



LANE COUNTY GOVERNMENT NEWS

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Visual Op: Local Public Safety Agencies Roll Out “Alert Me”

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What if you could learn about an emergency occurring near your home no matter where you are? If you carry a cell phone, now you can.

Public safety agencies in Lane County are expanding their Community Emergency Notification System, known as CENS, with the "Alert Me" registration for cell phone voice and texting. By registering on the CENS Alert Me website, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) or cellular phone owners may receive the same emergency message and critical information about emergency situations as those with land-line phones – but only if they register.

“This is one more tool local emergency managers have to help inform community members of emergencies,” said Lane County Emergency Manager Linda Cook. “It allows people to stay informed no matter where they are.”

CENS allows public safety agencies in Lane County to identify an affected area and, if necessary, send a message and/or text that describe the situation and recommend protective actions residents should take. The CENS system will automatically call out to all land-line and opt-in telephone numbers within that geographic area and deliver the recorded message once a voice is heard. If the phone line is busy, the system will attempt to redial the number three times to make contact. If an answering machine picks up the call, the emergency message will be left on the machine.

Some of the many uses of the system include:

- Tsunami Warnings
- Emergency Evacuations
- Natural Disaster Alerts

- Missing Child Alerts
- Hazardous Material Incidents
- Neighborhood Emergencies

West Lane County Commissioner Jay Bozievich sees the program as a positive option for residents, particularly for those in the coastal area.

“Opting-in is an important opportunity for community members because many people in the coastal tsunami zones may not own land lines and this program will allow them to be notified while maintaining their privacy,” said Commissioner Bozievich.

“Alert Me” will only be used for emergency notifications. Keep in mind that CENS is an excellent enhancement to the effort to share emergency information with county residents, but registration will not guarantee notification of any specific event. Community members are still encouraged to visit Lane County public safety agencies’ websites and to stay tuned to local news channels and radio stations during a community crisis. Further, it should not replace individual and family emergency planning.

This project is possible through a joint effort of the Lane County Sheriff’s Office, Eugene Police Department and Central Lane 9-1-1, Springfield Police Department, the Eugene Water & Electric Board and additional CENS partners.

Opting-In

Community members may register up to five numbers at an address. Land-line telephone numbers are already included in the CENS database. Go to www.lcog.org/alertme to register your VoIP or cell phone number. If you register as a cell phone number, you will also receive notification as a text message.

It takes approximately 2-3 weeks once a number has been registered for it to be validated and entered into the database. If an incident occurs in your neighborhood within that time period it is unlikely you will receive the notification.

All of the information you enter will feed directly into the CENS secure database. This information can only be accessed by system administrators and the data will never be sold or distributed to third parties.

Alert Me Opt-In Demonstration

What: Lane County Sheriff Tom Turner, Lane County Emergency Manager Linda Cook and Central Lane 9-1-1 Communications Manager Kristi Wilde will explain the new program and provide members of the media with a demonstration of the new CENS Alert Me program.

When: 9 a.m., Friday, June 17

Where: Central Lane 9-1-1, 1735 W. Second Ave., Eugene

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