

Del Norte County promotes training for disasters through CERT program

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Crescent City, sometimes referred to as the nation's tsunami capital, continues to prepare its residents for any number of disasters.

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training is again available for Del Norte County residents, from October 12-26 on Sunday mornings and Monday and Wednesday evenings.

There will be a variety of class topics offered, including fire safety, terrorism, medical response, and search and rescue.

"I mean, there are all kinds of things that threaten our community, and so the more prepared that every individual is, the better for them," said Kymmie Scott, the county's emergency services manager.

CERT is a nationwide program that prepares residents to respond to disasters before first-responders arrive.

Interested residents can attend the free classes, "survive" a disaster-like scenario staged by the organizers, then progress to become CERT-trained, if they wish. Beyond that, attendees can become qualified to join a CERT corps or fire team.

The corps handles tasks such as directing traffic and door-to-door calls in case of flooding, while the fire team offers hydration and other support at fire scenes.

Next spring, the emergency services department plans to host another, more-compact CERT course, in addition to hosting the twice-yearly classes.

Scott said, “The more prepared people are to take care of themselves and to help each other and to just raise their awareness about disasters ... just sort of builds the fabric of resiliency throughout the whole community.”

More than 400 Del Norte County residents currently are CERT-trained. Scott said she encourages young people to attend the training, not only to become aware but also to explore the possibility of becoming a first-responder.

She’s working on bringing training to the public schools in Del Norte County and hopes to one day see every high school senior graduate CERT-trained.