



# Southwest Florida MRC Messenger

Serving the Counties of Lee, Charlotte, Hendry, Glades, Highlands, Okeechobee and DeSoto

## Volunteers Now Federally Deployable Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps. Debuts After National MRC Reorganization

**THANK YOU!**  
**The Southwest Florida MRC greatly appreciates the service so generously given by our volunteers. Your invaluable contributions of time and expertise are priceless to our region. Together we can continue to be caring, capably and ready as we build strong, healthy and prepared communities.**

– The Southwest Florida Medical Reserve Corps



*Volunteers Building Strong,  
 Healthy and Prepared Communities*

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### Prepared and Responsive

For more information about the SW Florida MRC, volunteer opportunities, emergency response, disaster preparedness and readiness, call (239) 461-6109 or log on to [www.swflmrc.org](http://www.swflmrc.org)

The Medical Reserve Corps. officially became the **Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps**, reporting directly to the Surgeon General, Health and Human Services/ASAM, effective September 11<sup>th</sup>.

The reorganization and name change resulted in part from the phenomenal nationwide program growth. Now with 713 MRC units and 146,338 volunteers, the change helps differentiate the functions of the civilian volunteer program from that of the Public Health service (PHS) Commissioned Corps.

Although the focus remains local, the reorganization allows MRCs to better undertake efforts to expand the capacity of MRC units throughout the nation and begin to establish a federally-deployable cadre of volunteers. It also recognizes its "dual use" for both ongoing public health activities and emergency preparedness/response, and differentiates the functions of this civilian volunteer program from those of the PHS Commissioned Corps/

OFRD.

The new functional statement indicates the following primary activities:

- ★ Director serves as the principal advisor to the SG and the ASH on activities related to civilian volunteers
- ★ Provides day-to-day management of the MRC and related grants programs
- ★ Supports local efforts to establish, implement, and sustain MRC units nationwide
- ★ Provides national leadership and coordination of the MRC program
- ★ Promotes awareness and understanding of MRC units critical role in communities across the nation
- ★ Enhances the capacity of MRC units to achieve their local missions; and,
- ★ Supports efforts to utilize willing, able and

approved MRC members in a Federal response.

After the fall announcement, Capt. Robert J. Tosatto, Director, Medical Reserve Corps Program, said, "I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your support for the MRC program over the past five years, as well as your assistance to me personally as I now approach four years as Director of the program. I am truly looking forward to the exciting changes and challenges that will come with this reorganization, and to my continued work with all of you."

For those of you who would like to be placed on a **national registry** of volunteers who are willing to serve outside of their local communities, please indicate on the new volunteer survey or contact Pat Santucci at [santucci@pol.net](mailto:santucci@pol.net). Remember, you are never obliged to accept an assignment and can refuse for any reason.

### New Leadership & Volunteer Opportunities

#### Emergency Management Expert Steve Fettner Named Executive Director

Southwest Florida MRC recently appointed Lee County Health Department Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator Steve Fettner as its new Executive Director. He brings decades of public health and emergency management expertise as he develops response plans, establishes training and generates exercises for all hazards, as well as special needs shelters to respond to any natural or man-made disaster or to a bio-terrorist attack. Fettner's expertise ranges from public and international health development and administration to domestic security and bioterrorism planning, as well as community development.

"Major health emergencies place great stress on the already thinly stretched emergency response and health services in our fast growing area," said Fettner. "The MRC plays a critical role in fillings those gaps when traditional health services are overwhelmed, in addition to general response in

disaster related events.

"So much of what we do in Lee County correlates to the plans and programs of the MRC," said Fettner, citing the 330 health department employees and 600,000 to 750,000 population of Lee County (depending on the season). "The MRC is a natural fit to help us establish programs to supplement and complement regional needs."

Fettner cited four volunteer opportunity service areas for the next year in the Southwest Florida MRC plans:

- ★ Lee Memorial Health System Surge Support Program, including Support Centers for Families – it covers 95 percent of the County with its five hospitals and skilled nursing facility
- ★ POD (points of distribution program) designed for distribution of life saving drugs or immunizations

- ★ Expanded Disaster Mental Health Programs(see related story on page 3 about Psychological First Aid)
- ★ Pandemic Flu Program, including infirmery response

"We want to start integrating MRC volunteers into the Lee County Health System through credentialing and training with the hospitals' staffs," said Fettner, who credits MRC volunteer Dr. Pat Santucci's energy and expertise as guiding forces in volunteer development, stirring interest and garnering enthusiasm. "We're working closely together to establish training once specific (continued - page 2)

**New Web Site Premieres!  
[www.swflmrc.org](http://www.swflmrc.org)  
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**Fettner Named Executive Director** (cont. from page 1)  
needs are established." To learn about participation in the MRC volunteer survey, see the insert.



**Steven Fettner**

Fettner will also work with the Southwest Florida MRC Foundation, the non-profit organization that supports MRC, raises program/resource funds and serves as an advisory group to activities.

MRC coordinator Debra Gary, RN, MSN, assists Fettner with coordination and programs for the 200 SW Florida MRC volunteers, 180 of them in Lee County. With 21 years of Health Department expertise, and 41 years in Lee County, Gary brings an incredible head for details and tremendous knowledge of public health to SW Florida MRC.

Gary manages MRC training, the all-new web site ([www.swflmrc.org](http://www.swflmrc.org)) and works with Dr. Pat Santucci on orientation efforts. Recently SW Florida

MRC applied for TRAIN, an online program to track all volunteer classes. To be established this fall, TRAIN serves as the premier online learning resource for MRC volunteers (see inside back cover).

