

CERT MONTHLY

The newsletter of the Hays County
Community Emergency Response Team

WWW.HAYSCOUNTYCERT.COM



September 2025



CERT volunteers Ricky Hagy and Mel Barrentine at the Hays County Emergency Preparedness Fair

What a Fantastic Prep Fair!

Thanks doesn't quite cover it - we are absolutely thrilled at the level of support we received from our CERT members during the Hays County Emergency Preparedness Fair!! So how about...THANK YOU SO MUCH!!!

What a day - we were all exhausted by the time the event ended. And while we know we will make some adjustments for next year's event, the 2025 fair went very well.

And we could not have accomplished what we did without each of you who came out to help.

Thanks also to the sea of chartreuse shirts, aka CERT volunteers, who attended the Sept. 16 Hays County Commissioners Court meeting. Your support and presence in the room is deeply appreciated. Commissioners passed a proclamation declaring Sept. 14-20 as National CERT Week. Thanks for showing up!

Fall will be a busy time - any availability you have to help CERT would be fantastic. We know everyone is busy! Your continued dedication to this organization is truly unbelievable. Thank you!

Please send Kim H. ideas for stories and photos from events and trainings. Your help means so much - thanks in advance!

In this issue

Welcome	Pg 1
Message from the Program Manager	Pg 2
Volunteer Spotlight	Pg 3-4
CERT G-317 and Other Training	Pg 5
CERT Calendar	Pg 6
CERT Community Partners	Pg 7
Emergency Preparedness Fair Recap	Pg 8
CERT Pics	Pg 9-10
CERT Store	Pg 11
Help Needed	Pg 12
Birthday Shout-outs	Pg 13



CERT Monthly Meetings

Hays County CERT holds a monthly meeting on the third Tuesday of each month. Check the calendar (and emails) for info!

Like and Follow our public-facing FB page!

<https://www.facebook.com/hayscocert/>

Message from the Program Manager

Want to take a moment to sincerely thank each and every CERT volunteer who came out to support the Hays County Emergency Preparedness Fair. We were out in force that day – 67 volunteers worked at least part of a shift! From the bottom of my heart, thank you for your hard work, your dedication and your continued support.

I hope everyone had a chance to rest a bit – the fall will be another busy one. But we look at it as spreading the word about emergency preparedness and helping build a more resilient community. And that is something we all know is important.

I also thank all of the CERT volunteers who wore the yellow shirts and came out to the Hays County Commissioners Court meeting on Sept. 16. Your strong presence in the courtroom was felt – and seen!

Good news: we had 24 participants at our first G-317 class in Kyle, and 13 in Wimberley. We're off to a good start!

Several things are still on the calendar this fall, but I'm also looking forward to the end of the year awards dinner! Please let Kim H. know if you're interested in helping with the party planning. The biggest need will be to help find sponsors to help cover the cost of food and other aspects of the event.

Once again, sincerest thanks for everything you do.

Saying thank you always seems inadequate – it's just not enough. I'm so grateful for this incomparable group of individuals (meaning, all of you) who work with Hays County CERT. You are it's heart and soul! Our county is all the better for having CERT members like each of you.

Here's to a successful fall!

Candy

“Volunteers don't just give their time - they give their heart, their courage, and their strength. Together we stand ready, not because we have to but because our community matters.”

-Unknown author

Candy Lonie, CERT Program Manager



CAMPUS CERT

Hey TXST Students...

We're looking for students at Texas State University to become the leadership team for our Campus CERT. Contact Candy Lonie if you're interested! Email her: candy.lonie@hayscountytexas.gov

Volunteer Spotlight

Growing up in Kemah, Texas, which is along the gulf coast, Mike Cox was no stranger to disasters. Or preparedness.

"I saw firsthand the devastation hurricanes can bring," he said. "My family lost two homes to storms — and those experiences taught me that preparedness isn't just a concept, it's survival."

In addition to his family's personal tragedies, Mike also had a role model who instilled readiness — his dad. Mike's father was a founding member of the Kemah Volunteer Fire Department and served as Area Director of Civil Defense.

"This was back when emergency response was built on grit, neighborly trust, and handwritten plans," Mike said. "He believed readiness wasn't just about gear or drills — it was about mindset, responsibility, and showing up when it mattered most."

Those early lessons stuck with Mike.

He eventually worked his way through college at the University of Houston — first as a merchant seaman, and later in oil company computer rooms, where precision and planning were paramount.

