



July 10, 2015
#150710-VOLUNTEER

Contact: Joy Tsubooka, Public Information Officer
(850) 983-5254, (850) 393-8304 Cell
joyt@santarosa.fl.gov

Volunteers Needed for Volunteer Reception Center Exercise

Santa Rosa County Emergency Management is in need for volunteers from the Navarre community to help conduct a Volunteer Reception Center, or VRC, exercise Saturday, July 18 from 1-5 p.m. at the Navarre Library located at 8484 James Harvell Road in Navarre. A VRC is often set up after a disaster to register both local and out-of-town volunteers to help with needs in our community.

Volunteers play an important role after a disaster – from the removal of downed trees in subdivisions to help open access, helping move debris to the right of ways, and helping to staff local agencies' in the field. Additionally, a VRC can recruit volunteers to work at Points of Distribution, or PODs, handing out water, food and other items.

During a disaster it is vital that all volunteers working in our community register with a volunteer reception center. While well-meaning, volunteers not managed and handled efficiently and correctly can do more harm than good. Too many workers, vehicles, and convergent volunteers at the scene of a disaster can create congestion and interfere with response activities, and the need to manage converging resources puts additional strain on emergency response systems. Each disaster can pose create unique needs and hazards, so it is vital that volunteers' skills are matched to the volunteer task. It also helps avoid duplication of services and ensures that all impacted areas are prioritized and specific needs addressed. A VRC also tracks volunteer hours which allows the county to use volunteer hours as a match for disaster costs, thus saving the tax payers money.

The Navarre CERT team will be testing the VRC procedures during this exercise. Anyone that would like to participate should arrive no later than 1:15 p.m. at the Navarre Library. For more information or if you have questions, please contact Steve Mewborn at (850) 983-5360.

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