



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#12-16

**FEMA RECOGNIZES OEM'S PREPAREDNESS EFFORTS WITH TWO NATIONAL AWARDS FOR 'INNOVATIVE PRACTICES AND ACHIEVEMENTS'**

*OEM's Citizen Corps Council and Partners in Preparedness programs receive awards; Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program receives Honorable Mention*

**October 10, 2012** — Commissioner Joseph F. Bruno today announced that the New York City Office of Emergency Management had received two awards from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for its preparedness programs, New York City Citizen Corps Council and Partners in Preparedness. This is the second consecutive award for the Citizen Corps Council. OEM's Community Emergency Response Team program received an honorable mention. FEMA's Individual and Community Preparedness Awards recognize the innovative practices and achievements of individuals, Citizen Corps Councils, and non-profit, faith-based, and private sector organizations that work throughout the nation to make communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to manage any disaster or emergency event. The Citizen Corps Council received its award in the "Outstanding Local Citizen Corps Council Initiatives," and the Partners in Preparedness received its award in "Promising Partnerships." Award winners are selected by a panel of emergency management leaders, including the National Emergency Management Association, the International Association of Emergency Managers, Target, the American Red Cross and FEMA.

"I am proud of the achievements that the New York City Office of Emergency Management has accomplished over the past year," said Commissioner Bruno. "These awards recognize two very important programs in our preparedness efforts. The Citizen Corps Council has expanded its communication efforts across New York involving more and more communities across the five boroughs. The Partners in Preparedness program, launched last year, now works with over 240 private sector companies to help prepare their staffs for emergencies. Be it severe weather or other types of emergencies, New Yorkers, OEM and its partners know that it is smart to have a plan and be prepared long before the hazard is present."

The NYC Citizen Corps Council is part of the national Citizen Corps initiative to bring together local leaders from community organizations, government, the private sector, and volunteer programs. The Council promotes grassroots emergency preparedness and volunteerism and helps enable New Yorkers to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. Over the past year the Council engaged New Yorkers and volunteers in many different ways providing training and programming for nonprofit and community organizations. As a part of this effort the Council embarked on a year-long theme centered on crisis communications, bringing in subject matter experts to educate the community. Following up on the success of the first Special Needs Symposium in the fall of 2010, the Council was joined by over 120 consumers and leaders from important non-profit and government organizations for *Be the Solution! Emergency Preparedness Strategies to People with Special Needs Symposium* in March 2012. In January

2012, the Council launched a Tumblr site ([www.nyccitizencorpscouncil.tumblr.com](http://www.nyccitizencorpscouncil.tumblr.com)), becoming one of the first emergency management organizations to use the platform. The site has allowed the Council to engage a new audience and share and promote emergency preparedness resources, news, and Council events in real time.

OEM's Partners in Preparedness program, launched in Times Square in September 2011, is designed to help business organizations better prepare their employees, services, and facilities for disasters. More than 240 organizations representing over 500,000 employees have already committed their support as Partners in Preparedness. To become a Partner in Preparedness, organizations must complete five activities that help promote personal and family preparedness. These activities can include encouraging co-workers and volunteers to register for Notify NYC (the City's free real-time emergency notification system), distributing and testing an emergency contact plan, and distributing OEM's weekly preparedness messages via e-mail, Facebook, and Twitter.

FEMA recognized OEM's NYC Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) with an Honorable Mention. CERTs are groups of dedicated volunteers who help to prepare their neighbors and communities for different types of disasters. This past year over 300 NYC CERT members volunteered during Hurricane Irene, bringing critical support to the hurricane shelter system across the five boroughs.

OEM staff will join the other winners at FEMA headquarters in Washington, D.C., to participate in a community roundtable event where honorees will share their innovative and successful approaches to community preparedness with emergency management leadership.

### **Staying in Touch with OEM**

The Office of Emergency Management communicates directly with the public through a variety of tools, including Notify NYC. This is just one way the City of New York communicates urgent information to city residents. In addition to sending e-mails, text messages, and phone calls, the emergency notification office has the ability to activate NYC's Emergency Alert System (EAS), which sends information immediately via television and radio. Residents can also visit Facebook, Twitter, and the agency's website, [nyc.gov/oem](http://nyc.gov/oem) for more information. The public can sign up for Notify NYC by calling 311 or going to [www.NYC.gov/notifynyc](http://www.NYC.gov/notifynyc).

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