

News Release



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2nd Annual Countywide CERT Training/Exercise Held in Colton

On Saturday, June 6, 2015, over 200 participants, actors/victims, volunteers, and staff came together at the former K-Mart building in the City of Colton to train and exercise what they have learned as members of their local CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) programs. The City of Colton served as host to the 2nd Annual Countywide CERT Training/Exercise in partnership with San Bernardino County Fire Office of Emergency Services.

This year's training/exercise was designed to test the ability of volunteer emergency responders to deal with an earthquake-driven Mass Casualty Incident. The purpose of the exercise was to evaluate player actions against current response plans and capabilities for responding to an earthquake-driven Mass Casualty Incident.

"Our Countywide CERT program provides an invaluable resource for local communities as they deal with disasters and major emergencies. It is a volunteer work force that augments the scarce resources available in large scale emergencies. Exercises, such as the recent one in Colton, bring training and education in to real life scenarios" stated County Fire Chief Mark Hartwig.

Participants were invited from CERT programs both countywide and throughout Southern California. Participants from San Bernardino County Disaster Corps and San Bernardino County Fire Emergency Communication Services (ECS) programs joined in this year's exercise to practice their skills. Moulaged actors were brought in to assist in the realism of the exercise. Participants were exercised on Fire Suppression, Triage, Disaster Medical, Search and Rescue, and Communications operations that will need to be addressed in the real world. In addition to exercising the volunteer emergency responders the American Red Cross and Southern Baptist Convention Disaster Relief, members of the San Bernardino County VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster), exercised their disaster response feeding operations and served the participants lunch.

"This is the second year we have done something like this. It really is a team effort; from the planning team, to the execution team, to the partner organizations and especially the CERT volunteers who attend from all over the County" stated Michael A. Ramirez, Emergency Services Officer/County CERT Coordinator, San Bernardino County Fire Office of Emergency Services.

Practicing their skills is what will help all when the next disaster strikes. Watch for future trainings and exercises. To get involved in CERT or other disaster volunteer programs contact your local emergency services office or visit www.sbcfire.org. Courtesy photos also located at website under latest news.



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Mark A. Hartwig
Fire Chief / Fire Warden