

Charleston County News Release

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See pictures: <http://www.charlestoncounty.org/newsimages/earthquakedrill.htm>

County Emergency Preparedness Director Earns “Certified Emergency Manager” Title

Cathy Haynes accredited by the International Association of Emergency Managers

After years of experience and training in emergency management, Charleston County Emergency Preparedness Division Director Cathy Haynes has earned the title “Certified Emergency Manager” (CEM) from the International Association of Emergency Managers.

The CEM designation is the highest honor of professional achievement available from the International Association of Emergency Managers, which includes more than 3,200 local, state and federal government, private industry, and military emergency managers in its membership.

Haynes was accredited based on her extensive credentials package, a management essay and a written examination. The credentials requirements include experience, references, education, training and contributions to the profession.

“By obtaining her CEM, Cathy has once again demonstrated why she is considered one of the best emergency managers not only in the state of South Carolina, but also in the entire country,” said Jason Patno, Charleston County Emergency Management Director.

Haynes joins an elite group of only 1,068 other emergency managers across the U.S. and world who have been approved for the designation since January 1993.

“Without a doubt, there is a direct correlation between this achievement and the success of Charleston County’s emergency preparedness program,” Patno said.

Haynes began her career in 1982 as an Emergency Medical Technician with the Charleston County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department. She later went on to earn her bachelor’s degree in human services with an emphasis in emergency management. In 1987, she became the County’s Emergency Preparedness Division’s deputy director, and helped manage the Charleston County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during Hurricane Hugo in 1989.

“Hugo was my first hurricane experience. It was for many people,” Haynes said. “I learned a lot from that experience about how we could better improve Charleston County’s emergency plans. Nothing educates you like the real thing.”

Every year, Haynes and her staff review all of the County’s emergency operations plans to update them based on the newest information, laws and lessons learned. One plan that she’s added onto this year is the hurricane evacuation transportation plan.

“After Hugo, we learned that we had to create a plan to take citizens who don’t have transportation to their nearest shelter in order to get them out of harm’s way,” Haynes said. “We’ve had a plan on the books ever since.”

However, this year, with the cooperation of the city of Charleston and other municipalities, Haynes improved that transportation plan and brought it to the public so that citizens would know about evacuation pick-up points before the next storm.

“There are now 75 new, blue signs designating Evacuation Pick-up Points across the County,” Haynes said. “I want our citizens without transportation to incorporate these pick-up points into their own personal plan for what they need to do if a mandatory evacuation order is issued.”

To maintain her CEM certification, Haynes must continue to submit information about additional training and contributions to the profession to the International Association of Emergency Managers every five years.

“By attending training courses and sharing ideas and lessons learned with other emergency managers, I’m constantly learning new ways to better prepare our County for an emergency,” Haynes said, “and I hope Charleston County citizens will join me by taking the time to better their own emergency preparedness plans.”

The public can prepare their own emergency plans by going to www.charlestoncounty.org and clicking on the “Are You Ready?” banner on the front page of the Web site to download:

- The 2007 Charleston County Hurricane Preparedness Guide (in English or Spanish)
- The 2007 Disabilities Emergency Guide

SIDEBAR

Requirements for the International Association of Emergency Manager's Certified Emergency Manager accreditation:

Emergency management experience: Applicants must have at least three years of experience by the date of application. Comprehensive experience must include participation in a full-scale exercise or actual disaster. Applicants must submit three professional references, including their current supervisor.

Education: Applicants must have a four-year baccalaureate degree, or additional experience may be substituted to satisfy this requirement (two years per 30 college credits up to the 120 credits comprising most baccalaureate degrees).

Training: Applicants must have at least 100 contact hours in emergency management training and 100 hours in general management training. No more than 25 percent of the hours can be in any one topic.

Contributions to the profession: Applicants must have six separate contributions in areas such as professional membership, public speaking, publishing articles, serving on volunteer boards or committees and other areas beyond the scope of the emergency management job requirements.

Comprehensive emergency management essay: Applicants are provided real-life emergency scenarios, and must submit a response that demonstrates knowledge, skills and abilities as listed in the essay instructions.

Multiple-choice examination: Candidates sit for the 100-question exam after their initial application and other requirements are satisfied.

- Written by Danica Fri -