

## **HOMELAND SECURITY**

Some months ago President Bush announced the formation of the USA Freedom Corps. Its objective is to recruit civilian volunteers for America's Homeland Security effort through an arm called the Citizen Corps. This initiative includes five programs to be used at the local level by local Citizen Corps Councils to involve citizens in community preparedness and response activities. Citizen Corps programs are:

- Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) Training
- Medical Reserve Corp.
- Neighborhood Watch
- Operation TIPS (Terrorism Information and Prevention System)
- Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program helps train people to be better able to respond to emergency situations in their communities. Training teams will be made up of trained "first responders" qualified in all areas of disaster preparedness and relief.

The Medical Reserve Corps consists of physicians and other medical providers. They volunteer to coordinate and staff field medical facilities in the event of disasters. Their purpose is to handle less serious injuries and relieve the major facilities so they can handle more serious cases.

Operation TIPS (Terrorist Information and Prevention System) will be a national program enlisting workers who, by the nature of their jobs are well positioned to recognize (with training) unusual events and report them through proper channels to the FBI. Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) will provide support to resource constrained local police departments. We already have over two dozen DPD volunteers in our neighborhood. Currently they provide our VIP (Volunteers in Patrol) service

The Neighborhood Watch is something all of us are a part of. The aim is to strengthen this program and provide participants with information and training to enable them to spot signs of potential terrorist activity and how to report that activity. Our residents, and all citizens, play a critical part in the detection, prevention and disruption of terrorism.

The city of Dallas is in the very early stages of implementing these programs locally. We have a Director of Homeland Security at City Hall and a committee has been formed to get these programs rolling. The next step should be the formation of a Citizen Corps Council. It is envisioned that coordination with neighborhood groups will be handled by local police sub-stations (North Central Station) similar to our Neighborhood Watch and VIP. Further information on the Citizen Corps is available on their website [www.citizencorps.org](http://www.citizencorps.org).