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GRANTS FROM N.C. CITIZEN CORPS AND THE N.C. OFFICE OF THE  
GOVERNOR ENHANCE DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE  
*Hertford and Bertie County programs to move forward on development objectives*

MURFREESBORO, N.C – Two recent grants totaling \$11,400 will further develop of the Hertford County Citizen Corps Council and Community Emergency Response Teams respectively.

The grants, designed to support the development and enhancement of Citizen Corps in the state, were awarded by North Carolina Citizen Corps/Office of the Governor. The awards allow Hertford County to receive reimbursement for outreach and activities consistent with the national theme of citizen involvement, awareness and preparedness.

“I’m humbled and thankful for the incredible support our leaders have given throughout this process,” said Hertford County Citizen Corps/CERT Coordinator Stephanie Duffey, who is the Regional Marketing Coordinator for The Roanoke Center. “The progress that has been made thus far is truly a reflection of the commitment and faithfulness of civilians with a common vision towards readiness, helping people, and doing the greatest good for a better quality of life.”

The goal of Citizen Corps is to bring together leaders from law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services, emergency management, volunteer organizations, the private sector and local elected officials to oversee citizen engagement in homeland security and the promotion of community preparedness and family safety via education, outreach and training.

Since receiving official recognition by the state for its existence in November 2006, Hertford County Citizen Corps has organized multiple training workshops to engage the community in becoming more informed and prepared in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. Now, in light of the grant funds, it plans to do more.

Duffey said the grants will be used for planning, equipment, training and exercise development. One of her goals is the creation of a Campus CERT at Chowan University in Murfreesboro to help promote public safety and a culture of preparedness.

“This is a fantastic opportunity for every day citizens to get involved in the community and to get to know one another as well as those in key positions who are likely to handle emergencies and disasters, not to mention that it’s fun,” she said.

In a press release issued by the North Carolina Office of the Governor, more than \$275,000 in grants have been awarded statewide to the North Carolina Citizen Corps with a total of 31 counties receiving funds, among which was neighboring Bertie County. “We appreciate all the support the government has given us,” said Bertie County Emergency Manager Rickey Freeman, who plans to use the funds to increase the number of volunteers.

“CERT affords every day citizens the opportunity to be part of the community. That’s what this is. You don’t have to join the fire department or EMS to be a part of this community,” he said. “If there is a group or a subdivision that wants to train, we can go to them and teach them. That’s the beauty of CERT, it’s not an emergency management team or a county management team, it belongs to the people and they decide how much training they want to engage in.”

Freeman and Duffey are discussing the possibility of working together on some training initiatives as well. “We just want to do everything we can to make the Roanoke Chowan area as prepared as possible,” said Freeman.

The grant process was competitive across the state, upon registration and approval on the [www.citizencorps.gov](http://www.citizencorps.gov) website, all applicants had the opportunity to submit a proposal up to \$12,000 per county.

“It is heartening to see young people doing a public service,” said Hertford County Manager Loria Williams. “I believe grant this grant will also enhance communication between local government personnel, the citizens and the media and ultimately result in a community that is better equipped to meet each other’s needs when disaster strikes.”

For information on CERT, contact Stephanie Duffey at 252-539-2236 ext. 283 (Hertford) or Rickey Freeman at 252-794-5302 (Bertie) or visit [www.citizencorps.gov](http://www.citizencorps.gov).