



MONTHLY UPDATE

August 2020

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Newsletter edited by
Mary Schreiner
maryschreiner@live.com

WHAT'S NEW ?

This is it! This is our New Monthly Newsletter. Exciting, right? We will be able to keep everyone updated on what's new, what's on the horizon, and what is happening with ongoing projects. We will be drawing on information from our Unit Leaders, deployments, training activities, etc., so we will be relying on our members to help provide content for upcoming editions.

I invite you all to contact me with suggestions for making this easier to read, things you'd like to see included, or any other ways in which you think we can improve this newsletter.

GROVELAND CERT

While we're on the subject of new things, we now have a CERT unit in Groveland. Bob Asquith is the Team Leader for that unit.

Although COVID-19 has kept plans for an in-person meeting for Groveland from coming to fruition, there are plans for two community information meetings via Zoom in September.

COOLING STATIONS

A request for deployment for CERT members to help staff cooling stations in Sonora & Groveland was received from Public Health. Due to the extreme heat and extended forecast for hot weather, it was decided that the stations would be open from 11 am - 7 pm, Friday, August 14, through Wednesday, August 19th. Public Health provided PPE for staff and guests and COVID screening was performed on everyone entering the cooling stations.

Twain Harte Area CERT staffed the center, which was located at the Sonora Senior Center, and we had 10 volunteers sign up to help. Thanks to THA-CERT members Carol Hallett (Team Leader), Linda Postma, Mike Mandell, Bob and Mary Schreiner, Sheri Hoffman, Dawna Caporusso (volunteer), Nancy Stevens, Matt Kain, and Jan Morris. We each took 4-hour shifts. The highest number of guests we had on one day was 19 people. The staff at the Sonora Senior Center were very gracious and accommodating to the staff and guests visiting the cooling station.

In Groveland, the cooling station was at the Main Library, with Groveland CERT members Bob Asquith, Laurie Asquith, Barbara Klahn, Bruce Dudley, Steve and Jill Cate, Carol Shannon, and Sam Park staffing the center.

All CERT members received a very nice thank you note from Steve Boyack, Assistant Director, TuCo Health & Human Services Agency.



In Sonora: CERT members Jan Morris, Team Leader Carol Hallett, Mary and Bob Schreiner, Nancy Stevens (back)



Bob Asquith and Bruce Dudley at the Groveland cooling station

SAFETY

Bill McManus has served as Safety Officer for THA-CERT since April 2014 and is now turning over that responsibility to Nancy Stevens. Bill has done a fabulous job and his efforts are greatly appreciated. He will continue to serve as the Assistant Safety Officer and a mentor.

Nancy has been working hard on establishing Policy and Procedures for COVID-19, Risk/Safety, and Deployment protocols.



Bill McManus



Safety Officer Nancy Stevens

CERT DURING THE PANDEMIC

Submitted by Carol Hallett and Lise Lemonnier

Despite most businesses and activities being shut down during the COVID-19 pandemic, our THA-CERT members have found ways to keep busy while still serving our community.

The "Call-a-Day" program was initiated to ensure that anyone who was living in isolation had some human interaction every day. Carol Hallett spearheaded the campaign and volunteers from CERT were eager to assist. Six of our team members were matched with six senior citizens in our community. We had more volunteers than people wanting calls. Thanks to all who volunteered. Calls continue to be made daily.

Several CERT members worked independently on various aspects of mask-making in a "socially distant and safe" assembly line process to make 650 masks that have been delivered to people and businesses within our community (and beyond!). Cutting fabric, interfacing, filters, wires for nose pieces, and elastic, ironing interfacing, sewing masks, and assembling and packaging masks in sets of 2 (in either adult or child sizes) kept members busy during those first lonely weeks of the shelter in place, and continue to keep Lise busy, as requests for masks continue to come in.

