



Shelby County, TN Office of Preparedness HLS/EMA



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 3, 2012

Office of Preparedness Reserves Honored



"The heart of a volunteer is not measured in size.....but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others"

The Shelby County Office of Preparedness Reserve Program, under the leadership of Eugene Jones, Coordinator, honored two of its outstanding members, Willie Hollinger and Ham Hillard, at their December meeting. These two Reserves were applauded for going above and beyond to teach the public about the importance of disaster preparedness and disaster communications.

A Reserve since 1995, Hollinger serves as the Public Education / CERT Officer. With over 25 years of experience, he is known for his kindness, gentle humor, generosity, and depth of public safety knowledge. Hollinger has taught countless students from ages 4 to 94, how to survive disasters as a certified Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) instructor. He has created several videos of regional and national disasters that are shown during the CERT classes. He has also built many of the life-size props used during the hands-on portion of these classes. Additionally, Hollinger is a popular public speaker and speaks to schools, clubs, churches, and civic organizations on the topics of fire prevention, control, overhaul, and extinguishing, as well as self preservation, search and rescue, ventilation, salvage, extrication of victims, building inspection, and hazard reduction. In addition to his years with the Reserve Program, he has served his community as a volunteer fire fighter and a Shelby County Emergency Services volunteer.

Shelby County Office of Preparedness HLS/EMA
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www.staysafeshelby.us



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When asked why he spends so much time volunteering to teach others how to stay safe, he replied, "Because one of these days I might just be the person who is in need of help, instead of the rescuer. I want everyone to know what to do." Hollinger was unanimously voted "2011 Reserve Officer of the Year!" by his peers. When not volunteering for the Office of Preparedness, Hollinger and his wife Sue, grow prize-winning roses in their Cordova back yard. His "day job" is the Facilities Director at the Memphis University School.

Reserve Alexander "Ham" Hilliard, has for the past 39 years shared his time, talents and extensive knowledge of radios and emergency communications with the public. An active amateur "Ham" radio operator, call sign W4GMM, with an Extra Class License, he also holds a commercial license, is a radio instructor, and is a volunteer test examiner. Hilliard, now retired from South Central Bell, began his volunteer efforts during the Civil Defense days, and has through the years volunteered for the Shelby County Health Department, the American Red Cross MidSouth Chapter, and Air Force MARS (United States Air Force Military Affiliate Radio System). Hilliard has built five Ham radio repeaters, with three still in use - one is on loan to the Reserve Program. This fall, Hilliard conducted a very popular 10-week Ham radio class at the Emergency Operations Center for novices to help them earn a Technician license. Hilliard stated his motive for giving so much of his time and talents regarding Ham radios, "I volunteer with the Office of Preparedness Reserves and Air Force MARS because I realize that if the time came, I could best serve my community by helping to provide emergency communications." Hilliard also gives presentations on disaster preparedness to churches, schools, and civic groups. For his unselfish efforts to teach disaster communications, Hilliard was voted by his fellow Reserves as "2011 Reserve of the Year!"

In appreciation for their unselfish efforts to make a difference in their community, both Hollinger and Hilliard received a beautiful plaque and congratulations from their fellow Reserves and the staff.

Office of Preparedness Reserves are trained volunteers who assist the agency by educating the public about disaster preparedness as instructors in the CERT program and by giving preparedness presentations throughout the county. They also assist with disaster communications as Ham radio operators, and respond to the EOC during disasters or "activations" as needed. To find out more about the Reserve Program, please contact Eugene Jones, Reserve Coordinator, at 901.515.2525.

Photo Caption: Left to right standing, Eugene Jones, Office of Preparedness Reserve Coordinator, congratulates Ham Hilliard, **Reserve of the Year**, and Willie Hollinger, **Reserve Officer of the Year**, during their December meeting.

End of Release

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