

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 12, 2006, 10:00 AM, CST

CONTACT: Peter Cales (402) 471-6228
Peter.Cales@hhss.ne.gov

2006 "Redeem the Day- September 11"- Citizen Corps Awards

Outstanding "Volunteer of the Year" and "Team of the Year" recognized for local Homeland Security and community preparedness efforts

Lincoln, NE – The Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission (NVSC) Citizen Corps Program announced the 2006 recipients of the "Redeem the Day" awards September 11, 2006. These annual awards recognize Citizen Service that exemplifies excellence in the Citizen Corps programs of Community Emergency Response Training (CERT), Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS), Fire Corps, Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), and Neighborhood Watch.

Selected from Citizen Corps Councils and volunteers across Nebraska, this year's recipients of "Volunteer of the Year Award" and the "Team of the Year Award" demonstrate the commitment to share preparedness information and training with others.

The 2006 Citizen Corps "Volunteer of the Year" is Bob Hessler from the Scotts Bluff County Citizen Corps Council. Recognized and nominated by many local community leaders, Bob has made a special contribution to the local Citizen Corps Council. According to one individual nominating Bob, "Scotts Bluff County Citizen Corps began as a vision of Bob Hessler, and with his leadership, passion for purpose, expectation for excellence, can-do attitude, attention to detail and superb communications skills, SBCCC has grown from something our community ought to do to something our community does well." Certainly Bob has demonstrated leadership that is evident as the Scotts Bluff Citizen Corps Council continues to expand to include the new programs of Volunteers in Police Service and Fire Corps and considering a Medical Reserve Corps.

The 2006 Citizen Corps "Volunteer Team of the Year" is the Volunteer Educators Corps from the Lancaster County Citizen Corps Council. The Volunteer Educators Corps members are committed to giving community presentations about personal responsibility and community safety in times of disaster and emergency. The group grew out of the need to manage volunteers to help in debris removal in response to the 2004 Southeast Nebraska tornadoes clean-up. Recognizing the need to help others prepare personally and as organized networks of response, these Volunteer Educators began providing training on setting up Emergency Volunteer Centers and personal preparedness. Together in trainings and presentations, the following volunteers of the Lancaster County Volunteer Educator Corps have put in more than a thousand hours helping others be safer and more prepared in case of disaster or emergency. Team members include: Janis Darrington, Bonnie Filipi, Marcia Greve, Greg Lugn, Bruce Marxsen, Peggy Parker, Geri Powell, Don Poysa, Trevor Money and Leslie Wehnes.

In addition to these awards, special recognition goes to volunteer JR Reider from Holdrege, who has helped expand the reach of the Citizen Corps program by helping start four County Councils with others on the way.

"I am amazed by the quality activities and level of commitment that the volunteers in Nebraska's Citizen Corps network exemplify," said Susan Burton, the Citizen Corps Coordinator with the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission. "This

year's nominees reveal that everyone truly has a role in hometown security, that every person has a part in making the community safer."

Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission Executive Director Barbara Thomas agreed. "The composition of the Citizen Corps network of volunteers varies from doctor to neighbor, and professional emergency responder to volunteers trained and prepared to help as possible. This year's nominees and winners reflect how our Nebraska citizens are taking the lead to make their communities safer and more prepared for disaster and emergency response."

These volunteers understand that Homeland Security begins at home. Home in their local communities. The Nebraska Citizen Corps Program is represented by councils in 23 Nebraska counties to strengthen local communities against the dangers of terrorism, crime and natural disasters. This year the network of Councils grew from 12 to 23. Special recognition goes to The primary objectives of the County Citizen Corps Councils are: to make their communities safer from threats of all types, educate the public on safety, protection and prevention and to spearhead volunteer and educational efforts.

More information about Citizen Corps can be found at:
<https://www.citizencorps.gov/> and at www.nvsc.ne.gov, the Web site of the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission.

The Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission was established by Governor Executive Order in 1994 to promote, mobilize, and support the efforts of all Nebraskans who are united in strengthening their communities, state and nation through volunteer and community service.

Useful Links

<http://www.citizencorps.gov>

<http://www.freedomcorps.gov>