



KENAI PENINSULA CITIZEN CORPS

Resources for building stronger, safer communities on the Kenai Peninsula

Summer 2006

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KENAI PENINSULA CITIZEN CORPS COUNCIL

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SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH!

In addition to encouraging people to put together their own 72-hour kit, we're launching a campaign to assemble Basic Disaster Supply Kits for distribution to organizations that serve the elderly, poor and special needs clients.

YOU CAN HELP! Between now and the end of September, we need help soliciting and collecting items and assembling the kits. Please look for cooperators within your area clubs, churches, businesses - we would like to involve everyone! If you have contact ideas or can help, please call Glenda Landua 262-2098 (central peninsula) or 1-800-478-4441, ext. 2098 (the rest of the Borough).

Basic Kit Items include:

- * 5-gallon bucket with a secure lid
- * flashlight with extra batteries
- * portable battery operated radio
- * extra batteries
- * a good quality non-electric can opener
- * 2 rolls of toilet paper
- * travel size shampoo, soap, toothbrush, toothpaste
- * small writing tablet and pen
- * emergency blanket (compact type)
- * small first aid kit
- * whistle
- * 2 N-95 particle masks
- * roll of duct tape



We will add emergency preparedness checklists and (at least for the first 100 kits), a copy of the emergency preparedness manual - "It's A Disaster! ...and what are you gonna do about it?"

The strength of any government rests on the virtue of it's people.

Benjamin Franklin

Your spirit of volunteerism and willingness to extend a helping hand is the heart of our country and the soul of our communities. We hope you know how deeply your participation is appreciated!

What's Happening...

We moved! The Borough Office of Emergency Management recently moved into the new Emergency Response Center located at 253 Wilson Lane (behind the Soldotna Police Station). Our phone numbers remain the same. Give us a week or two to unpack and then drop by and check out the new facility.

In late May, we participated in Soldotna Safety Days where we distributed CERT and other emergency preparedness information and gave tours of the Borough's emergency communications van. Hannah Watkins, our favorite young author, joined us for a few hours to sign and give away her children's emergency preparedness books.

In June, our office worked with the Alaska Dept. of Homeland Security and Public Health to host a community forum on **pandemic and avian flu** at the Kenai Senior Center. A review of the information provided at the forum is provided on **page 2**. The forum led into a two day workshop for health care providers that is being repeated in Homer and other communities across Alaska in the coming weeks.

Pandemic Flu

By Kim Lorentzen

Has the summer's news about avian flu got your feathers a little ruffled? In June, the Borough's Office of Emergency Management hosted a community forum on pandemic flu and avian flu. Let's look at some of the straightforward and useful information that came out of these meetings to help you sort fact from frightening fiction. First, avian flu, as you've probably heard by now, has been around as long as birds have been around. Every once in awhile, a particularly scary strain pops up, like the current H5N1 virus. Humans are not normally susceptible to bird-borne viruses, but the threat of mutation does exist. Here are some flu facts (from the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services brochure, "**Flu, Bird Flu and Pandemic Flu**"):

- **Influenza (flu)**, are a group of viruses that primarily infect birds, but can also infect and cause illness in other animals, including humans. Although bird flu infection among humans is rare and usually results in mild disease, the resulting disease from the current strain of H5N1 is severe.
- **Regular (seasonal) flu epidemics** occur every year as flu viruses undergo small genetic changes. Each year, between 5 percent and 20 percent of the U.S. population will be affected and most people will recover within a week or two.
- **Flu pandemics** occur three to four times a century when a genetic change occurs and increases the infectiousness of the virus and severity of the illness. The worst pandemic of the last century was the "Spanish Flu" of 1918. It killed 50 million people worldwide and 500,000 people in the U.S.

Although the current H5N1 strain of bird flu has not yet efficiently or consistently transmitted itself to the human population, there are still some basic precautions you should take when handling chickens or game birds:

- Always wash your hands when handling birds (cleaning, plucking, etc.).
- Cook poultry well to kill any potential virus. The core temperature should reach a mini-

mum of 165 degrees.

- If you find dead birds with no apparent cause of death, call 1-866-5-BRDFLU to report them.
- Keep yourself healthy: eat right, get plenty of sleep, exercise and wash your hands regularly. A healthy immune system is your best defense against disease.
- Precautions for avian or pandemic flu are the same as any other basic infectious disease precautions. Remember that a person is typically infectious for 48 hours before symptoms appear. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth without first washing your hands. Stay home when you're sick to avoid spreading germs.
- Arm yourself with information (see the list of resources at the end of this article).
- Find out where and how you can help with your community's preparations. For instance, the Public Health office, Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), and fire, police departments, Borough's Office of Emergency Management and others are gearing up for a mass immunization event tentatively scheduled for early November. Watch for more information about this event and plan to participate. Event coordinators are looking for the public to come out and get flu immunizations en masse so that agencies can test their preparedness for a large-scale event of this kind. Even if you've already gotten your flu shot before the drill takes place, you're encouraged to come out, stand in line and go through the motions to help stretch the system to capacity. If a flu strain develops into a flu pandemic, it is estimated that a large percentage – perhaps as many as forty percent – of the population might become infected. Fortunately, our health and emergency response agencies are preparing and you can help!

