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Safe and sound



By [TIM STANLEY](#) World Staff Writer
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As Citizen Corps Council coordinator and president of the Brady Heights Neighborhood Association, Tim Lovell believes area residents are concerned about what they can do to ensure domestic security.
TIM STANLEY / Tulsa World



Tulsans offer insight on homeland security

One of the most discussed subjects at the Oklahoma Neighborhoods Conference, Aug. 23-24 in Oklahoma City, was homeland security and how neighborhoods and the ordinary citizens who live in them can contribute.

As a Tulsa neighborhood association president and Citizen Corps Council coordinator, Tim Lovell has plenty of thoughts on the subject.

Lovell spoke at the conference on what Tulsa is doing to prepare its own neighborhoods -- specifically through the recently-formed CCC.

Tulsa's CCC, one of the first in the country, was created through the Mayor's Office in March as a response to the 9/11 terror attacks. It operates as an extension of Tulsa Project Impact, which mobilizes volunteers for disaster response.

"Basically it expands TPI's mission," Lovell said in an interview following the conference.

Based on the national Citizens Corps Council program, which encourages the formation of local CCCs, the council coordinates with existing organizations and agencies to ensure that the community is as ready as it can be in preparing for potential disasters and terror attacks.

Tulsa was already ahead of the curve in some areas, Lovell said.

"Some of the recommended programs we already had in Tulsa, like neighborhood watches -- our Alert Neighbors -- and Volunteers in Police Service," said Lovell, who is also president of the Brady Heights Neighborhood Association.

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"Although they do make some recommendations, they leave a lot of latitude to the local councils as far as what kinds of programs they initiate," he added.

Taking its autonomy seriously, Tulsa's CCC is unveiling a new program, Safe and Secure, which Lovell said will be the first one of its kind in the country. "We're excited about it," he added.

The program is aimed at helping neighborhoods, businesses and organizations ensure their own security by following a seven step procedure.

As a neighborhood president, Lovell senses that residents are interested in domestic security.

"They really seem concerned about what they can do to be prepared, they just really don't know where to begin. This program will offer them a strategy," he said.

Steps will include vulnerability assessment -- to determine how susceptible they are to disasters or attacks; and training -- to make sure that more people acquire essential skills like giving first aid and CPR, as well as brushing up on subjects like bio-terrorism and disaster preparedness.

Safe and Secure will also work to ensure that families are ready to face the inevitable confusion in a disaster's aftermath, Lovell said.

"When mom's at work, dad's at work and the kids are at school, what do you do in a situation like that where your family's spread out?" he said. "This helps people to plan in advance so they can connect with each other, so a parent knows what a school's plan is and where their child will be relocated in the event of a disaster."

Lovell admits that the plan sounds like common sense, but he added that most people don't take those steps unless you give them a little push.

The plan doesn't stop with families and neighborhoods, though; Lovell said that's just a starting point and that the goal is for the community as a whole to eventually benefit.

"The final step in the Safe and Secure program -- after everyone's been trained for their neighborhood or business -- focuses on how they can take what they've learned and help out the larger community," he said. "It's based on the idea that the best homeland defense is a strongly interconnected community."

Erin Patrick, director of the Mayor's Office for Neighborhoods, said she will be working with CCC to get the word out to neighborhoods about the program. Patrick herself is involved with another outreach, the Mayor's Family Disaster Planning Task Force.

The Task Force -- which includes members from the Mayor's Office, the city's fire and police departments, Project Impact, Tulsa Public Schools and the Citizens Crime Commission -- will work with the CCC, she said.

One of the Task Force's first duties was to put together a survey that will be issued to all neighborhood associations.

"We want to find out exactly what our neighborhoods do and don't know about being safe, in the event of terrorism or natural disaster," Patrick said.

And when they find out, they'll work with organizations like CCC to provide education and training.

Patrick said the mayor also plans to hold a citywide neighborhood conference next spring -- a scaled-down version of the Oklahoma City event -- and one of the topics will be security.

With the Task Force, the CCC and all their constituent groups and initiatives, Patrick grants that it may seem like overkill. But she doesn't think it is.

"We've been given a directive from the President to be prepared and that's what we're doing. And all of this also is applicable to floods and tornadoes, which Tulsa has experienced before. Knowledge is power and we just want families and neighborhoods to be more aware and more prepared," Patrick said.

Tulsa's CCC will also feature an active Community Emergency Response Training program, which some other Oklahoma communities are also experimenting with.

"In event of a natural disaster or terrorist attack, people on the scene want to respond, they want to help," Lovell said. "This program equips them, just ordinary everyday people, with the training to do so."

An \$825,000 federal grant --\$275,000 a year for three years -- will help fund Safe and Secure, Lovell said. The Corporation for National and Community Service issued grants to cities around the country specifically for mobilizing volunteers for homeland security purposes, he said.

"The grants were issued in response to Sept. 11 and Bush's call for more volunteers," Lovell said.

Tulsa is one of 17 communities around the country to receive one and the only one in Oklahoma, he added.

The Safe and Secure program will likely be available to neighborhoods and businesses later in the fall, Lovell said.

"We'll probably start out with some pilot projects initially, to work out the bugs," Lovell said.

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