"Both of those experiences instilled in me a deep wanderlust and respect for global systems," he said.

His father's example also made CERT a natural path for Mike.

That same path led Mike to a 21-year career with the Arabian American Oil Company in Saudi Arabia. He said the time overseas broadened his perspective and deepened his commitment to preparedness.

"My wife, daughter, and I traveled the world during our annual repatriation vacations," he said. "Those experiences taught me about the diverse approaches to safety, resilience, and community in different cultures."

Mike said his inspiration to join Hays County CERT stemmed in part from his early days in Kemah, and going through the loss of two family homes.

"Community support was what got us through," he said. "I've carried that lesson ever since. Joining CERT was a way to turn that lived experience into action."

Mike said CERT embodies neighbors helping neighbors, and not just during disasters, but in building resilience before disasters strike.

Continued on Pg. 4



Have a spotlight Suggestion? Email [Kim Hilsenbeck](#), our Public Information Team Lead.



“CERT is the modern embodiment of what my father stood for: ordinary people stepping up with extraordinary purpose,” Mike said. “It’s about bridging experience with structure and turning lessons from the past into action for the future.”

Mike believes being part of CERT is not just volunteer work — it’s a continuation of a family legacy of service.

He added, “It’s a bridge between lived experience and structured response. It’s also a way to honor the past by preparing others for the future.”

Any advice for someone considering CERT?

Mike wants Hays County residents to know they don’t need to wait for a disaster to realize how valuable they can be.

“If you’ve ever felt the impact of a disaster — or watched someone you love lead through one — you already carry the mindset CERT needs.” Mike said. “CERT provides you with the tools, but it’s your heart and your story that make the difference.”

He added, “Preparedness isn’t just a skill set; it’s a way of life.”

**Know someone who might want to help us build a more resilient community?
Share our [website](#) and [social media](#) with them!**



G-317 and Other Training

- Free
- Useful
- Important

Building a More Resilient Community!

Hays County CERT is running two G-317 courses this fall, one in Wimberley, the other in Kyle. Let your friends and neighbors know they can drop into courses in which they have an interest! Share the schedule below.

LOCATION #1

Wimberley Presbyterian Church
Fellowship Hall
965 FM 2325
Wimberley, Texas

Unit 1 - Tuesday, September 30, 2025 – 6:30 to 9:00 pm
Unit 2 - Thursday, October 2, 2025 – 6:30 to 8:00 pm
Unit 3 - Tuesday, October 7, 2025 – 6:30 to 9:00 pm
Unit 4 - Thursday, October 9, 2025 – 6:30 to 8:00 pm
Unit 5 - Tuesday, October 14, 2025 – 6:30 to 8:15 pm
Unit 6 - Thursday, October 16, 2025 – 6:30 to 9:30 pm
Unit 7 - Tuesday, October 21, 2025 – 6:30 to 9:00 pm
Unit 8 - Thursday, October 23, 2025 – 6:30 to 8:00 pm

Saturday, Oct. 25 - Callout Training (8 a.m.- noon) and Exercise (1-5 p.m.) at the Hays County Public Safety Building in San Marcos. This is for both classes and ALL CERT members.

LOCATION #2

Hays Co. ESD#5/Kyle Fire
Station #1
210 W Moore Street
Kyle, Texas

Unit 1 - Monday, September 29, 2025 – 6:30 to 9:00 pm
Unit 2 - Wednesday, October 1, 2025 – 6:30 to 8:00 pm
Unit 3 - Monday, October 6, 2025 – 6:30 to 9:00 pm
Unit 4 - Wednesday, October 8, 2025 – 6:30 to 8:00 pm
Unit 5 - Monday, October 13, 2025 – 6:30 to 8:15 pm
Unit 6 - Wednesday, October 15, 2025 – 6:30 to 9:30 pm
Unit 7 - Monday, October 20, 2025 – 6:30 to 9:00 pm
Unit 8 - Wednesday, October 22, 2025 – 6:30 to 8:00 pm



The poster features the Hays County Office of Emergency Services logo and the CERT Community Emergency Response Team name. It includes the text 'Learn More about Being Prepared for Emergencies' and 'Our G-317 Classes are Starting Soon!'. Below this, it says 'Drop into Classes or Take the Entire Course'. A list of class topics is provided: Disaster Preparedness, Disaster Medical Operations, Stop the Bleed, CRASE, Disaster Psychology, Fire Safety & Utility Controls, and Light Search and Rescue. There are two circular images showing people in training. At the bottom, it says 'CERT is part of the Hays County Office of Emergency Services' and provides the website 'www.hayscountycert.com'.

