



Hays County Community Emergency Response Team

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Hays Co. CERT receives LCRA grant making possible Search & Rescue upgrade

Representatives of the Lower Colorado River Authority board of directors recently presented Hays County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) representatives a \$20,643 grant which will enable the organization to provide state-of-the-art search and rescue capabilities in support of county first responders.

Pedernales Electric Cooperative also assisted and supported CERT in the grant application process and representatives were on hand for the presentation.

Grant funds will be used to convert a small diesel bus, donated by Hays Co. Sheriff's Office, into a multi-purpose support vehicle. In a letter accompanying the LCRA grant request, the late Sheriff Allen Bridges said "we anticipate CERT being able to boost their support of county emergency operations by providing a multi-faceted base to enhance fire and emergency services rehab, serving as an all-weather control center for unmanned air observation (for fire and missing person operations), and rapid response to bring support equipment to emergency scenes."

Also in the letter, Sheriff Bridges said, "our CERT, recognized nationally two years ago as one of the 3 best in the nation, has - since its founding in 2003 - been of tremendous benefit to all first responders in the county and the citizens we serve. They've been called upon for a wide range of support activities under all conditions and have always exceeded our expectations.

"Their support," he added, "has included fire fighter rehab, evidence searches, missing persons searches, manning emergency shelters, educating the public in emergency preparedness and recruiting and training volunteers to help in these kinds of situations. Their dedication and professionalism is truly exceptional."

CERT is a federal program sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security. It was adopted by the county and approved by Commissioners Court in April 2003.

Hays County CERT now has 68 volunteer members and is directed at the County level by a Citizens Corps Council which includes County Emergency Management Coordinator Jeff Turner, County Grants Accountant Lamarr Petersen and, until his death, Sheriff Allen Bridges.

The mission of CERT is service to the community: To provide information on disaster preparedness; provide support for Hays County first responders (fire, sheriff, EMS and Red Cross); provide leadership and coordination for emergency response volunteers, and provide post-emergency assistance to victims.



**LCRA and PEC representatives present a \$20,643 LCRA grant to the Hays Co. Community
Emergency Response Team.**

*(back row – left to right) Rodger Parker –CERT Director, Brenda Adair – LCRA Board of Directors, Toni Reyes – PEC Community Relations Manager, Lewis Smith –CERT Director
Jeff Turner – Hays County Emergency Management Coordinator (front Row – left to right) Bill Coffman –CERT Director, and Darrel Delong –CERT Director.*

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