



## Monthly News & Updates

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December, 2019



PMKCA Vice President  
Ruth Bennett

### Vice President's Message

### All About CERT

### Community Emergency Response Team

Team members are required to complete a training program which includes such topics as disaster preparedness, basic medical techniques, search and rescue, fire suppression, and other subjects that might be specific to a team's local conditions.

While the team can develop its skills, tools and readiness in ways that are appropriate to their communities, they are activated in an emergency by Civil Defense and coordinate their activities at all times to avoid redundancy and confusion in what might be complex and demanding situations.

What does your CERT team do – and what does it NOT do? As the name suggests, the team is driven by the need for an "Emergency Response". When an emergency or disaster is identified by Civil Defense, the team is activated to provide a fast, well-informed and well-prepared response within the community it serves. The skills and communication protocols that the team practices can make



Many residents of the Pa'auilo Mauka area are likely to remember the last day of 2013 when, after a night of severe thunderstorms and flooding rain, the roadway over a gulch on Pohakea Mauka Road gave way and swallowed a truck, leaving a resident slightly injured and a community completely isolated. For the next eight days, as the county Public Works department reconstructed the roadway in a supreme effort of 24-hour labor and many cubic yards of concrete, the isolated residents above the crater, with no other route down the hill to jobs, stores, schools, gas stations or medical appointments, looked to each other for ways of coping. Friends and neighbors helped isolated residents in any way they could.

The Pa'auilo CERT team, affiliated with PMKCA and trained and certified in disaster recovery techniques, immediately mobilized its members to help as well. Team members went door-to-door along the affected roads (Pohakea Mauka, Manienie and Pohakealani) to speak to residents, identify their needs and concerns and find ways to make a difference.

team members a valuable resource to their neighbors in very unique and localized situations. The CERT team itself, however, is emergency-driven.

The Pa'auilo CERT team meets regularly to enhance its skills, learn new techniques and become acquainted with new equipment. The team welcomes new members who are willing to be trained and who appreciate CERT's mission to assist its community during the worst of times.

An ongoing Civil Defense and CERT initiative is developing a network of ham radio operators for emergency communications on our island. When Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico a couple of years ago, it wiped out power lines, phone lines, cell towers and a lot of other infrastructure, including seaports. Ham radio volunteers on that island set up and operated radio networks that helped get resources to where they were needed – fuel for hospital emergency generators, medevac for critical injuries, food and water, and so forth. Hawaii is an island too, and although it's been lucky with hurricanes so far, all the CERTs on the Big Island see the Puerto Rico experience as a lesson learned about the value of ham radio for emergency communications.

If you are interested in the Pa'auilo CERT team, or in any of the other teams that are active on Hawai'i Island, or in ham radio emergency communications – or if you have questions about how the CERT team might meet your particular needs in a disaster (as

What is a CERT team? CERT stands for "Community Emergency Response Team." A CERT team is a nationally recognized but locally organized volunteer group whose members are certified to assist other governmental agencies (Civil Defense, FEMA) in dealing with a wide variety of emergencies and disasters.

A local CERT team knows its community's vulnerabilities in an emergency – poor and isolated roads, flooding gulches, fallen trees, fragile power and water lines – and can often respond more quickly than other agencies, especially when agencies are stretched thin over a large disaster area.

When the crater formed in Pohakea Mauka road and recovery of the roadway seemed weeks away, many residents of the affected areas could count on family and friends "on the other side", but others had fewer options. The Pa'auilo CERT team members, in talking to stranded residents, determined that their most important role in that emergency would be in coordinating a shuttle service. Anyone who needed to be somewhere in the wider world could arrive at the "crater", walk across a narrow walkway and then be transported by a CERT team member wherever they needed to go.

The roadway is now repaired – with a culvert completely surrounded by concrete – and the emergency is many years past. The Pa'auilo CERT team,

it did for the Pa'auilo Mauka community back in 2013), you can look to these resources: Pa'auilo CERT team on PMKCA website:

<https://www.pmkca.org/cert.html>

Hawai'i County CERT program under:

<http://www.hawaiiicounty.gov/civil-defense>

National CERT

program: <https://www.ready.gov/community-emergency-response-team>

Your local CERT team serves your community in times of need. Please support your local CERT, and if you have the time and interest to participate in either CERT or ham radio or both, your help would be much appreciated.

### **Next PMKCA Meetings**

The next Board of Directors meeting will be held on Thursday, January 9th at the [Hawaiian Vanilla Factory Co., 43-2007 Pa'auilo Mauka Road](#). At the January 9th meeting, we will be planning for the January 21st General Membership meeting and we especially welcome any members who might have an interest in joining one of our committees.

Our annual General Membership meeting will be held at Pa'auilo School on Tuesday, January 21st, 2020. All PMKCA members and their guests are encouraged to attend.

however, continues to train its members, to perfect its skills and to join with other CERT teams around the Big Island in preparing to be of service to their communities when needed.



How do CERT teams operate? A team is officially designated by the federal Department of Homeland Security. Our local area is under the supervision of the Hawai'i County Department of Civil Defense.



### Hamakua Coast Dream Home for Sale

**FSBO Craftsman built home on 10 splittable acres in Pa'auilo Mauka, up above the Vanilla Mill, 4 bedroom, three bath, \$850K. For more info see Mosher.org.**

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