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## The Detroit, Michigan Citizen Corps' Special Event Program

### SUMMARY

The Detroit, Michigan Citizen Corps' Special Event Program supplies local sports and entertainment venues with trained volunteer security personnel who supplement professional security staff during special events. The program helps alleviate the burden on stadium security officials and provides the public with an increased sense of safety.

### BACKGROUND

In the spring of 2005, the City of Detroit was in the midst of preparing for two major sporting events: the 2005 Major League Baseball (MLB) All-Star Game and the 2006 Super Bowl XL. Both games posed significant security challenges due to their visibility and the high number of anticipated visitors. Michigan Citizen Corps Director Gary Zulinski recognized an opportunity for Citizen Corps volunteers to contribute to preparedness measures.

Zulinski contacted Rick Fenton, Vice President for Corporate Security at Illitch Holdings, the company that owns Comerica Park baseball stadium and other large venues in Detroit. Zulinski proposed incorporating Citizen Corps volunteers and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training into security planning for upcoming special events. He thought that special event planners could utilize the emergency management, disaster preparedness, and basic first aid training possessed by Citizen Corps volunteers. Fenton recognized Citizen Corps' unique capabilities and agreed to partner with it during major events at Comerica Park and other venues owned by Illitch Holdings.

"Due to the success of the partnership during the MLB All-Star Game and at the Super Bowl, the City of Detroit has truly seen the value in using Citizen Corps volunteers. Having Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) - trained volunteers at special events helps with preparedness measures and ensures emergencies can be dealt with appropriately."

--Gary Zulinski, Michigan Citizen Corps Director

### GOALS

The Detroit, Michigan Citizens Corps' Special Event Program provides trained Citizen Corps volunteers as supplemental security at major events. Citizen Corps volunteers assist professional security staffers in their preparedness and response operations, conduct security screenings, and act as street ambassadors. The program also provides CERT training to security managers and other professional staff at local stadiums.

### DESCRIPTION

The Detroit, Michigan Citizen Corps' Special Events Program is built upon a partnership between the private sector and the Citizen Corps to utilize the Corps' organization and training. Fenton and Zulinski agreed to work together to educate the City of Detroit and

private sector organizations about the Citizen Corps' available resources. Fenton further agreed to facilitate a flexible arrangement in which representatives of the City of Detroit and/or local private sector organizations are able to utilize Citizen Corps volunteer capabilities and request assistance when necessary. The two decided that the first step should be providing CERT training to venue staff and then using CERT trained Citizen Corps volunteers to assist venue staff with security at major events.

### ***CERT Training***

In April 2005, Citizen Corps offered CERT training to Detroit venue staff. Fenton and Zulinski, working with county and city officials through the Downtown Stadium Authority, arranged for 167 personnel from entertainment venues to receive CERT disaster preparedness training to supplement their security training. The CERT training offered security personnel additional disaster preparedness skills such as fire safety, medical operations, disaster psychology, and light search and rescue.

#### **Citizen Corps**

Citizen Corps, a component of USA Freedom Corps, coordinates volunteer activities that will make our communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to any emergency situation. The CERT program, one of the core components of Citizen Corps, trains people to be better prepared to respond to emergency situations in their communities.

### ***MLB All-Star Game***

Building on the relationship established at the CERT training, Comerica Park venue operators requested Citizen Corps volunteers to work security during the July 2005 MLB All-Star Game. Venue operators expected the MLB All-Star Game to bring thousands of visitors to Detroit requiring additional personnel at the Comerica Park venue. A Comerica Park representative contacted Zulinski requesting 60 Citizen Corps volunteers. Zulinski and Susan Sanderson, the Detroit Citizen Corps CERT Program Manager, informed Michigan and Detroit Citizen Corps members through a listserv that they could volunteer by submitting applications directly to Detroit Citizen Corps. The Saturday prior to the game, Zulinski held volunteer orientation during which Citizen Corps volunteer received their assignments and instructions for the event.

