



2019 Prairie State CERT Challenge Event to be Held

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SPRINGFIELD – The Serve Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service (Commission) will be hosting along with the Cook County Department of Public Health the 2019 Prairie State Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Challenge on September 21, 2019.

The CERT Challenge is an event that allows local jurisdictions within Illinois that have the CERT program to bring their volunteers together in a team format to test their skills. These skills are learned from CERT training, which is a 20 hour course from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that educates volunteers about disaster preparedness for the hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations.

“In partnership with the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA), the Serve Illinois Commission continues to support the Illinois communities that have CERT programs. We are pleased that local CERT programs not only are participating in the event but have worked with us to help provide this exercise opportunity,” said Commission Executive Director Scott McFarland. “Hosting these CERT teams together, along with the volunteers that help support this event, during National Preparedness Month only further highlights the important role that volunteers can play during emergencies.”

Not only will there be nearly 100 team members at the exercise, but there will be another 75 volunteers on site serving in various capacities. These include disaster victims, station assistants, evaluators, and other planning capacities.

The Prairie State CERT Challenge has been held a number of times over the last 10 years and has been recognized by FEMA as a nationally recognized outstanding exercise or drill. This year, 9 teams from the following jurisdictions will participate:

Alsip

Buffalo Grove

Carol Stream

Chicago

Highland Park

Merge (combined team from Addison, Mundelein, and Northbrook)

Milton Township

New Lenox

South Lake County

The event will begin with opening ceremonies at 8:30am and conclude at 3pm at the Oak Forest Health Center, 15900 S. Cicero Avenue, Oak Forest.

The Serve Illinois Commission is a 40-member (25 voting and 15 non-voting), bipartisan board appointed by the Governor and administered by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). Its mission is to improve Illinois communities by enhancing volunteerism and instilling an ethic of service throughout the State.