



## this issue

- Halloween Safety Tips **P.1**
- Volunteer Spotlight **P.3**
- NDSU Wins Award **P.4**
- Tell Your Friends **P.4**
- Incentive Prizes **P.5**
- Attention Volunteers **P.5**
- National CERT Newsletter **P.5**
- Upcoming Training Events **P.5**

## Getting Started

This newsletter is being sent out to help you stay in the loop and updated on what is happening with CERT in our community. A newsletter will be sent quarterly (January, April, July and October). If you have any suggestions for content please contact one of us [your CERT Team Leaders].

**WE HOPE YOU FIND THIS NEWSLETTER AND INFORMATION HELPFUL!**

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## Halloween Safety Tips

### Tips for Trick-or-Treaters

- 1) Costumes should be made of flame retardant material and should be large enough to fit over cold-weather clothing without being so long that they drag on the ground. Costumes should have reflective qualities, either the material itself should be reflective or you can add reflective tape. Inexpensive flashing decorative lights can also be added to costumes to aid in making trick-or-treaters more visible.
- 2) Wear good fitting shoes even if they do not go with your costume. If the weather requires it, wear snow boots. Good fitting foot wear helps to avoid tripping and injury.
- 3) Avoid large, poorly fitting masks that may cause difficulty in seeing. As an alternative to masks, consider using non-toxic make-up or decorative hats
- 4) Each trick-or-treater, or one person from each group, should carry a flashlight with new batteries in it.
- 5) Costume accessories such as knives, swords, etc. should be constructed of flexible material and should not have sharp points or edges.
- 6) An adult or responsible older child should always accompany young children.
- 7) Stay in familiar neighborhoods and approach only those houses that have a porch light on. Stay away from and don't pet animals that you don't know. Pets are often excited by all of the coming and going of little ghosts and goblins and may not always react predictably.
- 8) Walk, don't run. Stay on sidewalks whenever possible and avoid cutting



across yards and driveways. Groups should stick together, going only as fast as the slowest person.

- 9) Obey traffic signals. If there aren't any sidewalks in the area, stay on the left side of the roadway so that you are facing oncoming traffic. Check for traffic before crossing roadways and then cross as a group.
- 10) Don't eat any treats until an adult has inspected them. Discard any treats with torn packaging and homemade treats should only be consumed if they come from a known source.

#### Tips for Parents

- 1) Have your child eat dinner before setting out. They will be less likely to eat un-inspected treats or over-indulge on candy.
- 2) If your children are old enough and do go trick-or-treating on their own, have them follow a pre-planned route and set a time for them to be back home and have your child wear or carry a watch so that they can keep track.
- 3) Make sure that your children know how and where to contact you. Have them carry some quarters so that they can call from a phone booth if necessary.
- 4) Remind your children that treats need to be inspected before they can be eaten. Discard any treats with suspect packaging or any homemade treats that aren't from a known source. If you find any treat that appears to have been tampered with, contact local law enforcement.

#### Tips for Homeowners

- 1) Turn on outdoor and front porch lights to welcome trick-or-treaters and improve visibility.
- 2) Make sure your yard and entryway are clear of obstacles such as ladders, hoses, dog leashes, flower pots, etc. which may trip trick-or-treaters.
- 3) Avoid using candles as part of your decorations. If you do use candles, votive candles are the safest to use. Remember to place all decorations using candles well away from where trick-or-treaters will be walking or standing and make sure that paper or cloth decorations can't accidentally contact ignition sources. There are approximately 10,000 home fires every year due to decorations for special events and most of these involve candles.
- 4) Pets may become frightened or upset by trick-or-treaters and react in an uncharacteristic manner. Take the necessary precautions to keep both trick-or-treaters and your pets safe.
- 5) Consider giving out healthy food alternative treats instead of candy or non-food treats such as plastic rings, pencils, erasers, etc.



## Volunteer Spotlight: Pam Erlandson

Hi! I'm Pam Erlandson, Community Services Director at Red River Human Services Foundation and a CERT volunteer. I grew up in Wahpeton, and am married to Mike Erlandson.

When our 2 sons were in grade school, our family participated in a local disaster emergency drill. My sons enjoyed playing victims for the fire fighters and first responders. It was surprisingly stressful to see the fake injuries the local ambulance service designed. I wondered what I could do if an emergency like that actually happened. I have also helped with sandbagging a few times. When I heard about the CERT training, I was interested right away. I thought the information would be good to know personally and for work. The class schedule was something I could handle. People of all ages take the CERT training. In fact, I saw a mother and son team complete the training. I liked that we are to use the training first to help ourselves and our families at home, then our neighbors, then others. I knew most of the instructors and that they were very knowledgeable. I enjoyed getting to know others by taking the training.

After the training, I decided to volunteer with CERT. I have helped with a few events, including National Night Out and disaster training drills at the ND State College of Science and Wahpeton City Hall. Helping with the drills is a good refresher for CERT training. Several people I work with have now gone through the classes too. Our company pays staff for their class time. Then, if someone wants to be a CERT volunteer, they can choose to do so, or not, as they wish. They still have the extra knowledge and experience that the training provides, which can help them remain calm and assist others in a real emergency.

I have a CERT cap that was given to me after I helped with an emergency drill for a class held earlier this year. When I wear the cap, people ask me if I really am a CERT volunteer and if it actually means anything. I tell people that I did complete the training and have helped as a CERT volunteer. One of those times was when the

"bubble" built up in the dike along the Red River. Fourth Street North was blocked off to allow the National Guard trucks to haul fresh clay to reinforce the spot as quickly as possible. CERT volunteers assisted the police with blocking traffic entering 4th Street for several blocks. We were able to let people know what was going on and explain to those who wanted to help that sandbaggers were needed at the south side City shop. The response was wonderful. So many people volunteered that night that we had to start turning people away and ask them to come back the next day to fill more sandbags!

