

Homeland Reserve training to provide assistance to emergency responders

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LAUGHLIN — In case there were ever a large emergency or disaster in Laughlin, there is a group of trained personnel that will soon be ready to provide assistance to the police and fire department — and they're looking for new members.

The Laughlin unit of the Volunteer Homeland Reserve Unit is recruiting men and women with at least five years of police experience or five years of hotel security experience to join their team.

VHRU Laughlin Team Leader Joel Barez said the group is in the process of recruiting and training members and could be operational within three months.

Barez said the group is looking for 20 to 25 members. Any applicants will have a full background check processed.

According to the VHRU Web site, "The intent of the Volunteer Homeland Reserve Unit is to offer assistance to law enforcement in any major crisis situation."

Examples of these situations could include a terrorist attack, a major plane crash, flooding, a major fire or a missing or kidnapped child.

VHRU members would help assist in traffic and crowd control, evacuations, performing searches, manning phones for inquiry calls or anything else to assist law enforcement authorities.

The VHRU was formed by retired New York Police Officer and Las Vegas resident Ted Farace after Sept. 11 and has been gaining

volunteers who are not content to just watch the news when there is work to be done at a crisis.

Clark County Fire Department Chief William Kourim is in support of this group.

"I think it's a great idea," he said. "I think it's a great partnership because now you're getting your community involved."

Kourim said the partnerships between volunteers and public protection agencies are incredible and the benefits that result from those partnerships are

endless.

Kourim also said volunteers are always needed since trained personnel can become less effective or unable to work after 72 hours in a crisis situation.

"Credit should be given to groups like the VHRU for their commitment to their communities," he added.

"They do for free what a lot of the departments in the West get paid for," Kourim said.

For more information on how to join the VHRU, contact Joel Barez at (702) 809-6334.