1840 Lake

Board of Commissioners

KEVIN D. MALECEK
JUDY MORAN
DANIEL P. TROY

Lake County, Ohio

PAINESVILLE (440) 350-2745
TOLL FREE 800-899-5253
FAX (440) 350-2672

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Contact: Larry Greene, EMA Director (440) 350-5455

LAKE COUNTY, OHIO COMMISSIONERS APPROVE PURCHASE OF NEW REVERSE 911 SYSTEM

Lake County residents will soon have a new Reverse 911 system to receive emergency notifications. Purchased from Airbus DS Communications, a subsidiary of Airbus Defense and Space, the county's new VESTA Alert solution is scheduled to replace one that's been in use since 2006. Unlike the current Reverse 911 system, which is based out of the County's Emergency Operation Center in Kirtland, VESTA Alert employs secure web-based technology in its operation. "Lake County's emergency management agencies and their personnel have consistently upgraded their preparedness and ability to protect our citizens from potential natural or man-made disasters. This new Reverse 911 notification system enhances that quick response capability and becomes a vital, secure and integral part of that citizen protection," said Commissioner Dan Troy.

A substantial leap forward to get critical information to Lake County residents in a timely manner, this 24/7 hosted solution eliminates the requirement to maintain operating software and Graphical Information System data-sets needed for mapping on local computers. According to Lake County Commissioner Judy Moran, "This upgrade utilizes cutting-edge and user-friendly technology to ensure that the safety of Lake County residents is protected and preserved. During an emergency situation or hazardous event, every second is absolutely critical. VESTA Alert is an innovative approach that allows us to communicate with the masses, while also maximizing response time and essentially keeping Lake County safe."

A transition team, headed by the county Emergency Management Director and comprised of staff working in the Sheriff's Central Dispatch Division, conducted extensive research comparing various outbound calling systems before deciding on VESTA Alert. The team was impressed with the technical capabilities of the system and its robust mapping platform that allows operators to quickly pan, zoom and search areas through detailed street-level maps and high-quality aerial imagery. The solution also includes Airbus DS Communications' MassCall® service which provides the capability to send out hundreds of thousands of calls per hour. Unlike the current system, which relies solely on county-owned telephone lines to place calls, the new VESTA system can tap into 30,000 circuits geographically positioned across the country to send messages in multiple communications mediums including SMS text, wireless emergency alerts and email.

VESTA Alert also uses real-time contact information supplied by Lake County residents via its online Self Registration Portal which can be accessed by logging onto:

https://lakecountyohio.onthealert.com

Staff training required to migrate from the county's current Reverse 911 system to VESTA Alert is expected to take 30-60 days during which time both systems will be available if needed. In the meantime, residents are being asked to log onto the Self Registration Portal and enter or update their communication device information, especially cellular telephone numbers. The nearly 7000 residents who previously entered cell phone numbers through the EMA's website over the past several years are also being encouraged to update their information in VESTA. Although these numbers were entered into the VESTA Alert database, some of the information has undoubtedly changed. "Lake County continues to stay ahead of the curve in our plan to manage potential emergencies - this update will ensure our residents will have speedy access to the latest information if and when an emergency strikes," said Commissioner Kevin Malecek.

Questions may be directed EMA Director Larry Greene at (440) 350-5455.

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