Citizen Corps volunteer duties included preparing the stadium for an emergency and providing security during the event. Prior to the event, volunteers disbursed 75 standard CERT emergency preparedness supply kits to locations throughout the stadium. The kits included hard hats, clear impact goggles, leather gloves, dust masks, vests, flashlights, batteries, disposable gloves, wind-up radios, multi-use knives, duct tape, tarps, ponchos, garbage bags, compasses, whistles, and first-aid kits. The kits were housed in construction bins on wheels, ensuring easy accessibility in case of an emergency. During the event, Citizen Corps teams consisting of 6-12 individuals assisted with crowd control and operated security checkpoints at the stadium under the direction of a security professional. Volunteers wore fluorescent green shirts and ball caps bearing the CERT logo and the motto "Be Prepared, Not Scared" to clearly identify themselves to the public and stadium officials. Both Citizen Corps volunteers and venue operators benefited from the Corps' support during the All-Star Game. It provided Citizen Corps volunteers an opportunity to test their training; venue operators benefited from enhanced security capabilities, thereby easing the burden on stadium staff. According to Rick Fenton, the presence of Citizen Corps volunteers provided "high visibility that gave people a sense of security and well-being."

### ***NFL Super Bowl***

Citizen Corps participation at the All-Star Game heightened awareness of the program and led to participation in other events. In January 2006, a representative of the Downtown Detroit Partnership requested that Citizen Corps provide approximately 280 volunteers for Super Bowl XL to be held February 5, 2006. Through a listserv, Zulinski informed Michigan

Citizen Corps members that they could submit applications directly to the Downtown Detroit Partnership. The NFL also sought the Citizen Corps' help with security screening. Sanderson sent out a request to the Detroit Citizen Corps listserv.

Citizen Corps volunteers provided local assistance and security during the Super Bowl. Citizen Corps volunteers supporting the Downtown Detroit Partnership served as street ambassadors in the roads and parking facilities surrounding Ford Field providing directions and local assistance to out-of-town visitors. At the stadium, volunteers were responsible for telling visitors what items were permissible inside the park and for helping check bags. NFL contractors provided internal security. Approximately 300 Citizen Corps volunteers participated in this event, with 20 assigned to work the security gates.

### ***Future Plans***

These initial successes have established a growing relationship between Citizen Corps and downtown Detroit venue operators that Detroit Citizen Corp leaders hope will continue to future events. Following these initial events, Citizen Corps volunteers worked at other venues for Rolling Stones and Eminem concerts. Zulinski expects Citizen Corps volunteers to provide support during the NCAA Final Four basketball games in 2009.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

### ***Keys to Success***

#### **Early Involvement**

Early involvement in event planning for the All-Star Game provided an opportunity for organizers to determine the most effective ways to incorporate volunteers into event plans. Continued collaboration between Citizen Corps and the private sector has led to Corps involvement in planning of other major events.

#### **Level of Training**

Citizen Corps CERT volunteers were already highly trained in emergency management, disaster preparedness, and basic first aid. This level of prior training enabled venue operators to use the volunteers without using additional resources for training. The availability of CERT training for event staff also provided stadium staff enhanced emergency management and disaster preparedness training prior to the event.

#### **Organization**

Detroit Citizen Corps is a well organized group of volunteers. Area leaders maintain a listserv of available volunteers allowing for timely volunteer coordination when Citizen Corps participation is requested.

#### **Resources**

To fund the program, Michigan's Citizen Corps applied for, and received a Homeland Security Citizen Corps Discretionary Fund Grant for \$40,000. Michigan Citizen Corps applied the money towards training programs and equipment, including CERT kits, volunteer t-shirts and ball caps, and storage bins. The equipment purchased for the MLB All-Star Game has been re-used and will continue to be used in the near future.

#### **Links**

[Citizen Corps](http://www.citizencorps.gov/) (<http://www.citizencorps.gov/>)

[Michigan Citizen Corps](http://www.michigan.gov/mcsc/0,1607,7-137-6115-34574--,00.html) (<http://www.michigan.gov/mcsc/0,1607,7-137-6115-34574--,00.html>)

**CITATIONS**

Fenton, Rick. Vice-President for Corporate Security, Illitch Holdings. Interview with *Lessons Learned Information Sharing*. 28 Sept 2005.

Zulinski, Gary. Director, Michigan Citizen Corps. Interview with *Lessons Learned Information Sharing*. 28 Sep 2005.

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