

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Stephanie Duffey
Office: 252-539-3039
sduffey@roanokeelectric.com

ECU HOSTS CAMPUS EMERGENCY RESPONSE TRAINING
REC subsidiary employee attends state's first Campus CERT training



STAFF PHOTO/Diana Mitchell
Stephanie Duffey posing with her CERT equipment following the train-the-trainer class at ECU.

GREENVILLE (Erica Plouffe Lazure, ECU News Bureau 5-11-07) - East Carolina University hosted the state's first Campus Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training May 8 through May 10.

Sponsored by ECU's Department of Health Education and Promotion, Michigan State University, and N.C. CERT, the training drew interest from 25 campus and public safety responders from across the region, including Peace College, Guilford College, East Carolina University and UNC-Chapel Hill.

Stephanie Duffey, Regional Marketing Coordinator for Roanoke Electric Coop's economic development subsidiary Roanoke Economic Development, Inc. and Coordinator for the Hertford County Citizen Corps Council/CERT was among those who attended.

The three-day training showed participants how to tailor emergency response procedures to the specific needs of a campus environment through the CERT volunteer program. Such concerns include transient populations, large groups of people, campus visitors, political activity, communication limitations, industrial hazards, pandemics, crime, special events and research facilities.

"A campus is like any other big neighborhood," said C-CERT project coordinator Chuck Bouth. "It's very important we have an organization that, when emergency response officials are overwhelmed, we can help them and take care of our own."

Phil Schertzing from Michigan State University's School of Criminal Justice, led the sessions, which offered both hands-on disaster preparedness training and the skills to help people train others to become CERT volunteers on their campuses.

Neither Pitt County nor ECU has a CERT team, but Judith Taylor, a professor in ECU's Department of Health Education and Promotion, said she hopes to lead a training in the near future for faculty, staff and students.

“Our department views CERT as a way to promote a culture of preparedness throughout our region,” Taylor said. “We hope to infuse CERT in our curricula, specifically through our community and environmental health programs.”

Duffey, who is pursuing a degree at Chowan University in Murfreesboro, N.C., said although Chowan University does not presently have a CERT team, she hopes to coordinate similar training for faculty, staff and students as well as for the general population of Hertford County. In March, she and emergency management personnel from Chowan and Hertford counties collaborated to provide CERT training for the first group of volunteers. “This training will no doubt be an asset to the community,” said Duffey. She also hopes to plan a joint disaster simulation or “tabletop” exercise with Chowan County and perhaps some of the campus and public safety responders who attended the May 8-10 training at ECU.

The ECU training was sponsored by a grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, The North Carolina Citizen Corps, the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management, and Pitt County Emergency Services. The program enables community members to help each other in a time of natural or man-made disaster.