

CERT MONTHLY

The newsletter of the Hays County
Community Emergency Response Team

WWW.HAYSCOUNTYCERT.COM



January 2025



Hays County CERT volunteers Rowe Ray and Sheila Sidberry, along with OES staff, had a booth at the Hays CISD Career on Wheels Day at the Performing Arts Center in Kyle.

And here we go!

Time just keeps on ticking, ticking, ticking and Hays County CERT keeps on going, going, going!

This year we roll out our revamped G-317 Course with a new twist that we hope will bring in more members of the public who are interested in emergency preparedness. Folks can take one or as many classes as they want, or they can take the full course and become certified. See more on Pg. 6.

Our Volunteer Spotlight this month is Gordon DeWitte, a long-time, dedicated volunteer whose time and talent is always greatly appreciated! Catch that on Pg. 3.

The CERT Store is open for a few more days! See Pg. 9.

We have so much to look forward to and we are always in awe of our volunteers who step up and lead. Thanks for all you do!

In this issue

Welcome	Pg 1
Message from the Program Manager	Pg 2
Volunteer Spotlight	Pg 3-5
CERT Calendar	Pg 7
CERT G-317 Course	Pg 6
CERT Community Partners	Pg 8
CERT Store	Pg 9
Help Needed	Pg 10
Self Defense Class	Pg 11
CASPER Survey	Pg 12



CERT Monthly Meetings

Hays County CERT holds a monthly meeting on the third Tuesday or Thursday of each month. Check the calendar (and emails) for info!



Check out our new public-facing FB page!

<https://www.facebook.com/haycocert/>

Message from the Program Manager

One month into 2025 and you all are already knocking it out of the park! We've had an eventful start to the year, with shelter operations, leadership training by ADRN, Hays CISD Careers on Wheels and general member and campus team meetings.

I want to say a special thank you to all those who served our communities at these events. It wouldn't have happened without you.

It's a new year and I am excited to share one of our main focuses for 2025 will be our most valuable ...YOU! Member development through training and exercises is our number one goal. We want to ensure you feel ready and prepared for whatever mission we are presented.

Our next G-317 starts in February and it will be open to the public for drop-in classes. This allows us to bring emergency preparedness to more individuals, creating a more resilient county. We will need more support than usual with these classes. Please sign up if you're able! Stay tuned for more information on our "planned" callout exercise/training coming Sat., February 8 from 9-noon.

I am excited for all the things 2025 has to offer us and can't wait to take HCCERT to new levels with all of you!

Kind regards,
Candy

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

– Margaret Mead

Candy Lonie, CERT Program Manager



CERT by the Numbers

Total Accepted Members = 265
At Large = 14
Buda Division = 22
Dripping Springs Division = 25
Kyle Division = 32
Buda/Kyle Combined = 54
San Marcos Division = 31
Wimberley Division = 15
TXST Division = 124
G-317 Field Deployable = 221

Volunteer Spotlight

This month's spotlight volunteer, Gordon DeWitte, crisscrossed the USA as part of his career in electrical engineering. We're glad he ended up in Hays County, Texas!

Born in a small Michigan town, Gordon attended MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he was on the track team. His hometown high school had about 170 seniors who graduated with him in 1963. He was heading to a university with more than 900 freshmen. No one from his high school ever attended MIT before this.

"It was a shock in several ways," he said. "From the size of the town and the university to the culture."

After earning his degree in 1967, he landed a job with EG&G.

"I got a job working across the street from Fenway Park," he said. "The Boston Red Sox went to the World Series that year and I got to attend one game."



Gordon met Dorothy (Dot), currently his wife of 55 years, in Boston. She was a native Bostonian. They married in March of 1970.

"On our wedding day, the Boston Bruins were in the Stanley Cup Finals," he recalled. "That was the game where Bobby Orr scored the final goal in overtime."

Orr, whose skates got tripped up on an opposing player's stick, went flying through the air after making the goal. That iconic moment is still recounted today by sports fans and commentators.

But Gordon missed the game because he was at his wedding reception!

Continued on Pg. 4

Volunteer Spotlight

Each month we highlight a CERT member. This time, it's Gordon DeWitte!