For more information, check out the following resources:

<http://www.pandemicflu.alaska.gov>
<http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov>
1-888-9-PANFLU (1-888-972-6358)

Wildfire Preparedness

Although we've been lucky on the fire front this year, it never hurts to be prepared! In April and May, three **Fire Corps Wildfire Preparedness** trainings were held in Soldotna, Homer and Anchor Point (43 people attended). The training covered the basics of fire behavior, defensible space, fire resistant landscaping, evacuation procedures and sheltering-in-place.

The Borough's Spruce Bark Beetle (SBB) Mitigation Program has been working on Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) for communities with extreme fire risk. Currently, eight plans have been completed and are available on line on the KPB Spruce Bark Beetle website. Core teams have been formed in each community to help review and implement the plans. Upcoming community meetings to work on the plans will be posted on the SBB website as they are scheduled through the fall, winter and spring.

If you're interested in learning more about wildfire preparedness or helping with the CWPP in your community, contact Glenda Landua at the KPB Office of Emergency Management (907-262-2098), Sharon Kilbourn-Roesch at the Alaska Division of Forestry (907-262-4260) or Roberta Wilfong at the KPB Spruce Bark Beetle Mitigation Program (907-260-6202). Useful wildfire preparedness information is available online at:

<http://www.borough.kenai.ak.us/sprucebeetle/>
<http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/forestry/>
<http://www.borough.kenai.ak.us/emergency/>
<http://www.firewise.org/>

FALL CERT CLASSES

We have interest in fall CERT classes in Kenai, Soldotna, Sterling, Anchor Point, Homer, Hope, Seldovia, Tyonek, Nikiski, Port Graham, and Seward. *If you're an instructor in one of these communities - please get in touch - we need your help!*

We're also working with the Alaska State Troopers to provide an enhanced search and rescue class in Anchor Point and with local Amateur Radio Operators to provide a HAM RADIO/Emergency Communications class in Soldotna. In addition, a one night traffic control class has been tentatively

scheduled in Anchor Point for the evening of September 26th. **Watch for email alerts about the fall classes!**

Hannah Goes to Washington - Our favorite young author, Hannah Watkins, has done it again! In between trips to Washington D.C. to accept awards for her children's books: *Heidi and the Tsunami*, *Molly and the Earthquake* and *James and the Volcano*, Hannah finished her fourth book: *Spencer and the Wildfire*. Spencer is currently at the printers and



cooperators on the project include the Department of Natural Resources/Division of Forestry, KPB Office of Emergency Management, KPB Spruce Bark Beetle Mitigation Program, Alaska Fire Chief's Association, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and ConocoPhillips. A total of 11,000 books have been ordered and should be ready for state-wide distribution in late August. We plan to distribute a set of all four books

to all KPB kindergarten through sixth grade classrooms as well as school and community libraries. Hannah's done an extraordinary job with these books - if you see her around town, be sure to congratulate her on the awards! You can check out Hannah's books online at: <http://www.borough.kenai.ak.us/emergency/books/watkins.htm>.

NIMS TRAINING REMINDER

If you've been tuned in to recent emails and newsletters, you'll recall we're asking all of our CERT volunteers to complete two of the introductory **National Incident Management System (NIMS)** training modules - IS-700: NIMS, An Introduction and ICS-100: Introduction to Incident Command System. The courses need to be completed by the end of September if at all possible and are available online at <http://training.fema.gov/EMITWeb/IS/crslist.asp>.

Along with helping us stay eligible for Citizen Corps grants, the training provides valuable information about how the Incident Command System works during an emergency. If you have any questions about the courses, please feel free to contact Glenda (262-2098) or Kay (262-2096). Thank you to those industrious souls who have already completed the courses and forwarded their FEMA completion notices - your participation and hard work is sincerely appreciated!!



Online Courses

National Incident Management System (NIMS)

Go to: <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/crslist.asp>



IS-700: NIMS, An Introduction

ICS-100: Introduction to Incident Command System

Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness

Go to: <http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/is>, Click on "Our Courses" on the left side of the page, Click on IS-22.

CERT Refresher Course

Go to: <http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/is317.asp> to download the course.

As you complete the NIMS courses, please forward the course completion acknowledgement from FEMA to glandua@borough.kenai.ak.us. Thanks!

KENAI PENINSULA CITIZEN PROGRAMS CORPS

Volunteer opportunities abound!

We need your help with September's National Preparedness Month!

- ❖ collecting supplies and assembling emergency supplies kits for elderly, home bound and others with special needs;
- ❖ planning CERT get-togethers, drills and other emergency preparedness training in your area.

Call or email today and let us know how you can help support emergency preparedness in your community
(glandua@borough.kenai.ak.us, 907-262-2098).



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