



by Dan Tousley,  
*Circuit Rider III*

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Naturally, you know I am referring to your Vulnerability Assessment / Emergency Response Plan (VA / ERP). “What?” “No?”

Well anyway, waaaay back on November 7th, 2006, if your water or sewer system had an outstanding loan with USDA Rural Development, your Town Supervisor or Village Mayor received a letter from USDA Rural Development explaining that your system was (and is) required to complete a current VA / ERP. Any new loan applications ALSO have this requirement.

Now I think that the letter just never got passed down, or was not understood, and simply just got shelved. Believe me, I know the feeling! Why, I’ve been misunderstood and shelved most of my life!

Some time after 9/11, governmental regulations required larger systems, serving 3300 population or more, to complete a VA / ERP, which I am certain they ALL did! Now Rural Development sees that it is a very good thing and is requiring it of their customers. Think you are being picked on? Well, COWBOY UP troop! As with everything with the government, it is only a matter of time before the requirement is passed down to the smaller systems (YOU!) too. When that happens you can say with a secure smile: “Been there, done that!”

Now, Rural Development does not want to know your

vulnerabilities or who you’re gonna call. (That has a familiar ring to it) They are requesting a copy of your Certificate of Completion ONLY!

Now (#2) When you, or we, sit down to do these, don’t be so darn defensive! The idea is not to find fault with your system or its operation, but to cause you to pause for a minute, think, take an objective look at your system, and see where it is, or may become, vulnerable. Emergencies will be handled more proficiently with a PLAN, so be proactive when you are calm and collected, rather than reactive, when you are rattled and bleeding! Especially if I am somehow involved! You’d better know the phone number and shortest route to the trauma center!

Now (#3) the GOOD NEWS! You can call your very friendly New York Rural Water Association Circuit Rider who will happily assist you if need be to achieve this Rural Development request. They, (RD) and I, have been very patient BUT, it has been a loong time since 11/7/06 now hasn’t it? It is your security and safety we are concerned about, you must be also.

“Are you ringing New York Rural Water Association’s phone yet?” “Well, what on earth are you waiting for?” “Lets git’ er’ done!” 💧