Gordon J. DeWitte, a junior from Grandville, has been named captain of the 1966-67 MIT varsity indoor track team. DeWitte, a 6-4, 220 pound weight man, has been the engineers' leading scorer in field events the past two seasons. As a sophomore Gordon had a best of 52-4 in the 35 pound weight. Last winter DeWitte raised his personal best to 56-2. Outdoors, the Grandville native has thrown the 16 pound hammer 169-1. A 1963 graduate of Grandville High School, Gordon is currently majoring in electrical engineering at Tech.

For those interested, you can see a replay of the end of that famous Bruins game [here](#).

He and Dot's first daughter was born in 1972.

"We then moved to Nevada for my career," he said. "I was still with EG&G. We were supporting work for Atomic Energy Commission that was conducting testing out in the desert near there."

He said he's still not able to discuss much about his time there.

In the mid 1970s, Gordon and his little family moved back east, this time to New Hampshire to work for General Electric (GE).

"I didn't know it at the time, but our own [CERT volunteer] Paul Freeman was also working there," he said. "It's a small world!"

While at that job, Gordon earned a patent for a tester and method for checking meter encoders in automatic meter reading systems for watt-hour meters.

"It expired 20 years later but still, I received that patent," he said.

His next stop took him to Nevada but by this time, Gordon was back at EG&G.

"We moved near Los Alamos," he said. "In another small-world connection, my daughters attended the same elementary school as Laurie Taylor."

Laurie works for Hays County OES.

Another job change, this time to Hewlett Packard, took the DeWittes to Santa Rosa in Northern California.

"It was 60 miles north of San Francisco in wine country," Gordon said. "We lived between the ocean and the mountains."

He said it was a beautiful part of the state and they stayed there for 22 years.

When he went to work for one of HP's spin-off companies, they said he could move to the Austin office.

"That was March of 2006," he said. "We've been here ever since."

His daughters now live in Arizona and Colorado.



Continued on Pg. 5

When Gordon and Dot selected the Belterra neighborhood in Dripping Springs, he didn't know that Laurie Taylor and her husband had also lived there, though both only learned that after he joined CERT and she'd already moved to another town.

How did Gordon hear about CERT?

"The company did some restructuring in 2009, and I got 'excessed'," he said. "While I was looking for something to do, I took the Hays County Citizens Sheriff's Academy course."

He met CERT members during that class. Because of them, Gordon attended some meetings. He then joined the organization, or really its first iteration which was a group of folks from in and around Wimberley. That group transitioned into Hays County CERT around 2014.

What does he do for CERT?

"I started going to call-outs," he said. "I'm now not the guy you want out in the field anymore."

His area of expertise for CERT is computers and electronics, like radios (And flashlights! And batteries!). Gordon is part of the CERT Operations Team. He also helps with a lot of training.

"I'm a certified CERT Train the Trainer," he said. "so I can—allegedly— teach any of the units. I'm also certified in Stop the Bleed and CRASE instruction."

He usually teaches Units 1 and 2 during G-317 courses.

Outside of CERT, he was part of the Dripping Springs Emergency Management Commission, a group that advises the city on emergency preparedness and response plans.

"I got volunteered – or maybe voluntold – to be on that commission several years ago," he said.

He stepped down from that role at the beginning of 2024.

Gordon said he is enjoying retirement.

Is he doing too much these days?

"Yes," he said. "But I have a hard time saying no sometimes."



FUN FACT: Gordon played senior slowpitch recreational softball in NM, CA, and TX. "I played Catcher, 1st base and, if the team was really desperate, sometimes 2nd base or shortstop."

*Have a spotlight Suggestion?
Email [Kim Hilsenbeck](#), our
Public Information Team Lead.*

Help us Build a More Resilient Community!

A new CERT G-317 course is beginning! We're shaking things up a bit. Now, Hays County residents can attend individual classes and learn more about emergency preparedness.

Want to know more about these topics?

- Disaster Preparedness
- CRASE
- Stop the Bleed
- Disaster Psychology
- Fire Safety & Utility Controls
- Light Search and Rescue

You can drop into any class that interests you! Want to become CERT certified? You can do that by attending the January 30 meeting and all of the classes. [See the calendar](#)

G-317 Basic CERT Class Enrollment & Admin*

Thurs., January 30, 6:30 - 8 p.m.

