

**EMERGENCY VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT
AND RETENTION COMMITTEE REPORT**
SUBMITTED FEBRUARY 22, 2007
ACTION STATUS AS OF OCTOBER 30, 2007

Routine distribution of deed transfers

Status: Implemented and Ongoing

This initiative has been in place now for almost two years. In an attempt to reach out to people as potential volunteers upon moving into our area, the County Executive's office provides the Director of Public Safety with lists of new homeowners as the information becomes available. The Director, in turn, transmits that information to the relative fire districts and emergency agencies so that they can follow up.

Countywide Volunteer Identification Program

Status: Currently Being Implemented

This is a program by which a home Emergency Service Agency will identify a volunteer to potentially assist on the scene anywhere throughout the county. A County issued ID will indicate membership and list what duties the volunteer may be qualified to perform (see attached draft of card and information sheet). Although the Sheriff's Department has a system that is capable of producing such an identification card, because of the secure location of that system, the committee is pursuing funding for the purchase of a system for Public Safety. A system specifically for Public Safety would also ready us for anticipated NIMS credentialing guidelines. The Rensselaer County Legislature has committed up to \$2500 funding for this project. Funding may also be available from a grant from the New York State Emergency Management Office to support emergency management and disaster preparedness initiatives.

VIP Card & Window Signs

Status: Currently Being Implemented

This incentive will undoubtedly prove to be a win/win situation for volunteers and participating vendors throughout the county. It is a program, entitled Volunteer Incentive Program, or 'VIP', whereby local businesses can offer discounts of their determination to individuals that can document (the County-wide ID card described above) their active membership in a volunteer emergency services agency located in Rensselaer County.

The committee has developed a decal, letter, FAQ sheet and application form for community businesses to sign on to this program.

Media and Marketing Campaign

Status: Ongoing

All local volunteer departments and agencies are in the process of being contacted to establish a communications link between the County and the agency. The County will assist in getting information the volunteer agency wants published into the various mediums providing local news coverage in an effort to increase knowledge of the public service provided by those volunteer agencies.

Income Tax Credit

Status: Implemented

This committee met with Sen. Bruno's office earlier last year with Mr. Kirby Hannan and lobbied for State Legislation that would offer a tax reduction to emergency service volunteers. A bill has been passed and became law that provides for a two hundred dollar tax credit for those who file individually; four hundred dollars in the case of a husband and wife who are both volunteers and file jointly.

County Website

Status: Currently Being Implemented

The County website can be a valuable tool when trying to attract and retain volunteers. A specific page for Volunteer Fire and Emergency Services will incorporate pictures, statistics on the power of volunteering, testimonials from current program participants, benefit programs, higher education scholarship opportunities, and volunteer applications. It will be localized; talking openly about the problems faced by Volunteer Emergency Service providers in Rensselaer County and exactly how volunteering can help. The website will reach out to all varieties of potential Emergency Services Provider volunteers. The elderly, college students, and people with disabilities can all have a valuable role in the continued existence of Volunteer Emergency Services providers. The message will be light and positive, while also stressing the important local and real-world results that can come from being a volunteer.

Scholarships Lists Compilation

Status: Implemented and Ongoing

This committee has compiled information about scholarships available from state and federal associations and agencies for college bound students who are willing to volunteer some service in return and turned it over to the Website Committee for placement on the website. This will be a useful tool in providing information, requirements and assistance to our high school students so that they can take advantage of financial assistance as they plan to attend college.

EMS Fly Car Program

Status: Still Under Review

This committee has met with the last of the ALS providers. In an attempt to reach out and involve the various agencies, a questionnaire has been prepared and was sent to the agencies. The final report of this committee is in the draft stage and will be filed after the returns are in. *Report has since been filed*

Business management/administration college course

Status: Still Under Review

Considering the amount of time already committed by emergency volunteers, this committee explored educational opportunities with more flexibility than commuting to a classroom. Along with the help of HVCC, it would like to build a catalog of relevant on-line courses and other resource links on those topics of most interest to our emergency volunteers, as expressed in a survey (ex. grant-writing, leadership, business management, public relations). A directory can be placed on the County's website listing such courses as well as seminars, etc.