When I tell people about CERT training, I explain that we are there to help. We would never replace the police or first responders and emergency medical technicians, but we can at least start our safety efforts until the professionals and other highly trained volunteers could get to us. The CERT training is thorough. It needs to be, because so many different kinds of emergencies can happen.

If your company or employer does not sponsor a class, maybe they will pay for the class time, like Red River Human Services Foundation does. I'm proud to be a CERT volunteer. I'm glad Wahpeton and the surrounding area offers this opportunity.

Pam Erlandson took her CERT training in July 2005.



## NDSU Wins Award for Innovative Use of Technology

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recently announced the recipients of the 2012 Individual and Community Preparedness Award Winners. For the third time, North Dakota has a winner. Congratulations to North Dakota State University on their award for innovative use of technology for their development of disaster-related smart phone apps.

These awards recognize the innovative practices and achievements of individuals, Citizen Corps Councils, and non-profit, faith-based, and private sector organizations working throughout the nation to make our communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to manage any disaster or emergency event. Each applicant demonstrated their ability to engage the Whole Community through partnerships, achievements, and activities that took place from January 2011 to June 2012.

“It has been shown time and time again that after a disaster, the very first responders are our neighbors,” said FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate. “The award recipients promote preparedness across America’s communities – the bedrock of our national

resiliency. I commend each and every one of the awardees for their service and innovation. They serve as a model for communities everywhere.”

North Dakota State University Agriculture Communications developed two Smartphone applications, one to address the needs of individuals and families affected by local flooding, and one with information for residents stranded during a winter storm. To learn more about these free smartphone apps go to <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=md.apps.Blizzard>.

All winners will be invited, as FEMA’s honored guests, to a community roundtable event in Washington, D.C. During the roundtable the honorees will share their innovative and successful approaches to community preparedness with emergency management leadership.

Congratulations also go to Stutsman County for an honorable mention in the Youth Initiative category for their Teen CERT program. Information on all the awards is available at <http://www.citizencorps.gov/newsevents/awards/2012/2012winners.shtm>.

## Tell Your Friends about CERT

The best source of help in an emergency or disaster is the paid or volunteer professional responder. But, if they are not available to address immediate life-saving needs or to protect property, CERT volunteers can help. CERTs are not intended to replace a community's response capability, but rather, to serve as an important supplement to it.

CERT training will benefit anyone who takes it, whether or not they join the CERT organization. CERT training not only prepares individuals to respond to and cope with the aftermath of an emergency. It also prepares individuals to stay safe at home, at the job, or in their community.

If you enjoyed your CERT training, please tell your friends about it. We are planning to begin a new CERT training in January or February. Anyone who is interested in taking the training, or has questions, can contact me at [pennyann@wah.midco.net](mailto:pennyann@wah.midco.net) or 701-642-2392.

Penny Seifert, CERT Coordinator

# INCENTIVE PRIZES!!!

As CERT volunteers, you realize how valuable your training is to the community and in your personal lives. With that in mind, we are hoping you will encourage friends, family, coworkers and neighbors to sign up for CERT classes. We are offering you an incentive gift for each person you "recruit" who completes the CERT class! Simply ask your friends to let me know that you had suggested the class to them. As always, they can get more info on upcoming classes by contacting me at 701-642-2392.

Penny Seifert, CERT Training Coordinator



## ATTENTION VOLUNTEERS!!

Please help us out. We are looking for volunteers to submit short pieces about themselves for the CERT Newsletter. We take our training in small groups, and do not get to know CERT members from other classes – at least not in the CERT context. And it is difficult to get our approximately 60 CERT volunteers together. We are trying to “introduce” volunteers to each other through short bios in our quarterly newsletters.

These bios can be simple – just tell us something about yourself. For example, tell us about what you do for a living or what you do in your free time. Have you used your CERT training in any way? (We featured Rachel Roets and how her first aid training came in handy in our April 2012 issue.) Or do you have a suggestion for other CERT volunteers? Don't be shy. We know you all have something very interesting to say!

Please send your bio to Heather at [hzilmer@wah.midco.net](mailto:hzilmer@wah.midco.net) or Penny at [pennyann@wah.midco.net](mailto:pennyann@wah.midco.net). We will try to include a couple of bios in each newsletter.

## National CERT Newsletter Vol. 4 - Issue 2



This exciting issue of the CERT National Newsletter features *Giving CERT A Spanish Flavor*, about CERT training to Spanish-speaking communities in Arizona, California, and Texas. The CERT response to tornadoes in Gloucester County, VA, Walker County, AL, and Joplin, MO shows how CERT members assisted communities who suffered devastating damage. And a story on CERT members running the medical tent at a bike race provides a good example of CERT assisting with non-disaster public safety efforts. These articles and more showcase CERT members making an impact in their communities and providing help whenever and wherever needed. [Click here to read the newsletter.](#)

## Upcoming Training Events

♦ Are you interested in brushing up your skills learned in CERT Training?

Training is available at: <http://www.citizen corps.gov/cert/IS317/>

Another way to brush up on your skills is to sit in on a current running CERT course. Please contact Penny Seifert if you are interested.

♦ CPR and First Aid Training—Please contact Penny Seifert if you are interested.