*Those wishing to become certified Hays County CERT Members should attend this session and additionally sign up for all 10 days of sessions.

Join Hays County CERT and help us create a more resilient community!

**Classes during this G-317 course take place at ESD #5/Kyle Fire Department, Station 1
210 W Moore St., Kyle, Texas**

CERT G-317

- Free Training
- Helps our Community
- Drop into a Class or Get Certified

Drop into a class or take the full course!



**Hays County
Community Emergency
Response Team**

**Learn More about Being
Prepared for Emergencies**

Our G-317 Classes are Starting Soon!

*Drop into Classes or
Take the Entire Course*

Some of our Class Topics:

- Disaster Preparedness
- Disaster Medical Operations
- Stop the Bleed
- CRASE
- Disaster Psychology
- Fire Safety & Utility Controls
- Light Search and Rescue



**LEARN MORE & SEE
THE FULL SCHEDULE**

CERT is part of the Hays
County Office of
Emergency Services



www.hayscountycert.com

CERT Calendar

- Trainings
- Events
- Meetings

Upcoming Events

CERT G-317 (Multiple Days)

G-317 Basic CERT Class

Kyle Fire Department Station 1

210 W Moore St, Kyle

See our [Calendar Page](#) for all class info

Planned" Callout Exercise/Training

Feb 8, 9 a.m.- Noon

Monthly Member Meeting

February 18, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

CASPER Survey with Hays County Health Department

February 19 and 20, 2-7 p.m. both days (See flyer on Pg 12 for details)

Trailer Work Day and Breakfast

February 22 (Tentative)

AMVETS in Kyle

Mardi Gras Parade in San Marcos (Traffic/Crowd Mgt)

March 1

Downtown around the Square

Wimberley Market Days

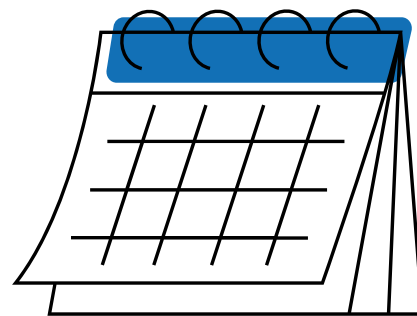
Sat., March 1, 7 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Monthly on the first Saturday

TSA/ABIA K9 Decoy Training Assistance

See our [Calendar Page](#) for details

NOTE: Campus CERT meetings are every other Friday at 5:30 p.m. at Bruce and Gloria Ingram Hall on the Texas State campus.



Find more details on our [CERT calendar!](#)

*Thanks for all you
do as CERT
members!*

Visit the [CERT calendar](#) for all the
info and sign-up links!

Hays County CERT appreciates every organization and business that so generously helps us. The continued support of the following businesses and organizations is critical to our mission.

We greatly appreciate how business owners rally to assist CERT and the Office of Emergency Services, during emergencies and beyond.

Please accept our gratitude!

[Alsco \(Kyle\)](#)

[AMVETS Post 115 \(Kyle\)](#)

[Buda Lions Club](#)

[City of Kyle Parks Department](#)

[Dripping Springs Distilling](#)

[Hays City Store](#)

[Hays County Commissioner Michelle Cohen, Pct. 2](#)

[Hays County Commissioner Debbie Ingalsbe, Pct. 1](#)

[Hays County Fire Chiefs Association](#)

[Hill Country Trophy \(San Marcos\)](#)

[Kyle Fire Department/ESD #5](#)

[Fire Marshal Mark Schultz \(Kyle FD\)](#)

[Martin Taylor](#)

[Root Cellar \(San Marcos\)](#)

[San Marcos Emergency Management](#)

[Tea2go/TeaN'ergy \(Kyle\)](#)

[Wimberley Cafe & Marco's Italian](#)

CERT COMMUNITY PARTNERS



**WE APPRECIATE
YOUR SUPPORT!**



Want to be a CERT Community Partner? Email [Candy Lonie](#)

CERT Store

Get all your CERT gear at our online store!



Check out the CERT web store!

