



*Attendees at a meeting August 18 at the Fort Hall Fire Department to discuss possible formation of a community emergency response team on the Fort Hall Reservation (left to right) Becky Martin, Thunderbird Preparedness LLC consultant; Val Navo, Fort Hall fire chief; Kenneth E. Fagnant, Bureau of Homeland Security field officer; and Brian Briggs, assistant Fort Hall fire chief.*

Fort Hall emergency response agencies are exploring the possibility of establishing a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program on the Fort Hall Reservation to train volunteers to assist in an emergency when professional responders are not immediately available to help.

Federal funding is available to provide community volunteers with 16-20 hour training in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations, said Kenneth E. Fagnant, Bureau of Homeland Security (BHS) field officer. Trained volunteers would also be provided with a backpack containing basic safety equipment and disaster supplies.

Fagnant met Tuesday with members of Fort Hall's Fire Department and Shoshone-Bannock Fish and Game and Emergency Management & Response and other emergency response personnel at the Fort Hall Fire Department. Many area communities have or are in the process of starting CERT programs including Franklin and Caribou counties and neighborhood watch programs in Bannock County.

CERT volunteers would be especially helpful in providing initial assistance in the remote areas of the reservation where it takes longer for emergency personnel to respond to an incident, said Val Navo, Fort Hall fire chief.

Local emergency response agencies plan to present the program to the Fort Hall Business Council and, if approved, to form a local community planning committee and to organize volunteer teams in each of the reservation districts.

Fagnant said communities are encouraged to use local emergency personnel as trainers and to tailor the program to meet local needs and concerns.

For more information, contact the Fort Hall Fire Department at 478-3784.