



GRAND ISLE CERT



After Action Report – Isle La Motte – July 18-20, 2008

A thunderstorm with high winds traveled across Isle LaMotte and North Hero on the afternoon of July 18. At approximately 1800 hours I received a telephone call from Franklin County CERT telling me they had been activated to Isle La Motte at the request of Scott Newman, Chief IVFD. They suggested that Grand Isle CERT should activate as well and FC-CERT was beginning to call their members and would leave for Isle La Motte at 1900 hours. I called Chief Newman and asked him if he knew that FC-CERT was activated. Chief Newman said he had called Central Dispatch and asked that CERT be activated and apparently they activated FC-CERT since they are familiar with them in St. Albans. Chief Newman authorized me to activate GI-CERT. I called the Vermont Emergency Management Duty Officer and informed him we had been activated. He was aware that FC-CERT had been activated and told me that Route 2 at Carry Bay was closed due to the storm.

I contacted our CERT members by telephone and told them we were activated and I would be bringing the CERT trailer up through St. Albans and Swanton to get to Isle La Motte since Route 2 through Carry Bay was closed. Three of the CERT members lived north of Carry Bay and would be able to go directly to the staging area (West Shore Road and New Road), while the remaining members had to take the long route around. Activated were Dick and Kay Trudell, Chuck Besterman, Keith and Vanetta Darby, Tom LaBombard, Jodi Verba and Kelly Barton. The Darbys reached the site first and spoke to someone from the Fire Department, who told them everything was under control and they weren't needed. The Darbys returned to the ILM Fire Station and waited for a period of time and when no one came by, eventually returned home.

The FC-CERT trailer arrived first at the staging site as they had been activated first and had a shorter distance to drive. Radio communications were set up and when GI-CERT arrived, we divided into two teams with members of both CERTs working together on each team. The Red Cross (Enosburg unit) also arrived. Chief Newman requested that we conduct safety and welfare checks along the storm damaged West Shore Road from New Road to Turner's Lane. A house to house survey was conducted; residents who were at their homes were asked if they were okay and if they needed food or water. In a couple of instances,

drinking water was requested, but in general there were no injuries or needs expressed. Water was delivered to those who requested it. This exercise lasted until approximately 2000 hours and all the homes had been visited. A second storm front was heading in toward Isle LaMotte and the teams returned to the CERT trailers to wait out this storm. At approximately 2100 hours Chief Newman shut down operations for the evening and asked that we check with him in the morning. FC-CERT returned to St Albans and I brought the GI-CERT trailer to the Alburgh Fire Department for the night, since we were scheduled to be there the following day for the Alburgh FD 60th anniversary. Route 2 through Carry Bay was still blocked at this time.

On Saturday I returned to Isle La Motte at 0800 to see if further assistance was needed. Chief Newman requested that we provide traffic control at the intersections of New Road and West Shore Road, and Main Street and Lakehurst Road, mainly to keep sight-seers and non-residents out of the area. We were also asked to provide a member on either side of the cleanup crews working on the south end of West Shore Road. I brought the CERT trailer to the site and set up radio communications. Activated on Saturday were Dick and Kay Trudell, Tom LaBombard, Kelly Barton, Jodi Verba, and Chuck Besterman. Using radio communications and the 911 maps of Isle LaMotte we were able to pin-point where the cleanup was underway and allow local traffic to access the area on either side of the cleanup. However, even the local traffic proved to be getting in the way of cleanup operations and we were later asked to keep all traffic out. In general most people respected this; although some were disappointed they were not allowed to go in. During the day we also provided some assistance in helping the Red Cross who had brought in a mobile kitchen. The landowner on the corner of West Shore and New Road graciously allowed the use of his field for a staging area. During the day numerous telephone and electric companies repaired and restored service in the area. We left the site at approximately 1800 hours, and the CERT trailer was left at the staging area for use on the following day.

On Sunday I returned to the site at 0800 and was asked to provide traffic control at New Road and West Shore Road. I was later joined by Tom LaBombard who stayed in the general area of the work crews. Again we were in radio communications so we could determine where cleanup was occurring. We were again asked to keep all traffic out of the area and only allow workers to enter. In the afternoon it started to rain again and the Red Cross mobile kitchen was relocated out of the staging area and parked alongside the intersection as the field was beginning to get soft. Some rutting of the landowner's field occurred from the electric company vehicles that were staged there. I was relieved by members of the Town and left the site at 1500 hours.

Observations:

1. Our hand held 5 watt radios proved very useful and coupled with the base station in the CERT trailer provided good communications in the CERT team.
2. We were able to use the 911 maps provided to GI-CERT by the Northwest Regional Planning Commission to pinpoint activities along West Shore Road.
3. Mutual aid with FC-CERT was effective in providing the number of personnel needed on the first evening.

Recommended follow-up:

1. Contact Central Dispatch and provide them with contact information for GI-CERT in order that GI-CERT is notified of activation in Grand Isle County.
2. Establish an in-house procedure in GI-CERT for reporting to an incident site and when to leave.
3. Although we had radio contact with the CERT members, we only had face to face contact with Chief Newman. GI-CERT should get a P20 compliant radio with an 800 MHz channel.
4. GI-CERT should get some hand-held GPS units so that teams calling back could pinpoint a location where an injury occurred or help was needed.
5. GI-CERT should get the Grand Isle County 911 maps on disk. The use of a laptop in the CERT trailer could prove to be useful in conjunction with topographic maps and coordinates.

Submitted by

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August 1, 2008