All the items will be delivered to the Hays County OES building in San Marcos and distributed from there.

Many thanks to Chuck Koenen for all his hard work on this project!



CERT volunteers Kamryn Hamilton, Sheila Sidberry and Azure Summers helping at the winter shelter at the Southside Community Center in San Marcos during the recent cold snap.



CERT volunteers were on hand alongside Hays County OES staff to showcase options for careers in emergency services at the the Hays CISD “Career on Wheels”.

Know someone who might want to help us build a more resilient community? Share our [website](#) and [social media!](#)



CERT Needs



Can you help?

Here at Hays County CERT, we know we have many talented, creative and resourceful volunteers. Each of you helps make this organization even better. Here are some of our current needs - can you help us with one of these areas?

- Photographers for Social Media/Newsletter/Website
- Videographers for Training Classes
- AV techs for Meetings and Trainings
- Communications – Writers and information gatherers (social media, website, newsletter)
- Assistance in Logistics – choose your area: Food Unit, Medical Unit, Supply Unit, Communications Unit, Facilities Unit, Ground Support Unit
- Assistance in Planning – choose your area: Processes and documentation, Event planning and IAP development, Mission documentation
- Training – Classroom Support, Position Task Book tracking, Instructor
- 2025 Awards Planning Committee
- Community Preparedness Outreach (Booths and/or Presentations)
- Administration – choose your area: Volunteer Communications, New Member Enrollment, Reporting and Documentation
- Operations – Rehab, SAR (including evidence and missing person), Traffic Control, Crowd Management, Damage Assessment, Debris Management, Reunification, Sheltering/Mass Care, Family Assistance Center, Family Resource Center, Volunteer Resource Center, Animal Response

Thank you!

If you can help with any of the above area, please contact Candy Lonie 512-781-2088, or one of your Section Chiefs/Leaders:

Gordon DeWitte (gordon.dewitte.hccert@gmail.com) – Operations

Mel Barrentine (melvin.barrentine.hccert@gmail.com) – Planning

George Conwill (gsconwill@gmail.com) – Training

Paul Freeman (paul.freeman.hccert@gmail.com) or Sue Richards (sue.richards.hccert@gmail.com) – Administration

Noah Dennis (noah.dennis.hccert@gmail.com) – Logistics

Sandi Barber (sandi.barber.hccert@gmail.com) – Community Preparedness Outreach

Kim Hilsenbeck (khilsenbeck71@gmail.com) – Communications, Photographers

Self Defense Class

Shout out to CERT member Mike Whitely and his wife Rose for coordinating and hosting the upcoming Practical Self Defense class on March 8, 10-12. See the flyer below for more info.



Practical
SELF
Defense

Private Seminar for HC CERT

- ✓ Information & physical training for practical responses to defense scenarios
- ✓ Awareness and anticipation
- ✓ Know fear - avoid panic attacks
- ✓ Protect Yourself
- ✓ Learn how to become more capable
- ✓ Know your fitness and physical limitations
- ✓ Discussion & Physical Activity
- dress appropriately - comfortable athletic wear
- ✓ Protect yourself in both Call-Outs and HEB Parking Lots!

Saturday, March 8 • 10:00 am-12:00 pm
Astig Fitness & Martial Arts Training Center
12300 Wirth Dr, Manchaca, TX, Ste D

(512) 567-7995
AstigFitMA@gmail.com

HAYS COUNTY CASPER

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT FOR PUBLIC
HEALTH EMERGENCY RESPONSE



WHAT IS THE CASPER?

The CASPER is a way for our department to help identify where gaps are within our community. The information that is gathered will be used to identify community needs and to develop an emergency response plan.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

We are looking for volunteers! Volunteers are needed to help gather the information needed to make Hays County more prepared.

WHAT TO EXPECT:

As a volunteer, you should be prepared to walk long distances, knock on doors in the community, and have your own vehicle to use.

You will complete training before going out into the community.



FEBRUARY 19 & 20, 2025



2 - 7 PM



ALL OVER HAYS COUNTY

VOLUNTEER SIGN-UP:



For more information:

Madison McLarry, MSPH

Epidemiologist

512-393-5534

madison.mclarry@hayscountytexas.gov