

BE PREPARED.....PLAN ON IT

Submitted by Lisa Schwartz, Emergency Response Coordinator, City of Taylorsville



Last month's article focused on setting up a neighborhood emergency plan. The Block Captain/Leader program that is available for neighborhoods to use in structuring and organizing their plan was featured. This article will focus on three aspects of neighborhood preparation, **light fire suppression, light search and rescue, and light medical.**

In a large scale emergency, professional responders will be overwhelmed. Many of the tasks that they normally perform will be needed. Although a resident is not able to do the tasks to the degree a professional responder does, a lesser version of those services may be rendered. **It will be very tempting for any one of us to try to perform these tasks in an emergency situation, especially if a loved one is in need of them. However, there are safety concerns when performing these functions that could put an untrained individual at risk.** When the responder has not been trained, he or she can become a victim themselves. These three functions are most effective when they have been taught with safety in mind and practiced by the individual.

This brings us to the **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)** training available to our residents. This is a course taught through the local fire department in which disaster awareness, fire safety (including fire extinguisher use), emergency medical skills, light search and rescue, psychology of all types of disasters and emergency organizational skills are taught. For your neighborhood emergency planning, you may wish to select a **reasonable number** of your neighbors to take the training to perform these functions as part of your overall plan. Having the ability to perform these life-safety skills in an organized and efficient (and safe!) manner will increase your readiness to the level that will be necessary in a wide-scale disaster primarily, but a benefit for any emergency, large or small.

The next scheduled CERT training course within the City of Taylorsville begins April 13, and continues April 20, 27, and May 4, from 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m., at 6250 S. 2200 W. This course has four sessions with an online session required to be completed prior to the session on April 13 (see the website below for more information on how to do the online session). The last session will include a disaster simulation. The cost of the course is \$30.00 per participant and includes a manual, handouts, a small medical kit to be used during the course, a safety vest, particulate mask, and a hard hat. Students are required to bring a pair of work gloves, goggles for eye safety and sturdy work boots if possible. To sign up for the course, go to www.unifiedfire.org or contact **Unified Fire Authority at 801-743-7150. The City of Taylorsville has a very active and organized CERT program and if you would like to be involved within it, contact Roger Anderson at 801-706-2518.**

I encourage neighborhoods to put into action an emergency plan and to consider what an asset a CERT team would be as part of that plan. If you have any questions or input, please feel free to contact me at 801-955-2092 or by email, lschwartz@taylorsvilleut.gov.