

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Omaha Citizen Patrols receive Governor's Points of Light award for volunteer efforts

Lincoln, Neb. – The Omaha Coalition of Citizen Patrols (OCCP), an off-shoot of Neighborhood Watch, is comprised of almost 1000 volunteers who spend their time patrolling their neighborhoods and working with police to help keep Omaha communities safe.

Governor Heineman and First Lady Sally Ganem honored the volunteer based service group today with the Governor's Points of Light group award at a ceremony in the Warner Chamber at the State Capitol. The awards are sponsored by ServeNebraska, Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission and presented quarterly in recognition of volunteers who give their time, talent and energy to help Nebraskans build stronger communities.

There are citizen patrols in each of the 4 Omaha Police Precincts, assisting the Omaha Police and Douglas County Sheriff's office with additional neighborhood patrols. Most often, the members patrol within their own neighborhoods, assisting police as additional eyes and ears. But the patrols also assist the Omaha Police with other events and activities throughout the city and the year. The patrols assist as increased Halloween patrols, shopping mall patrols during Christmas time, the first and last day of school patrols, as well as assisting with neighborhood safety during the summer months by utilizing bicycle patrols, walking patrols and even Segway patrols.

OCCP also formed a subcommittee of their patrol called Rapid Response Team. The Rapid Response Team or RRT as they are also known, are an extra tool the police can call on 24/7, to assist them with searching for a missing child or a missing vulnerable adult. The RRT will assemble up to 40 trained volunteers to assist with a search. They have been trained by the Omaha Police and work with officers on patrol to locate the missing child and/or vulnerable adult.

In 2011, OCCP patrollers patrolled 12,020 hours. At \$18.00 an hour, that's around \$216,372.00 they donated to the community to help keep Omaha safer. Additionally, so far this year, they have donated over 12,000 hours, so they are on track to break previous volunteerism records.

The Omaha Coalition of Citizen Patrols is very deserving of the Governor's Points of Lights Award for their community service.

To nominate a youth, adult or group for a Governor's Points of Light Award who have made a difference through volunteerism and community service, visit the ServeNebraska website at www.serve.nebraska.gov. The next nomination deadline is June 15, 2013.

ServeNebraska pursues its mission of mobilizing Nebraskans to strengthen their communities through volunteering, collaboration and national service programs.

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