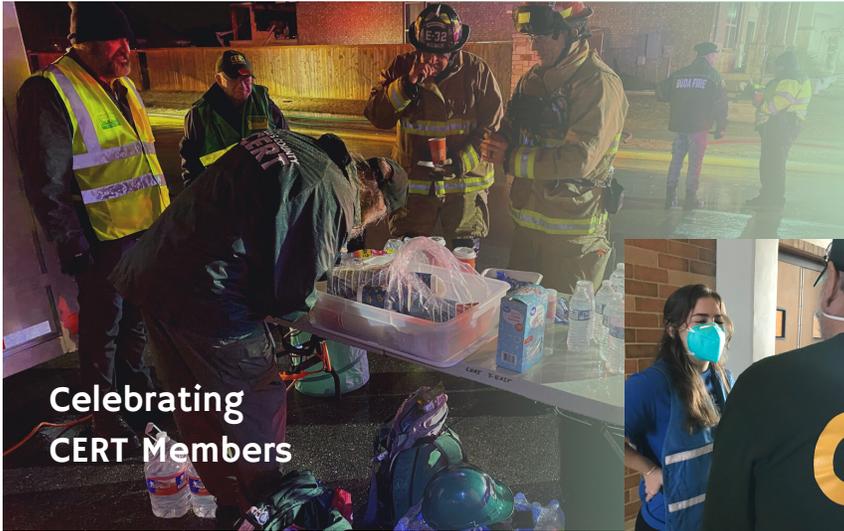


CERT MONTHLY

FEBRUARY 2022 | ISSUE 4

NEWSLETTER OF THE HAYS COUNTY
COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM



Celebrating
CERT Members

Above and below photos by Rowe Ray
Right photo by Kim Hilsenbeck



2022 IS ALREADY BUSY!

CERT Showing its stuff around the county

Welcome to another edition of CERT Monthly! Things started off hot in January and continued in February. CERT members showed up at a structure fire in Buda and another in Wimberley. Fire fighters and other first responders were glad to have the rehab capabilities of CERT for everything from hot coffee to checking vital signs to a chair for rest in between battling the blaze

Our Office of Emergency Services continues to beam with pride at the incredible work being done by CERT members all over Hays County. Keep it up, folks!

We cannot adequately express our sincere appreciation for everything our CERT teams do. When we say 'Thank You!', we hope y'all understand the depth of our conviction.



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This is the monthly newsletter of Hays County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), which is under the auspices of the Hays County Office of Emergency Services.

www.hayscountycert.com

MESSAGE FROM THE CERT PROGRAM MANAGER

When I think about all of the Hays County CERT members who volunteer their time and talent, I think how fortunate we are in this county. Having a dedicated group of individuals ready to jump in and assist during most any kind of emergency is a special thing. Knowing many of those same folks will also step up to help during the wide variety of events and activities we do is a comfort.

As we build the organization and strengthen our community at the same time. I'm reminded how important it is for any group to have the right people in the right job. Diverse skills, backgrounds and experiences allow an organization like CERT to flourish. Not everyone is able to come out to a fire at 3 a.m. when it's 29 degrees outside.

But we've seen our CERT members show up for special events, assist at vaccine clinics and in general become invaluable members of the group for their willingness to tackle many types of jobs.

Being the CERT Program Manager gives me a unique perspective on how the organization not just survives, but thrives. I see and talk to CERT members daily. I take each of their requests, suggestions and yes, sometimes complaints seriously. My goal is to continue to train a volunteer corp in Hays County that is comprised of people who represent the best of what it is to be a human in our society: Independence. Grit. Resourcefulness. Resiliency. Determination. Compassion. Hard work.

I see these things each day with CERT volunteers. When I say thank you for all you do, it comes from the heart.

-Brandon



HaysCo CERT Program Manager, Brandon High



CERT Out & About



CERT members and TXST Medical Explorers receive a briefing before the Mardi Gras parade on Feb. 26



Members of the Kyle/Buda Division cleaning out their trailer after a recent house fire in Buda

Photos by Rowe Ray

CERT VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

JIM GARDNER - ASSISTANT LEADER, CERT WIMBERLEY DIVISION

Being a long-time supporter of law enforcement and first responders is part of the reason Jim Gardner joined Hays County CERT six years ago. Gardner lives just outside of Wimberley and is now the assistant leader for the Wimberley Division of the organization.

His first call-out was just after he completed the CERT G-317 training. It was the middle of the night when he got the call.

“I thought, this has to be a drill,” he recalls saying to himself. “I just finished the training – how can I be ready?”

But he told his wife he ought to go, so he got up, got dressed and headed out the door. He was headed to downtown Wimberley where, according to the call-out alert, the popular Cypress Grill caught on fire.

“About five miles from town, I could see red and blue lights reflected off the low clouds,” he said. “I knew then, it wasn’t a drill.”

As he approached the scene, he saw the restaurant was fully involved with fire. That was when the adrenaline kicked in for Gardner.

“We jumped right in to help,” he said.

