

Chase and Perkins County residents are asked to become part of an emergency response team to assist local law and fire officials in times of disaster.

Perkins County Emergency Manager James Brueggeman, Chase County Emergency Manager Paul Kunnemann and Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department Emergency Response Coordinator, Heidi Wheeler seek residents to join a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program. CERT will educate people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills.

“The simple fact is that response by local law, fire and other officials in a disaster situation only goes so far. Having volunteers trained and ready to respond is critical for the positive outcome of a potential disaster,” explains Kunnemann.

Volunteers would complete 20 hours of training to be qualified for the team. Training involves disaster response skills in fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization and disaster medical operations.

Eight people are required for a team to be created. “Once eight volunteers have been identified, a class training date will be set,” states Wheeler. The training will be paid for with grant funding from Homeland Security.

Those who would like to volunteer for the CERT program, or who have questions, are asked to call Wheeler at 308-882-4269 or 308-345-4223. Residents may also email Wheeler at erc@swhealth.ne.gov.