

# CERT MONTHLY



The newsletter of the Hays County  
Community Emergency Response Team

[WWW.HAYSCOUNTYCERT.COM](http://WWW.HAYSCOUNTYCERT.COM)



April 2025



Hays County CERT volunteers at the Buda Weiner Dog Races

## Great Spring So Far!

Anyone else feeling like spring is running along and you're doing your best to just keep up? Same, friends, same.

Hays County CERT had a busy month! Between trainings, meetings, and several community events, we've been rockin' n' rollin'.

We are working to host the first ever CERT Spring Social. The date will probably be June 1 and we will confirm ASAP. The good folks over at Roughhouse Brewing are working to try to accommodate us. This will be a CERT member + 1 event. Kim Hilsenbeck will be sending an email shortly to gauge how many folks plan to attend.

If you can help us do some fundraising to help cover the cost, your efforts would be much appreciated!

Check out this month's CERT Volunteer Spotlight on Pg. 3 - we shine the light on Pastor Sheila Sidberry-Thomas.

Please send Kim 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
CERT Store	Pg 8
Help Needed	Pg 9
CERT Pics	Pg 10-12
Birthday Shout-outs	Pg 14



## 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/haycocert/>

# Message from the Program Manager

If March was madness, April is like that on steroids!

Once again, I am overwhelmed by the dedication and commitment of so many Hays County CERT volunteers. Your talents, skills, abilities and generosity with your time are more appreciated than you know.

The Buda Weiner Dog Races and Dripping Springs Founders Day events went well. We had 59 people express interest in CERT at our last three festivals (Buda, Wimberley, and Dripping Springs). Thanks to all who worked these special events!

We could use more volunteers at upcoming happenings. Check the [CERT calendar](#) for all our upcoming meetings, trainings and community events. If you can join us, we'd be thrilled!

We're working on putting together our first spring social; looks like June 1 is the date but we will confirm ASAP. Please respond to Kim Hilsenbeck when she emails about the date and if you or you and a guest might attend. This is our way of saying 'thanks!' to our volunteers.

If you haven't been to a meeting, training or event recently, we welcome you to join us in May! And remember, we also need as many volunteers as possible for the Emergency Preparedness Fair on September 13. That event is like our prom - we prepare all year for it. Please lock in that date on your calendars!

My sincerest thanks for all you do for CERT. It does NOT go unrecognized! And it definitely doesn't go unappreciated. I'm so grateful to everyone in Hays County CERT. Thanks for what you do!

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?"  
— Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Candy Lonie, CERT Program Manager



## CERT by the Numbers

Total Accepted Members = 264  
At Large = 14  
Buda Division = 29  
Dripping Springs Division = 23  
Kyle Division = 32  
Buda/Kyle Combined = 61  
San Marcos Division = 31  
Wimberley Division = 15  
TXST Division = 122  
G-317 Field Deployable = 220

# Volunteer Spotlight

Sheila Sidberry-Thomas is what you might call an energetic woman of a certain age. She is also the pastor at the oldest black church in San Marcos, Wesley Chapel AME.

This Philadelphia native ended up in Texas in about 2009. Why Texas?

"I don't like the snow," she said.

She lives in San Antonio and was a pastor there for about fifteen years. In total she's been a pastor for 19.

"This is my fourth year in San Marcos," she said.

Sheila hasn't considered moving to San Marcos but is active in the community.

"I attend city council meetings to learn what's going on around town," she said.

She also volunteers when she can for the Southside Community Center; she is a member of the San Marcos Ministerial Alliance and the Hays County Homeless Coalition.

Was it a big change coming to preach in a relatively small town, compared to San Antonio?

In some ways, she said, yes.

"I don't have the resources as readily available," she said.

How did she get involved with Hays County CERT?

Members of her congregation told her about CERT. She said they strongly encouraged her to get the free training CERT provides.

"They told me, 'We need to go be part of this organization,'" she said. "I didn't know what CERT was."

They all signed up for the course in the fall of 2024.

"I paid attention as best I could," she said.



**Shine the Spotlight!**

Each month we highlight a CERT member. This time, it's Sheila Sidberry-Thomas!



Sheila Sidberry-Thomas accepting her Hays County CERT graduation certificate.

Continued on Pg. 4

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

And some of the course, particularly the medical aspects, may have come easy for Sheila. She was an EMT when she lived in Philly.

"In a past life, I was an EMT, certified in CPR," she said. "I was volunteering in Philly right after college at an ambulance company not far from where I lived. They offered EMT classes."

So, she took the training.

"I really enjoyed it - driving the ambulance and taking care of the patients," she said. "You had to be certified in CPR and I kept up with the certifications for a while even after I left."

Sheila added that CERT brought back a lot of those teachings.

Is she enjoying being a CERT member?

"Yes, and I'm getting to know the Hays County community a little better," she said. "I help out mostly at events on days as I can adjust my schedule better."

She isn't always able to attend CERT training, because weekends are a busy time for a pastor.

What she likes is there is something for everybody in CERT.

"You do it when you can," she said.

What does she like best about CERT?

"Volunteering makes me happy," she said. "I'm able to help someone else."

