



OPERATION WEATHER SURVIVAL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 16, 2007 – 2:30 p.m.
St. Louis Society for the Blind Building
8770 Manchester Road

Attendees:

Dr. Adams – St. Louis County Department of Health
Debbie Fagin – United Way of Greater St. Louis
Molly Martin – Ameren
Ellen Sherman – St. Louis County Office of Family & Community Services
Bill Siedhoff – City of St. Louis Department of Human Services
Anneliese Stoeber - St. Louis Area Agency on Aging
John Vincenzo – Home Services Inc.

Meeting called to order by John Vincenzo at 2:40 p.m. John asked everyone to take a few minutes to look over the minutes from the November 21, 2006 meeting. Under the “Cold Weather Response Plan” the minutes should read: 18 warming centers (not shelters). With that addendum, minutes approved.

Ice Storm Recap and OWS Involvement

Group discussed the November/December Ice Storm and Power Outages. Ellen asked about the resources available to help the elderly and disabled. As with the July storm, clean up and removal of downed trees on private property was and still is an issue needing resolution. AmeriCorps provided assistance with this need during the July “event”. Ellen questioned their capabilities and what was needed to activate them. Bill questioned their availability.

Bill pointed out that, in the City of St. Louis, the city handled the removal of trees and other debris. However, the debris had to be manageable and moved curbside. Local Municipalities in St. Louis County were responsible for removal of debris, but again, the city paid staff are not allowed to go onto private property to move and/or cut up trees, etc.

This type of need would fall into response to a disaster, not OWS, per say. For the elderly and disabled with no insurance to cover this type of clean up after a disaster this is a real unmet need. CORP, Mid-East AAA and SLAAA know this all too well. Since there is no “official” COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disasters) established OWS could attempt to formalize some type of organized response to this unmet need in the community. Coordinated volunteer efforts may be a possibility. We should plan to discuss this at our next meeting.

Discussion moved to the formation of a local COAD. Preliminary discussions have taken place to move toward the “official” formation of a COAD for St. Louis City and County. Group asked if Kay Archer could attend our next OWS meeting and provide an update on the formation of this COAD. Debbie agreed to ask Kay to be on our planned conference call in February.

OWS focus is coordination of resources and education for the general public to prevent illness and death caused by extreme hot or cold weather. What happened in July 2006 with the storms and power outages constituted a disaster response which, coincidentally, followed OWS activation of the Hot Weather Plan for excessive heat. The Cold Weather plan doesn’t have temperature activation criteria and doesn’t address “warming shelters” for the general public. There is no “power outage” criterion and probably shouldn’t be because it falls under disaster response.

Energy Updates

Molly reported that \$185,000 of Dollar More monies would be made available to the 40 agencies that receive this funding. Dollar More can be used for either heating needs or cooling needs. Heat Up St. Louis has an additional \$250,000 to distribute to its partner agencies.

EITC

Bill reported that Mayor Slay made some PSA’s to run encouraging taxpayers to apply for the Earned Income Tax Credit. Some \$13,000,000.00 goes unclaimed in St. Louis City alone each year. The Mayor will hold a press conference in early February to promote free tax preparation programs and again remind taxpayers to take advantage of the EITC refund.

Next meeting: February 20, 2007 at 2:30 PM (conference call meeting)

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Debbie Fagin, Director – Information and Referral Services
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