Among the people and agencies receiving masks from CERT were THCS Board & Employees, Sonora Area Foundation Employees, Area 12 Council on Aging, MeadowView Senior Facility Care Providers, Meals on Wheels, Aqualabs, THFD, Avalon Care Providers, and several individuals. While masks were provided free of charge, we were given donations by many of the recipients, totaling \$5,800.



CERT DURING THE PANDEMIC- CONT'D

One thing that the pandemic really brought into focus is how many of our neighbors live on the edge of poverty. One of the ongoing programs that CERT members are happy to help support is the ATCAA Food Bank Monthly Food Distribution, sponsored by the Twain Harte Rotary, and even more so during the pandemic.

Once a month a food truck delivers fresh, healthy food to the Twain Harte Community Center. Members of the Rotary and THA-CERT work together to unload the truck and package food for distribution. Recipients are given a variety of items, ranging from bags of potatoes, apples, celery, and beans, to meat, eggs, bread, and other food staples. Although the specific items donated change every month, all of the food distributed is healthy "whole" food that will be the basis of many hearty meals. During the food distribution in August, we were able to serve more than 115 people.

The food distribution occurs on the first Wednesday of the month, from 10 am until Noon.



MOC FIRE DEPLOYMENT

Submitted by Carol Hallett

A fire in Moccasin (later referred to as the Moc fire) started at approximately 12:30 pm on Thursday, August 20th. The fire rapidly spread to 2800 acres. It became clear that homes and lives were in danger and evacuation orders were issued for the area surrounding the fire. Knowing that CERT would be asked for assistance, in some capacity, Jan Morris, Nancy Stevens, and Mary Schreiner were asked to contact fellow CERT members to ascertain their availability.

"We never know exactly what we will be doing, so we got prepared for whatever the county needed." - Carol Hallett

With the possibility of needing support from the UAS unit, Doug Simmons, Dennis Wiebe, and Nancy Stevens were on standby for three days.

Other areas in which it was thought that we could provide assistance were the evacuation center at the Mother Lode Fairgrounds in Sonora, making food and water runs to firefighters and other personnel working the fire, and answering the Tuolumne County Information Line at the Emergency Operations Center on Stryker Court. The American Red Cross, who were running the evacuation center, determined that, due to COVID-19, evacuees would be safer and better served by being provided vouchers for stays in hotels and motels. Logistics for making food and water runs proved to be better accomplished by other means.



MOC FIRE DEPLOYMENT-CONTINUED

The call center, under the direction of the Office of Emergency services, and operating in the Emergency Operations Center on Stryker Court, was equipped with phones, and staff were up and running by Friday. CERT members responded to requests for assistance and training was done on site. There were between 5 and 7 CERT members working in the EOC every day, usually working 5-hour shifts. The phone lines were open from 9 am to 7 pm, from Friday, August 21st, through Tuesday, August 25th.

Well over 2000 calls were answered over the course of the deployment. Calls ranged from evacuees needing prescriptions that were left behind, to people searching for family members who had been evacuated, to requests for Animal Control to feed or rescue pets and livestock that were not able to be evacuated. The more "entertaining" calls ranged from a man concerned about a freezer full of meat, to a man who wanted someone to go by and turn off the sprinklers that he had left running on the roof of his house.

I think it's safe to say that the most popular people answering the phones were those who were working Tuesday, the 25th...they got to tell callers that the evacuation orders were lifted and everyone was free to go home!

Thank you to Mary, Bob, Nancy, Patricia, Matt, Lise, Sheri, Karen, Dawn and Jan, who worked in the call center, and to those who stood by, awaiting deployment. I could not be more proud of our team.



HAIL TO THE CHIEF!

As you know, Fire Chief Todd McNeal left Twain Harte Fire Department for a new position in Dixon at the end of July. Although Todd and his wife still live in the area, we will miss seeing him on a regular basis and we wish him all the best in his new position.

After serving as Captain for the THFD, Neil Gamez has been promoted to Fire Chief. We congratulate Chief Gamez on his promotion and look forward to working with him.



