NESA-Mobile Training Team Turns 10

By Lt. Col. Bob Ditch

The National Emergency Services Academy Mobile Training Team is an extension of the annual NESA program, providing the worldwide delivery of emergency services certification and other emergency management curricula. It's intended to extend the academic reach and excellence in training demonstrated through NESA, a proven record of rigor and quality education programs. It's not a replacement for any federally delivered or state training officer authority having jurisdiction-provided emergency management training programs.

In addition, mobile training team instructors have been chosen by both the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Cyber Security Infrastructure and Security Agency, many states, the U.S. Air Force, and some National Guard/Air Guard organizations to teach emergency services courses for them. This includes training Air Force Total Force members who are active-duty, reserve, or Guard. The training team has also been asked to assist the U.S. Coast Guard and its auxiliary in forming a similar capability within their ranks.

The original NESA program was founded in 1996 to increase the knowledge and professionalism of CAP members in incident management, aircrew, and ground team emergency services response. During its first two years all classes were conducted in Virginia. By 1998 the program had moved to Camp Atterbury, Indiana, providing emergency services professional development in multiple incident command, public information, communications, aircrew, ground team, safety, chaplain, and other disciplines.

The curriculum at Camp Atterbury has grown from two field search and rescue classes to nearly 30 courses. In 2014 CAP introduced the training team off-campus extension program with pilot programs in Arizona, Texas, and New Jersey.

By 2015, the first formally recognized training team courses were being offered in 16 states across the nation, including Alaska and Hawaii. More than 12,000 CAP members from all 52 wings have been trained in over 500 classroom courses. After 10 years the training team is still excelling in delivery of both synchronous/virtual and face-to-face

classes across the nation, with 32 courses set for 2025. Noteworthy were the incorporation of Chaplain Emergency Services School, small Unmanned Aircraft Systems, Communications/Radio Operator, and Public Information Officer certification/professional development curriculums.

In May 2020 FEMA requested that training team instructors be made available to support presentation of their five novel Emergency Operations Center Skill-Set curriculums because COVID-19 pandemic restrictions forced the federal agency to close its doors. As a result, a team of six instructors was mobilized and assisted in teaching more than 1,500 students online across the nation and world in 51 week-long course deliveries. Since that time CAP instructors have continued to assist FEMA in providing 13 courses to emergency managers across the nation and six overseas nations.

The training team program's mission is to institute outreach capability to all regions, including overseas units, while still providing a high level of professional instruction and academic rigor at a much higher accessible means and lower cost to all CAP members and the overall organization. Again, it's not a replacement for local/state-provided or state training officer authority having jurisdiction programs. Those should always be the first stop for local and regional training opportunities.

Most courses are provided to CAP by FEMA National Disaster and Emergency Management University approved by National Headquarters. Other curricula and CAP homegrown courses have also been developed under the training team umbrella of academics to meet special mission requirements. The list and descriptions of all courses can be found on the training team homepage. Many of these have received collegiate certification and are transferable to college credit.

All CAP instructors are selected by National Headquarters and exceed the certification/experience requirements of Department of Homeland Security/FEMA National Disaster and Emergency Management University and states, offering quality curriculum deliveries with operational experience and lessons learned from actual disaster/emergency and search and rescue missions.

For more information and questions on the training team program and how to request regional courses, contact Lt. Col. Bob Ditch at 480-298-2603 or rditch@cap.gov.