She added that CERT is a bit different - you're not just helping an individual.

"Now we're helping communities," she said. "We get to see how we can assist whole communities. We share information and help them be prepared."

Sheila also enjoys working with the other volunteers and meeting new people.

"I like to reconnect with those I've met," she said, "And I started working with students at Texas State."



Sheila Sidberry-Thomas at a CERT event at Texas State University.



Sheila Sidberry-Thomas at a winter shelter operation with fellow CERT volunteer Kamryn Hamilton.

**Fun Fact:** Sheila is a die-hard Philadelphia Eagles fan in Texas county!! A sign on her office door has "her Eagles" on it.

**Side note:** Wesley Chapel AME turns 150 this year! The church will hold a celebration in August.

# Building a More Resilient Community!

Hays County CERT will run another G-317 course beginning in May; see Pg. 6 for dates. Attend all classes to become certified, or drop into courses in which you have an interest! Be sure to share this info with friends and family.



## 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

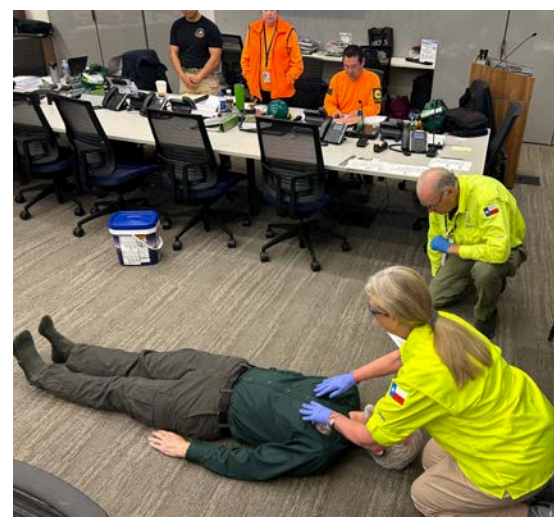
[www.hayscountycert.com](http://www.hayscountycert.com)

CERT is part of the Hays County Office of Emergency Services



## G-317 and Other Training

- Free
- Useful
- Important



# Upcoming Events

## CERT Calendar

- Trainings
- Events
- Meetings

*Thanks for all you  
do as CERT  
members!*

### SAVE THE DATE

June 1 CERT Social  
Look for details soon!

### SAVE THE DATE

June 7 - Exercise: Rehab,  
Callout, and COMMS  
classroom training and  
exercise. This is our final day  
of G317 and also training for  
ALL CERT members.

### SAVE THE DATE

September 13 -  
Hays County Emergency  
Preparedness Fair

### TSA/ABIA K9 Decoy Training Assistance

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

### Campus CERT Meetings

These will resume in the fall

### Wimberley Market Days

May 3, 7 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

### Texas State Spring Commencement

May 8, 9, and 10

### Command Staff & Chiefs Meeting

May 8

### G-317 Course

May 5 – June 7 at Barnabus Connection. (Sign-up link in calendar)

May 13 – MGT 452 – Physical and Cybersecurity for Critical Infrastructure

May 15 – Wildfire Awareness and Response

May 31 – CPR/AED/First Aid

June 1 – Final

### Kyle Tex-Travaganza Fair

May 16, 17, and 18

### Mermaid Parade

May 17

### CERT Member Meeting

May 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m. (Four locations and virtual)

### Wimberley Memorial Day Concert

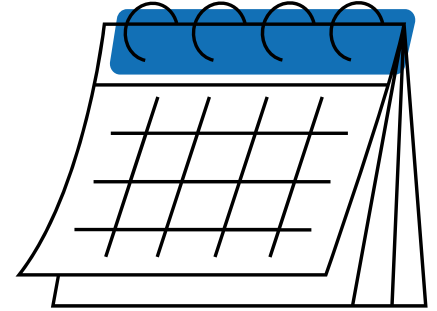
May 24

### TDEM Conference/HCCERT Booth

May 27-30

### CPR Training

May 31, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.



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

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

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

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 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 \(Kyle\)](#)

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



## CERT COMMUNITY PARTNERS



WE APPRECIATE  
YOUR SUPPORT!

