



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

August 28, 2011

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Riverside USAR team member activated in response to Tropical Storm Isaac

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – City of Riverside Fire Department Battalion Chief LaWayne Hearn, a key member of the Riverside Urban Search and Rescue Team (CA-TF6), has been activated as a member of the FEMA Incident Support Team (IST) responding to Tropical Storm Isaac. The storm is expected to strengthen to a hurricane and make landfall on one of the Gulf of Mexico states.

Chief Hearn was dispatched last night at 9:00 p.m. (PST) and immediately departed for Houston, Texas to assemble with the other members of the Incident Support Team. He will assist with the leadership and coordination of the USAR response to Isaac. Hearn, a 19 year Fire Department employee, has been a member of the Riverside USAR team since 2000. He has responded to multiple incidents including New York on 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina.

Riverside Mayor Ron Loveridge said, “Riverside is proud of its USAR team and our ability to provide needed support to our neighbors across the country.”

Urban Search and Rescue, USAR, is a "multi-hazard" discipline, that may be needed for a variety of emergencies or disasters, including earthquakes, hurricanes, typhoons, storms and tornadoes, floods, dam failures, technological accidents, terrorist activities, and hazardous materials releases.

Riverside CA-TF6 is one of 28 National Task Forces and one of eight in California that respond as either FEMA or as a California EMA resource during emergencies requiring highly skilled search and rescue personnel. Although USAR Task Forces are FEMA resources, they also work for, and in support of, local response agencies. They have performed search and rescue for numerous major disasters, including the 1994 Northridge Earthquake, the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, and Hurricane Katrina.



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USAR Mission Statement: The CA USAR System provides highly specialized personnel and resources, leveraged from the local level, for 24/7 response capability to the State and Federal Government.

The primary role of the CA USAR System is to provide highly trained, motivated and experienced personnel, specialized tools, equipment and techniques for the purpose of rescuing persons in peril as a result of natural and manmade disasters, terrorist acts and acts of war, as well as to provide large scale incident management coordination and support, as applicable, in support of overall incident operations.

For more information on the Riverside USAR team,
go to www.riversideca.gov/fire/specialprograms/usar/