Hays County Office of Emergency Services
CERT
Community Emergency Response Team

Hays County Community Emergency Response Team

Learn More about Being Prepared for Emergencies

Our G-317 Classes are Starting Soon!

Drop into Classes or Take the Entire Course

Some of our Class Topics:

- Disaster Preparedness
- Disaster Medical Operations
- Stop the Bleed
- CRASE
- Disaster Psychology
- Fire Safety & Utility Controls
- Light Search and Rescue

LEARN MORE & SEE THE FULL SCHEDULE

CERT is part of the Hays County Office of Emergency Services

www.hayscountycert.com

Upcoming Events

Sacred Springs PowWow

October 3-4

Saturday 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. & 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. & 2 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Wimberley Market Days

October 6, 7 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

National Night Out (Texas)

October 7, details TBA - check calendar soon

ICS-400: Advanced ICS for Command and General Staff

October 8, 8 a.m.- 5 p.m.

CERT General and Command Staff Meeting

October 9, 9-11 a.m.

TXST Footballs Game

October 11, 2-10 p.m.

Kyle Founders Day Parade

October 11, 10:30 a.m. start time

TX State Football Game

October 11, 2-10 p.m.

Songwriters Festival - Dripping Springs

October 17-19, Traffic Control @ 3 locations and 1 parking lot

Friday 2-10 p.m., Saturday 2-10 p.m., Sunday Noon-7 p.m.

PALS Pet Fest

October 18, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Kyle City Fest

October 18, 4-8 p.m.

Boo! Hole Halloween

October 18, 4-10 p.m.

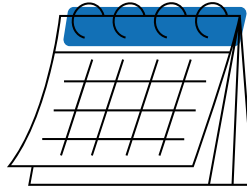
Callout Training

Saturday, Oct. 25, 8 a.m.- noon

Rehab, Comms and Classroom Instruction

CERT Exercise

Saturday, Oct. 25, 1-5 p.m. This is for G-317 classes and **ALL CERT members**.



CERT Calendar

- Trainings
- Events
- Meetings

Find more details on our [CERT calendar](#)!

Visit the [CERT calendar](#) for the sign-up links!

Campus CERT Meetings

Info coming soon!

TSA/ABIA K9 Decoy Training Assistance

See our [Calendar Page](#) for details.

*Thanks for all you do as
CERT members!*

***Please sign up for events
to help CERT support
our community!***

CERT COMMUNITY PARTNERS



**WE APPRECIATE
YOUR SUPPORT!**



Hays County CERT appreciates every organization and business that so generously helps us. The continued support of the following businesses and organizations is critical to our mission.

We greatly appreciate how business owners and local organizations rally to assist CERT, and the Office of Emergency Services, during emergencies and beyond.

Please accept our gratitude!

[Alsco \(Kyle\)](#)

[AMVETS Post 115 \(Kyle\)](#)

[Buda Lions Club](#)

[City of Kyle Parks Department](#)

[Dripping Springs Distilling](#)

[Hays City Store](#)

[Hays County Commissioner Michelle Cohen, Pct. 2](#)

[Hays County Commissioner Debbie Ingalsbe, Pct. 1](#)

[Hays County Fire Chiefs Association](#)

[H-E-Bs in Buda, Kyle, San Marcos, Wimberley](#)

[Hill Country Trophy \(San Marcos\)](#)

[Kyle Fire Department/ESD #5](#)

[Fire Marshal Mark Schultz \(Kyle FD\)](#)

[Martin Taylor](#)

[Root Cellar \(San Marcos\)](#)

[San Marcos Emergency Management](#)

[Tea2go/TeaN'ergy \(Kyle\)](#)

[Thundercloud Subs \(San Marcos\)](#)

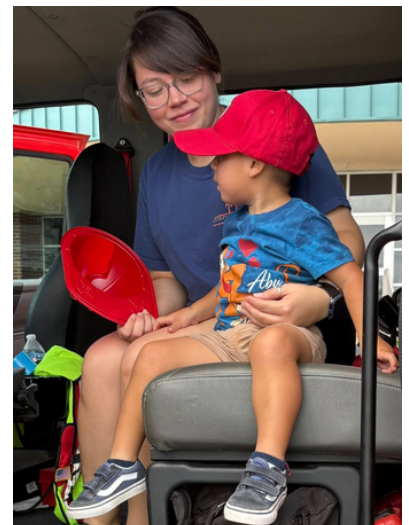
[Wimberley Cafe & Marco's Italian](#)

Want to be a CERT Community Partner? Email [Candy Lonie](#)

Thanks for your help at the Hays County Emergency Preparedness Fair!

