

## **Damascus Emergency Preparedness Team Weekly Report 12 July**

First, many thanks to the 13 of you who have indicated by email your desire to take the CERT training on offer by the County. This does not include many who have stated a desire but have not officially signed up... as well as several of you who may have thought you signed up at the Celebrate Damascus booth where you signed the white form for the County. We still need some to step forward before the end of Monday's meeting to enable us to meet our goal of 20 to have the class offered in Damascus.

While at that booth Jim Resnick, Montgomery County Director of Emergency Planning, suggested a careful reading of the Montgomery County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) would be a good first step for the committee tasked with contacting WSSC about an emergency generator for the Damascus water tower. This EOP is supposed to be at each County library. Unfortunately, the only readable copy at the Damascus library turns out to be a 1998 version. It seems the post 9/11 plan was distributed to all libraries as a CD Rom. but the libraries are without equipment to read it. The only accessible hard-copy-page-turnable version requires a drive to Rockville to read. Nancy Hislop of the Upcounty Service Center was also amazed to discover this and has requested the tech services department at the County library HQ address this problem. As to when we will hear more on this... well... start your clocks.

Monday night's meeting will be a town meeting in format and will be hosted by the Damascus Community Alliance. This meeting has been called by the attendees at the 8 July meeting, which included the leadership of the major Damascus civic organizations... to include the Rotary, Lions, Alliance, Legion, and Damascus Volunteer Fire Department. As we are still in the stage of trying to discover the right questions to ask, the purpose of the meeting is to again seek citizen ideas, input, and participation. Several ideas are already before the community, and a steering committee will be formed to evaluate and recommend action. Among other ideas brought forward:

That the many fresh water springs in the Damascus area be inventoried (Douglas King has volunteered) such that they can be cleaned by Boy Scouts and further determined which might be used by the fire department to pump from into trailored tanks.

That a radio network be set up such that in an emergency or grid failure, a person at the fire station would be responsible for manning the base station which would connect radios previously distributed to homeowners associations, churches, major businesses important in emergencies, and other community organizations as necessary.

That the churches be asked to have a plan to outreach to their neighborhoods, to do a needs assessment to identify those most at risk in their neighborhoods, and to provide centers of communications and support in times of emergency.

That it be determined if the Damascus water tower could be configured such that in the event of a grid failure, a portable generator could be hooked up to insure that the Damascus water supply would keep flowing.

That in times of emergency or grid failure, an arrangement be made with the Police Department to insure a law enforcement presence up county by having an officer posted to Damascus, even if only an arrangement to activate one of the many off duty officers who live in our community.

And on and on. There are more and better plans and ideas out there... but we need the community to show up and give them to us. Please come to the meeting Monday night at 7:30 at the Damascus Library.