, where it was pointed out that while everyone had received e-mail suggesting October training dates from Bill Delaney, who is in charge scheduling the training for the County, confirmation was pending regarding the availability of the Damascus library meeting rooms and/or the Damascus Fire Department facility for those specific dates. Captain Ty Stottlemyer volunteered that although the fire department annex was scheduled Wednesdays for bingo, the dayroom at the station was certainly large enough and could be made available.

A Communications Committee report was read into the minutes. It concerned the attempts of Doug Noble, chairman of that committee, to attempt to discuss coordination and cooperation with the Montgomery County volunteer who is Emergency Coordinator (EC) for the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) and the RO for the Radio Amateur Communication Emergency Service (RACES) for Montgomery County. That person was reported as saying he did not want us doing anything up in Damascus since they already had "everything" handled. Doug informed him that DEPT wanted his cooperation but that in any event we would continue our plans for a community communications network. The entire report is lengthy, detailed, and should be considered embarrassing for the County as regards the attitude encountered by DEPT. Chair pointed out that the report had to be read into the record because more than one county official had been asked to look into this and intervene so that some subsequent action could be reported instead... that in hope of a better and different report the information had actually been withheld for two weeks pending such County action... and that such inaction itself now had to be reported. The report is included in the compendium of meeting reports that is available at the Damascus library and at any DEPT meeting.

Note: A model for a community communications network similar to that discussed in DEPT meetings can be seen at: <http://emcomus.org/commwp.html>

Ken Phillips of the Lions Club reported that their board had met to discuss and approve in principle funds for the purchase and installation of an emergency backup generator for the refrigeration equipment of the local Damascus Help food bank facility. This is a major DEPT goal.

George Moy gave a Mission Statement report and the meeting discussed it point by point until there was a clear consensus. The revised mission statement will be prepared for circulation to the wider group not present for approval.

The Red Cross has been contacted by DEPT and Edith Evans, Montgomery County Training Coordinator for the National Capital Area of the American Red Cross, has

offered Red Cross expertise to coordinate with Damascus the development of a *disaster training partnership proposal*. These could also include courses in:

- Introduction to Disaster services
- Mass Care: An Overview
- Shelter Operations
- Shelter Simulation
- Logistics: An Overview
- Damage Assessment
- Family Services

Also available is a tool kit presentation for area businesses. Sue Woelfel, Community Services Coordinator for the Montgomery County Red Cross, will arrange a meeting to discuss a disaster training partnership.

Marlene Lee, attending the meeting only as a neighbor from the local community of Boyds but also a former member of the Red Cross Management Team for the National Capital Area, gave a presentation in which she proposed that given the size, geography, and citizen interest of Damascus that DEPT should engage the Red Cross directly and make the Upcounty Red Cross as strong as the Down County organization is with volunteers, shelters business contracts, etc. She suggested that most of the areas we are going after are already part of the Red Cross purview and therefore questioned why DEPT had sought CERT training rather than Red Cross affiliation, training, and partnership. Kathee Henning pointed out that while the County might open the shelters in the high schools, they provided management only until the Red Cross showed up with their own management team. Marlene Lee offered to help prepare goals and objectives in preparation for the meeting being scheduled with the Red Cross.

The discussion of the possibilities of Red Cross affiliation took up the remainder of the meeting time, and so the announced goal of planning DEPT participation in the Damascus Health and Safety Fair was postponed to the next meeting, to be held in the Damascus library at 7:30, Monday, 30 August 2004.