### Special thanks to:

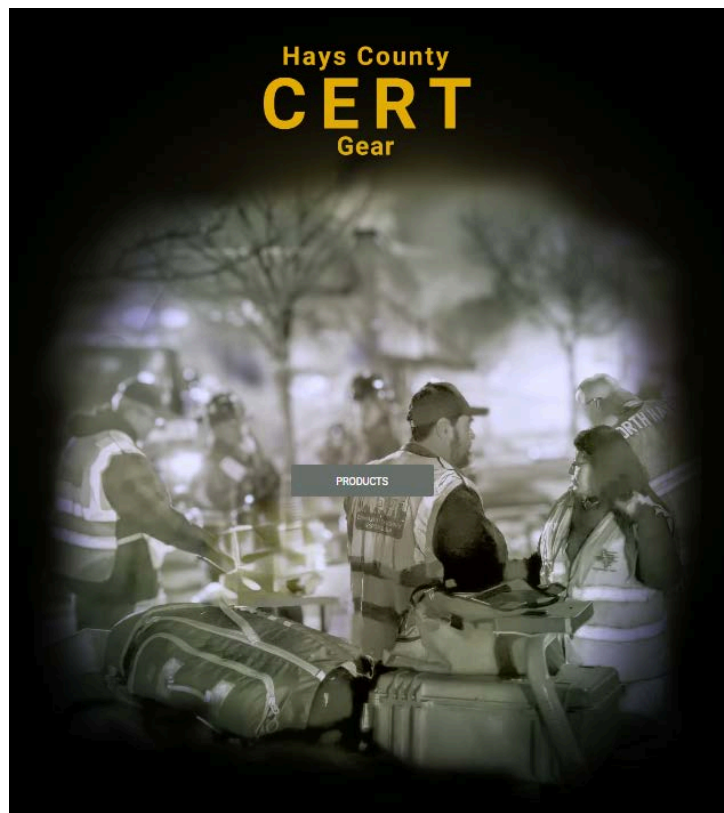
- **Chick-fil-a San Marcos**
- **Sonic West Buda**
- **Thundercloud Subs**

**These restaurants  
provided food either at no  
cost or heavily  
discounted. Thank you!**

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

# 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.

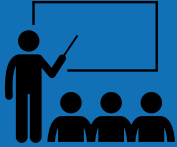
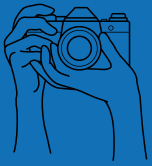
*Many thanks to Chuck Koenen for all his hard work on this project!*

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





# 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

*Thank you!*

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](mailto:gordon.dewitte.hccert@gmail.com)) – Operations Chief or Rickey Clement Deputy Operations Chief

Mel Barrentine ([melvin.barrentine.hccert@gmail.com](mailto:melvin.barrentine.hccert@gmail.com)) – Planning Chief

Paul Freeman ([paul.freeman.hccert@gmail.com](mailto:paul.freeman.hccert@gmail.com)) or Sue Richards ([sue.richards.hccert@gmail.com](mailto:sue.richards.hccert@gmail.com)) – Administration

Noah Dennis ([noah.dennis.hccert@gmail.com](mailto:noah.dennis.hccert@gmail.com)) – Logistics

Sandi Barber ([sandi.barber.hccert@gmail.com](mailto:sandi.barber.hccert@gmail.com)) – Community Preparedness Outreach

Kim Hilsenbeck ([khilsenbeck71@gmail.com](mailto:khilsenbeck71@gmail.com)) – Communications, Public Information, Photographers

Rick Hagy ([Richard.Hagy.hccert@gmail.com](mailto:Richard.Hagy.hccert@gmail.com)) – Safety Officer

# Pics

CERT members at the  
Buda Weiner Dog Races



# Pics

CERT members working at the preparedness information booth during the Dripping Springs Founders Day festival



# Pics

Campus CERT members at River Fest



Campus CERT members at Texas State University



Hays County CERT members assisting with pod-moving day

# Ham Radio Course - Register by May 10!!

## Fees:

Study materials

Non-refundable \$35 license fee for the Federal Communication Commission\*

\$14 non-refundable fee paid to the Volunteer Examiners (VEs) and the VE Coordinator (VEC)

*\*When your satisfactory test and application is submitted to them.*

## Registration:

Registration is a 2-step process: **First**, email the class instructor Gary White at [w5gw1956@gmail.com](mailto:w5gw1956@gmail.com) with your name, email, and telephone number and a copy of your driver's license or passport.

**Second**, you will receive a welcome packet containing the Discord access link and a link to pay the non-refundable VE test fee (\$14.00) by PayPal or check to the provided address. You will not be registered until the VE test fee is paid.

Questions? Contact [gordon.dewitte.hccert@gmail.com](mailto:gordon.dewitte.hccert@gmail.com)

## Hays-Caldwell Amateur Radio Club & Oakhill Amateur Radio Club Boot Camp



# July 12, 2025

Course is a combined self-study and one-day boot camp class, immediately followed by the exam for a license.

The class will cover new Technician licenses and upgrades to General and Extra Class licenses.

**Signups need to be complete by May 10, 2025.**

*"Having several licensed amateur radio operators expands our communications ability both in the field and throughout the county."*

*- Rickey Clement, Hays County CERT  
Deputy Operations Chief*



# Register Today!

# Happy Birthday!



This year we started a newsletter segment to wish a very  
Happy Birthday to our members.

## April Birthdays

Suzanne Robbins  
Cassidy Ellis  
Kassy Solis  
Caitlyn Wilhelm  
Ameer Khan  
Adam Guest  
Adrian Ramsey  
Lynette Hill  
Adriana Quiroga De Lozano  
Ivy Bell  
Tracy Stalvey  
Mary Conway  
Ashley Sanchez

Henry Daggett  
Chloe Arizola-Leonard  
Krunal Khamkar  
Jasmin Khan  
Rusty Fletcher  
Madison Whiddon  
Leann Hosein  
Alexandra Dinescu  
William Little  
John Roppolo  
William Ashby  
Jackie Uselton  
Samantha Gladden