

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY? October 15th, 2009

A Meeting Partnered by Downtown Association, City of Santa Cruz and Santa Cruz Neighbors

Facilitated by Lynn Robinson, Santa Cruz City Council

Chief Howard Skerry, Santa Cruz Police Department.

One of his first messages was, when a disaster strikes....

“Is you family secure in a safe place?” It would be good for you to have a plan in place with a meeting place and an outside point of contact. If you cannot find someone you would report that to the Police as a central point.

Santa Cruz is very organized and prepared for a disaster. California is the leader in the United States in setting standards of programs to network the force of people that can help in a disaster situation. It’s well documented for these teams where to go and what to do.

If Police need extra resources, we would first go to the County Sheriff, then request for more assistance would go to State level and other resources could be released so that more officers could come from all over the state.

Important message used to be that you needed to be self sufficient for 72 hours.....that has now been extended to 7 days.

It’s important to “Be prepared”

Brett Taylor – Retired Fire Captain, Santa Cruz Fire Department

The 89 Earthquake lit a spark in Santa Cruz to be ready and Brett was involved in the Disaster Preparedness Classes, The CERT (Certified Emergency Response Team) classes are still available through the County. And Brett later on said he would be available to teach a fee-based class if anyone or neighborhood is interested. Be Prepared! Think about it and act on it.

Each family needs to be prepared with your basics. These lists are available online and on the Red Cross website and Santa Cruz Neighbors website at _____ Put together a kit, you already have all

the supplies to pull together and put it in a place that you will have access to.

Have a plan with your family. What to do during an earthquake – Duck, Cover and Hold still applies. This is the way to be safe. Secure objects in your home, bolt to walls, speakers, bookcases, etc., anything that could potentially fall on you. Turn off your gas ONLY if you smell gas. It's not a good idea to automatically turn off gas. It still may be used for hot water and heat. Get an old pulse dial phone that you can plug into a phone jack. It will still work when electricity is off.

Robert Solick – Emergency Operations Sector Manager, City of Santa Cruz

Robert presented an organization chart for the City of Santa Cruz Emergency Operations Organization. See attached. We live in a community that is prone to disasters and we are prepared. Public Works Department will be in the group of first responders when a disaster strikes. The chart shows how “responders” will work together and be able to expand personnel when necessary. This is a Standardized Emergency Management System that is a model state-wide. There was a State Senate Bill #1841 that was written and passed just after the Oakland Hills fire. With this type of organizational system in place local jurisdiction will be organized and be reimbursed through this process.

Ready.gov is a good site to go to for information. Have your basic supplies. Have a communications plan with a third party for your family. In the back of your car, “Do you have an extra pair of walking shoes, water, glasses?” This would be your “go kit” if you are caught away from home.

Back to the City of Santa Cruz Organizational chart. Operations section- think of these people as the “Boots on the Ground”. They are checking the damage assessment. Logistics – they are the people who get what is needed – blankets to more personnel support. Planning and Intelligence – How long do we need to maintain the resources till we can return to normal. Finance – They will watch the budget, local contracts and Invoices. Try to use local business resources. There is a model to track finances and resources. If the city needs more resources they would go to county, then region, then state, and then FEMA. By law, all city workers have a role in this Emergency System. They are trained and ready. This is a total of about 800 service workers. There is a focus on planning, training, mitigation funding plans, create defensible spaces, bolting objects and constant improvements. Recovery after a disaster starts immediately to gain FEMA support.

Good to have CERT trained neighbors and a CERT Captain to can help to assess Neighborhood needs and form a plan. Neighbors need to be self sufficient. There are many volunteer opportunities; one example is the Medical Reserve Corp. MRC and Red Cross.

David Wright, CEO, Red Cross

A briefing on Red Cross 101. The Red Cross in Santa Cruz is 112 years old. The Santa Cruz Red Cross is all about Preparedness and Response. They teach courses in First Aid, CPR and Life saving skills. This Red Cross is locally funded by the Santa Cruz Community and currently has over 500 volunteers.

When an Earthquake strikes there is NO warning. Red Cross advocates three points; Make a Plan – Get A Kit – Stay Informed. They have supplies available, a crank up radio and even a radio that can be solar powered. Need a supply of 7 days per person and pet. Food and basic necessities are necessary.

The Hayward fault will have catastrophic due to location and mountain ranges on either side of the fault. The Hayward Fault has occurred about every 130 years. It is due to happen because it did happen 130 years ago. Red Cross and other organizations are looking at even more sustainable ideas such as creating emergency gardens, learning how to collect water and other ideas. Red Cross said you could even be prepared beyond 7 days.

Shelter places in Santa Cruz area are already in place with agreements. Trailers with supplies are places all over the county for access.

Lee Yamada, Volunteer from the Santa Cruz Red Cross

“Are You Ready?” If you are not at home, How will you get there is you cannot drive?, Do you have an out of State contact person set up? Do you have walking shoes in your trunk? Got Water? Are there work place plans set up if you are at work when disaster strikes? There should be training in your work places so everyone has a role and is prepared. Highway 17 may be closed, Are you prepared to deal with that? If you know about Reverse 911 calling you can register your cell phone for a reverse 911 call by going to SCCECC.org. Make up your Emergency KitJust Do It!