Gardner and other division members quickly set up the rehab tent, complete with chairs, a portable generator, water, hot coffee, and a table full of snacks and electrolyte packets.

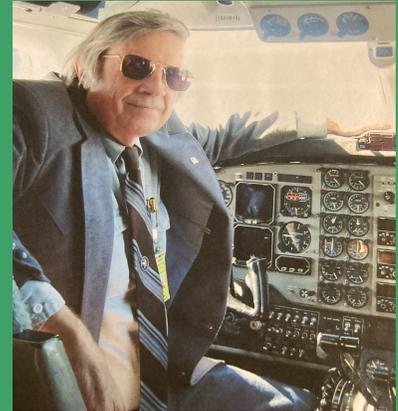


Photo courtesy of Jim Gardner

Continued on Pg 5

UPCOMING EVENTS AND TRAININGS

Healthy Kids Running Series

Sundays: March 6 thru April 10, 2022

Buda City Park, Main St., Buda

4-5 p.m. each Sunday

Four positions: Rehab/First Aid, Info Table, Traffic Control, Cheer Section

All CERT members encouraged to attend!

CERT G-317 Course

Tuesdays April 4, 11, 18, 25

May 2, 9, 16, 23

June 6, 13, 27

810 S Stagecoach Trail, San Marcos

8-10 p.m. each week

Monthly CERT Training & New

Member Orientation

3/12/2022

Public Safety Building

810 S. Stagecoach Trail, San Marcos

8-9 a.m. New Member Orientation

9 a.m.-11 a.m. Training

All CERT members encouraged to attend!

Monthly CERT Training & New

Member Orientation

4/9/2022

Public Safety Building

810 S. Stagecoach Trail, San Marcos

8-9 a.m. New Member Orientation

9 a.m.-1 p.m. Shelter Supervisor Training

(Provided by [American Red Cross](#))

All CERT members encouraged to attend!

CERT G-317 Course

Tuesdays April 2, 9, & 16

Dripping Springs TBD

8 a.m.-5 p.m. each Saturday



Sign into TDVR and check for new missions, trainings and more!

CERT HELPS AT TWO FIRES

So far in 2022, HaysCo CERT team members have been called out for two structure fires, both at night and both during freezing weather. Kudos to our team members who brave the elements and show up to support firefighters and law enforcement!

In early February, members from all over the county assisted with firefighter rehab during a structure fire in a Buda subdivision. No injuries were reported and the incident lasted about two hours. It was another incredibly cold night and we're grateful to the CERT folks who showed up! More recently, Wimberley CERT members assisted with a structure fire.



Photos by Rowe Ray



Photos by Jim Gardner

Continued from Pg 4

Gardner, now 75, may be used to adrenaline. He was a flight crew member on air refueling tankers in the U.S. Air Force for about five years. He also flew as a corporate pilot for the Texas Farm Bureau in Waco. During a portion of his long career, he was a flight instructor. Along his career path he even flew for the sheriff's department up near Abilene.

"I spent about 41 years as a pilot," he said.

These days, Gardner is retired from flying, but he certainly isn't bored. He enjoys spending time with his grandkids. He is a fire-arms instructor, a DPS license to carry instructor and a certified range safety officer.

"I also play in a country band," Gardner said. "The Lone Star Pickerz. That's pickerz, with a z at the end."

Gardner plays lead guitar and the pedal steel guitar. The group mostly plays in the San Antonio area, which is where the band is based.

But he also is ready for any CERT call-out where he can assist fire fighters and law enforcement members. In fact, he keeps a prep bag in his car, which always has at least a half tank of gas in it, so he's ready for any emergency.

How did he get involved?

"My son-in-law is an assistant fire chief," he said. "He told me about CERT and I got involved. So I credit or blame him on different days for telling me about the group."

One of his priorities, along with Wimberley CERT Division Leader Gary Callen, is to keep the CERT trailer up to snuff.

"He and I take care of that trailer," Gardner said, with palpable pride in his voice.

After a recent fire in Wimberley where CERT was called out, he said he and Callen need to clean and restock the trailer as they always do.

Over the six years he's been a member, Gardner said he's been on call-outs for fires, fatal car wrecks, a murder/suicide incident, search and rescue, missing persons and the like. He said he is happy to give his time, gas and even cases of water to the cause.

Gardner said he doesn't often attend CERT events that aren't connected to emergencies, but said he knows the broad appeal of CERT is a good thing because there are jobs for everyone who wants to be involved in building a more resilient community.

"There is a place for everyone. We have people who help at special events, vaccine clinics, who do traffic control and more," Gardner said. "And those jobs are important. I just prefer to be there to help our first responders."

He advocates for joining CERT regardless if you go on a lot of call-outs or not.

"The training is free and if something happens before first responders are able to get there, your training can help," he said. "Early involvement can save a life."

He paused.

"But the pay is not too good," he said with a laugh.

**Nominate a CERT
member for an upcoming
Volunteer Spotlight!**

email kim.hilsenbeck@co.hays.tx.us



Photo courtesy of Jim Gardner