TRAIN's free advantages include:

- ★ Quickly find and register for many courses
- ★ Links available to key academic learning resources
- ★ Select courses by subject, competency, credit type, etc.
- ★ Work at your leisure
- ★ Earn CME, CEU and contact hours for many courses
- ★ Track your learning with personal online transcripts
- ★ Course reviews and discussion board
- ★ Identify MRC Core Competencies and courses that will fulfill the requirements
- ★ Check out upcoming events

"Volunteers can do everything online from home, working in their own account, taking classes when they want in what they're interested in and ultimately be prepared to help at any place, any time," said Gary. She also works with Dr. Abbe Finn in Disaster Behavioral Health and Psychological First Aid for non-mental health volunteers, as well as with Executive Director Steve Fettner on the volunteer survey to increase recruitment, retention and readiness.

"2008 marks a year of resilience training for health department staff members to be resilient to disasters and flexible in emergency response," she said. "MRC people do such a great job," she said, citing this Summer's Lee County Health Department's highly successful exercise for isolation and containment via a flu epidemic scenario, as well as work with Sanibel and regional health systems. Such efforts feature dozens of health field employees and MRC volunteers playing multiple roles to enact.

Four more orientation and training dates along with volunteer registration into the New Year will help MRC expand the volunteer pool and keep participants ready to respond to any potential disaster.

For more information on these programs and how you can be involved in serving your community, please contact Steve Fettner at (239) 461-6109 or [Steven\\_Fettner@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:Steven_Fettner@doh.state.fl.us)



## WORLD WIDE WEB

well as an important new section "Volunteers Needed!" Be sure to check this occasionally to keep abreast of upcoming events, volunteer opportunities and alerts, and other vital information.

We will continue to expand the website, making it an even more useful tool for volunteers and the public. If you would like to help or have ideas about how it can be improved, please contact Debra Gary at (239) 461-6106 or [debra\\_gary@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:debra_gary@doh.state.fl.us).

# JOINING UP!

## Sanibel Hosts First Orientation-Recruitment Event

Sanibel held its first recruitment meeting at Big Arts this fall while discussing the possibility of running a POD exercise (points of distribution designed for administering life saving drugs or immunization) on the island. The geographically isolated resort community holds more than 8500 residents. Dozens attended the event that covered medical and non-medical volunteer opportunities and the importance of community readiness and disaster response.

"It's important that the local residents have their own self-contained point of distribution designed for administering life saving drugs or immunizations," said Steve Fettner, MRC Executive Director and Lee County Health Department Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator. "We work with the police and fire departments and will use the school out there to administer and dispense medications, if needed. Our efforts receive tremendous cooperation from all government and public safety officials, including our lead contact, Sanibel Police's Major Murray. He was delighted to work with us because we fit in so well with his own emergency operation plans."

Organizers hope that events like this can be repeated throughout the region's smaller communities so that SW Florida MRC can organize volunteers, help tailor training to individual unit area needs and provide the support equipment/services required to readily respond to an emergency.

If you would like a presentation for your organization or community, or know of an organization that would be interested, let us know. We are looking for opportunities to recruit new members and provide community education. If you are interested in serving on a recruitment committee or being an MRC spokesperson, please contact us at (239) 461-6109.

## [www.swflmrc.org](http://www.swflmrc.org)

### MRC Launches New Web Site

It's online and ready to serve! Log on to the SW Florida MRC's all new website at [www.swflmrc.org](http://www.swflmrc.org) Here you can find information about the MRC, frequently asked questions, links to training materials, national and regional MRC newsletters, photos of MRC activities and even a short video.

Additional features include a new volunteer application and information about the SW Florida Foundation as



POST THIS 2007-08 SCHEDULE

# TRAINING PAGE SW FLORIDA MRC

## CIVILIAN VOLUNTEER MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS

**SAVE THE DATE-- BRING A FRIEND**  
*Join us for our monthly MRC meetings*

### TRAINING DATES:

Tuesday, Nov 13th 8-11 AM\* Health Park Hospital (HP1A and 1B)  
Strategic National Stockpile, Mass Casualty Triage & Film,

Wednesday, Dec 12th 8-11 AM\* Cape Coral Hospital (Life Center A/B)  
Universal Precautions, Quarantine, Isolation, Decon, Hospital Tour

Monday, Jan 7th 8-11AM\* Lee Memorial Hospital (Cleveland Auditorium)  
Pandemic Update, POD Set-up and Community Organization,

Wednesday, Feb. 13th 8-11 AM\* Health Park Hospital (HP1A and 1B)  
Family Support Program, Psychological First Aid, Resiliency Issues,

\* 8-9, Orientation for new MRC volunteers/update on MRC/ new ID Badges

For additional information call Debra Gary, 461-6106

## WELCOME! SW FLORIDA MRC'S NEW MEMBER VOLUNTEERS

*As every thread of gold is valuable, so is every minute of time.*  
- Mason

Janice Alden  
Nancy Jean Beatty  
Leclair Bissel  
Sheila Dingwall  
James "Mike" Drushal  
Mary Ellen Drushal

Sheila Duren  
Marcia Fowler  
Methel Gale  
Phyllis Gresham  
Claudia Johnson  
Carla Lewins  
Gene Lopez

Julie Parker  
Molly Robinson  
Hazel Shuller  
Dixie Slack  
Shelly Storyes  
Sharon Warnecke