Former Fire Chief Todd McNeal



Fire Chief Neil Gamez

FIREFIGHTER REHAB VEHICLE

The firefighter rehab vehicle is almost ready to hit the road! Mike Mandell has been working hard on getting the vehicle roadworthy and registered. The vehicle needed to be weighed to see if a smog check was required. Fortunately, the vehicle is under the weight requirement. Mike managed to get an appointment at the DMV (no simple task in times of COVID) and was able to get the vehicle registered.

The last item on the list is having our CERT logo/signage put on the doors, which will be happening soon. The members of the Firefighter Rehab unit are looking forward to having a dedicated vehicle to use during deployments and for the Columbia College Firefighter Academy training.

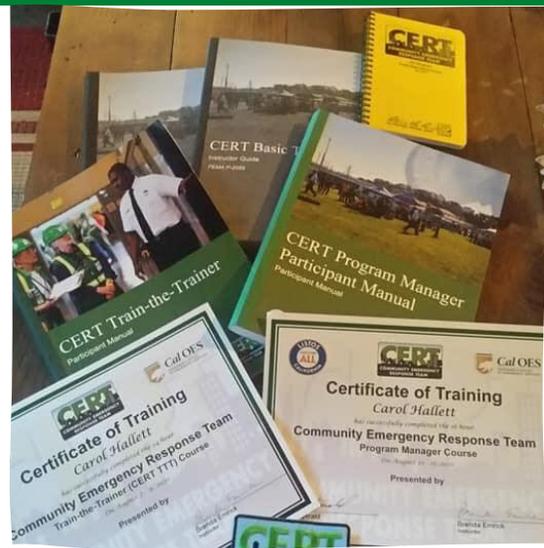
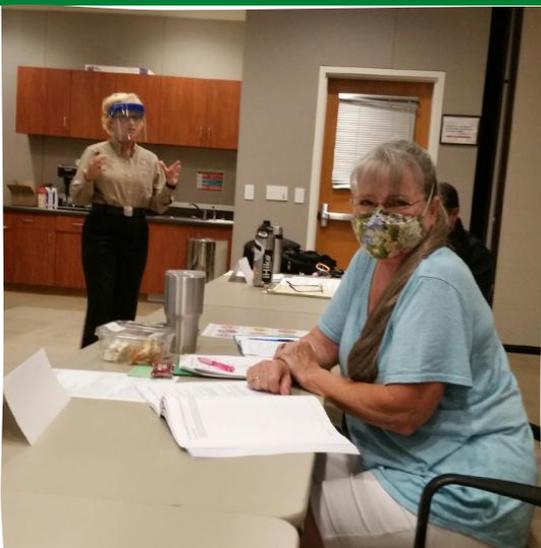
TRAINING NEWS

If you have spent any time at all with CERT, you know that we're all about training. It's not just a one-and-done thing with us, we train every chance we get (You might say we have a bit of an obsession with it).

Recently our own Carol Hallett completed both the "Train the Trainers" and "Program Manager" training courses. Now Carol is ready to step into the Program Manager shoes, left vacant by Chief McNeal. We are so proud of Carol! She has been a great Team Leader these past 6 1/2 years and we look forward to the exciting things she will do as Program Manager for both the Twain Harte Area CERT and Groveland CERT.

Since COVID-19 has changed the way we do things, we haven't been able to have our regular monthly Team Meetings, which also include "refresher" training in a variety of things. We have tried to do "safe and socially distanced" training, but many aspects of our training in CERT require literal hands on. We hope to be able to resume our monthly meetings and training as soon as possible.

The CERT Basic Training course materials have been updated and Carol has placed an order for the new books and they are on their way. We are hoping that we will be able to put them to good use for Basic Training classes in Groveland in November and in Twain Harte in January. Specific dates for both courses have yet to be determined.



TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER

As we mentioned, Carol Hallett will now be serving as Program Manager for both THA-CERT and Groveland CERT. Carol has served as Team Leader since the inception of THA-CERT, in April 2014, and has been a great guiding force for our team. Having Carol move to the Program Manager position means that we are now looking for someone to step into the Team Leader role.

So, are you looking for a way to give back to the community and make a big difference in helping others? If so, please contact Carol at twainhartecert@gmail.com.

UAS UNIT NEWS

With the departure of Chief McNeal, the UAS (Unmanned Aerial Systems) Unit is seeing some changes. Chief McNeal acted as not only the Program Manager for THA-CERT, but he spearheaded the UAS Unit and acted as the Unit Leader. This Unit is now looking for someone to step in as Leader and we are currently looking at members to fill that role.

UAS Unit members have been assigned to crews of 3 to 5 members, who will train together. Each team will be on call for one week at a time on a rotating schedule, in order to be ready to deploy whenever they are needed.



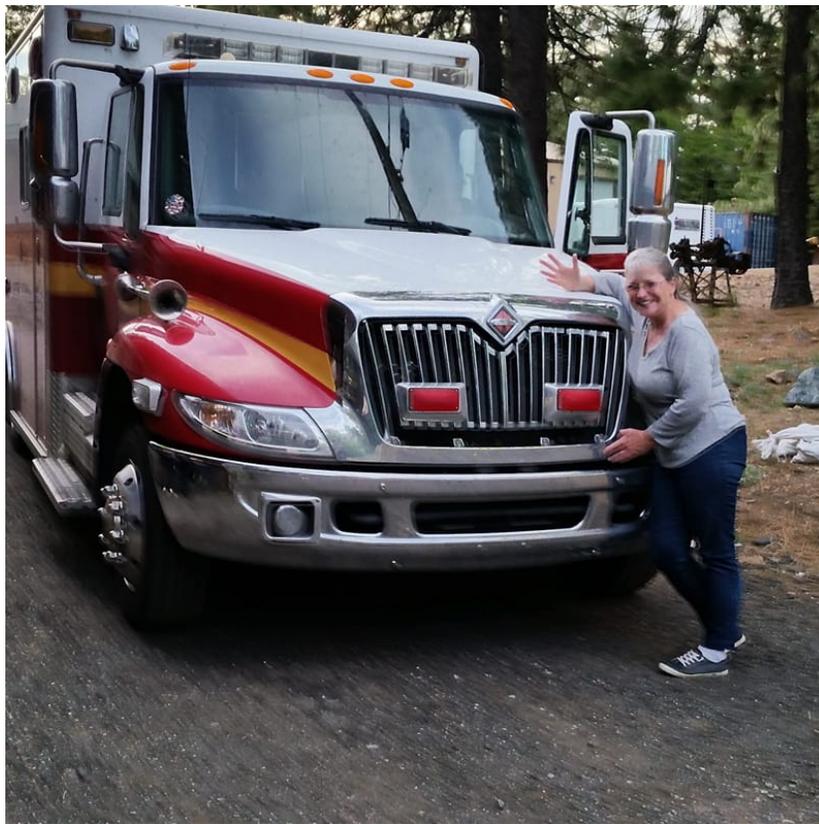
Program Manager Carol Hallett



One of our UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle)

LOOKING TOWARD OUR FUTURE

With many projects out on the horizon, Program Manager Carol Hallett and THA-CERT members Jan Morris, Sydney Geissler, and Julia Stevens are collaborating with Groveland CERT Team Leader Bob Asquith and Pete Kampa, General Manager, Groveland Community Services District, to write a grant request to help fund future acquisitions of equipment for the UAS, Traffic/Crowd Control, and Firefighter Rehab units.



Program Manager Carol Hallett and the new Firefighter Rehab Vehicle

I would like to acknowledge the contributions of Carol Hallett, Mike Mandell, Lise Lemonnier, and Bob Asquith in providing material for this newsletter. I would also like to extend a huge thank you to Nancy Stevens for proofreading every draft; your patience is truly appreciated.