



GILA COUNTY DIVISION of HEALTH & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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New Tech to Keep Gila Safe, Informed During Crisis

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Michael O'Driscoll

Globe, Arizona March 11, 2016 – Gila County's Office of Health and Emergency Management has partnered with the award-winning company Everbridge to instantly disseminate life-saving information in the critical moments at the onset of a crisis.

Available now, the Everbridge Mass Notification System is an opt-in program that immediately sends key information through any combination of email, voice, or text message to Gila County residents who register to receive them. Unlike previous disaster notification systems, the Everbridge Mass Notification System can target highly specific areas, down to the street where the information is needed. If natural or man-made disaster strikes, residents of affected areas who have registered for the service will be armed with relevant information instantly, potentially saving loss of life and property.

The new system frees local officials from navigating often slower state channels to access state-wide emergency alert systems, such as those used for Amber and Silver Alerts or storm warnings, meaning the notifications will take much less time during the key moments at the onset of a crisis. "By employing this technology, Everbridge affords local officials the ability to provide the public with timely and accurate information that will enhance the overall safety of the public," said Joshua Beck; Manager of the Gila County Health Emergency Management Department.

Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities may be requested.

Countywide TTY (928) 425-0839

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Additionally, registered users will be able to select which areas they prefer to get information for, such as their home, school, workplace, vacation spots, and so on. Rather than warning all of Gila County about a flood in Tonto Basin, only those in the affected area would be alerted. This should help reduce unnecessary concern and fatigue from residents being exposed to repeated warnings that do not impact them. Ideally, if there was a controlled burn in Northern Gila County that created excessive smoke in a particular area, a direct message could be sent to the affected area to inform citizens of the activity. “By providing early notification through Everbridge, we will likely reduce public concern, and hopefully decrease the strain on the emergency response 911 systems,” said Mr. Beck.

The program is paid for by a Federal grant, and is entirely free to users, but interested residents must enroll at www.readygila.com, by clicking ‘register for emergency alerts’ on the main page. Once registered, users can visit their profile at any time to update contact information or unregister for the service.

If a resident does not register, they will receive notifications only by the methods on file for their organization. Contact information will only be used for emergency alerts and notifications, and will never be sold or distributed.

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