



KENT COUNTY SEARCH and RESCUE

Service through the Office of Emergency Management - Kent County, Michigan

701 Ball Ave NE ♦ Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Kent County Search and Rescue (“KCSAR”) works under the direction of Kent County’s Emergency Manager and at the request of the Kent County Sheriff’s Department. KCSAR’s parent organization is Kent County Emergency Services Team (“KCEST”), which is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization.

KCSAR is an all-volunteer organization of highly-trained, dedicated individuals who are ready to respond 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, in any kind of weather. The primary mission of the team is to plan and execute methodical searches for missing persons, who may include autistic children, Alzheimer’s patients, despondent/suicidal people, overdue hunters and hikers, etc. The team is available to provide mutual aid to surrounding counties. In addition, the team serves Kent County by providing communication and medical support to community events such as the River Bank Run. The team also provides communication and support services during and after severe weather events.

KCSAR is organized into several specialized units. **Ground Unit** – the core of the team, “ground pounders” log many miles on searches. Many are nationally certified members of the National Association of Search and Rescue. **K9 Unit** – the canine teams train weekly and the dogs and handlers are certified in one of three core disciplines: trailing, air scent detection and human remains detection. **Search Management** – the people who plan and coordinate all aspects of the search. **Communications & Support** – this unit communicates with teams in the field and provides whatever support is needed to ensure safe, smooth and efficient operations.

The team trains together every month, and team members are required to take additional courses, on their own time and at their own expense, to have the knowledge and skills needed to execute any missions. In addition, the team members are each responsible for purchasing their own equipment such as radios, uniforms, first aid materials, personal protection equipment, survival gear, etc. The K9 handlers are responsible for all the costs related to their dogs.

Considering team training, K9 training, personal training, search activations and community events, the team provides thousands of hours of volunteer time to Kent County every year.

As an organization, KCEST has regular expenses for real-time mapping services that are used to plan the search and to track search teams in the field, systems to notify the members to respond for a search or other event, software to maintain personnel information and training records for each member, insurance, web site maintenance, and various other activities. The team appreciates any financial support from individuals and businesses in the communities we serve.

For additional information, visit our web site at www.kcest.org or send an email to kcest_info@kcest.org. Donations can be made through the donations page of the web site, or by sending a check, payable to KCEST, to the address on the donations page of the web site.