



PS-2

## Emergency radio station

When a public safety emergency occurs in the city of Beachwood, Ohio (12,000), residents can obtain up-to-date information and instructions from the city's own emergency radio station. By using the city's reverse 911 system to direct listeners to the new radio station, the city can provide customized information that can be amended as the situation warrants.

### Implementation notes

**Leadership/staffing** The reverse 911 system was started by the fire chief, who worked with the police chief to set up the radio station.

**Timeline** The reverse 911 system has been in place since 1999. Plans for the radio station came out of the city's emergency plan in 2002. The radio station was implemented in January 2004.

**Budget/funding** Establishing the radio station cost approximately \$35,000. The reverse 911 system cost approximately \$15,000.

**Program description** When an emergency, such as a major storm, tornado, or toxic spill, occurs, the city can contact all of the households in the area through the reverse 911 system. Using a cell phone, police or fire personnel record a brief message that is stored in the reverse 911 computer system. The computer then calls all of the telephone numbers in the affected area to give residents and businesses brief information and instructions on the situation. The system can target all residents within a certain area, all businesses, or all religious groups, as appropriate. With the radio station in place, the telephone messages can now instruct residents to turn to the city's emergency radio channel for detailed, live broadcasts that provide up-to-the-minute information. For example, in the event of a tornado, residents will be told about the tornado by phone and can learn from the radio where it currently is, whether they need to evacuate, and where to find a shelter. Public safety personnel can keep residents informed of the tornado's

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progress and let them know immediately when the danger has passed. The city is also encouraging all citizens to purchase battery-powered weather radios that are linked to the national emergency broadcast system. When residents learn from these radios that an emergency is occurring in the Beachwood area, they can again turn to the city's radio station for more details. Both the reverse 911 system and the radio station have backup power systems so that emergency information can be communicated even in the event of a power outage.

**Results** The city has used the reverse 911 system many times to tell residents about power outages, missing children, and road closures. The city has not used the radio station yet, but it plans to use it the next time spraying is done for West Nile virus, as residents have requested more details when this type of spraying occurs.

### PS-3

#### Mutual aid pact for police

The towns of Holland (2,000), Brimfield (3,000), Wales (2,000), and Sturbridge (8,000), Massachusetts, and the town of Union, Connecticut (1,000), have established a mutual aid pact, which has been approved by the selectmen of all five towns. Most of these towns have part-time police departments and generally have only one, or sometimes two, officers on duty at night. When police officers in these towns require backup, they can call one of the other towns and receive additional assistance very rapidly. The towns have agreed to help each other out at no cost to the towns needing the assistance. The arrangement has worked well and the towns have called on each other several times, primarily for motor vehicle accidents and domestic situations. In addition to helping the towns deal with emergencies, the arrangement reduces the burden on the state police, who are now needed less frequently to help the towns out.

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