Just a few of the many pics we
snapped that day!

2025 Preparedness Fair & TOP DAWG Chili Cookoff



Fair Stats:

- 67 CERT members volunteered
- 17 non-CERT volunteer partners
- 668.7 volunteer hours total

More Fair Pics!





CERT volunteer Rowe Ray recently attended an HR & Safety Congress event at Embassy Suites in San Marcos.

CERT in Pics

We had a sea of chartreuse shirts at the Sept. 16 meeting of the Hays County Commissioners Court. The members of the court proclamation September 14-20 as National CERT Week - because every community needs a CERTain kind of hero! Thanks to our Hays County CERT members who attended and showed strong support for the organization.



CERT Store

**Get all your CERT
gear at our
online store!**

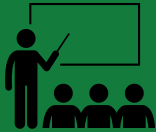


Check out the CERT web store!

All the items will be delivered to the Hays County OES building in San Marcos and distributed from there.

*Many thanks to Chuck Koenen for all his
hard work on this project!*

CERT Needs



Can you help?

Here at Hays County CERT, we know we have many talented, creative and resourceful volunteers. Each of you helps make this organization even better. Here are some of our current needs - can you help us with one of these areas?

- Photographers for Social Media/Newsletter/Website
- Videographers for Training Classes
- AV techs for Meetings and Trainings
- Communications – Writers and information gatherers (social media, website, newsletter)
- Assistance in Logistics – choose your area: Food Unit, Medical Unit, Supply Unit, Communications Unit, Facilities Unit, Ground Support Unit
- Assistance in Planning – choose your area: Processes and documentation, Event planning and IAP development, Mission documentation
- Training – Classroom Support, Position Task Book tracking, Instructor
- 2025 Awards Planning Committee
- Community Preparedness Outreach (Booths and/or Presentations)
- Administration – choose your area: Volunteer Communications, New Member Enrollment, Reporting and Documentation
- Operations – Rehab, SAR (including evidence and missing person), Traffic Control, Crowd Management, Damage Assessment, Debris Management, Reunification, Sheltering/Mass Care, Family Assistance Center, Family Resource Center, Volunteer Resource Center, Animal Response



Interested in being part of our Food Unit team? This [link](#) provides a basic review of food handling. Though not everything will apply to us, best practices whenever possible is always optimal. If interested, please take the two-hour online course. There is a minimal fee of \$7. Once completed, email a copy of your card to Paul Freeman and Sue Richards.



We are looking for CERT members to become CPR/AED/First Aid Instructors. If interested, please email Paul Freeman and Sue Richards.

If you can help with any of the above areas, please contact Candy Lonie 512-781-2088, or one of your Section Chiefs/Leaders:

Gordon DeWitte (gordon.dewitte.hccert@gmail.com) – Operations Chief or Rickey Clement Deputy Operations Chief
Mel Barrentine (melvin.barrentine.hccert@gmail.com) – Planning Chief
Paul Freeman (paul.freeman.hccert@gmail.com) or Sue Richards (sue.richards.hccert@gmail.com) – Administration
Noah Dennis (noah.dennis.hccert@gmail.com) – Logistics
Sandi Barber (sandi.barber.hccert@gmail.com) – Community Preparedness Outreach
Kim Hilsenbeck (khilsenbeck71@gmail.com) – Communications, Public Information, Photographers
Rick Hagy (Richard.Hagy.hccert@gmail.com) – Safety Officer

Happy Birthday!



September Birthdays

Dorcas Oladapo
Ashley Nelson
Tyler Norman
Uriel Martinez
Sydney Zapalac
Bryon Turner
Angelica Espinoza Del Real
Kourtnie Bertram
Richard Hagy
Jacqueline Williford
Debbi Cooke
Jon Lasser
Tristan Hernandez
Lynette Plascencia
Karen Myers
Elizabeth Zuniga
Maria Tomasso
Mary Espinoza
Jacob Hill
Prescilia Kengni
Mamta Ganesan