

**MOORPARK CITY COUNCIL  
AGENDA REPORT**

**TO:** Honorable City Council

**FROM:** John Brand, Senior Management Analyst

**DATE:** January 4, 2011 (CC Meeting of 1/18/2012)

**SUBJECT:** Consider Memorandum of Understanding Between the Ventura County Sheriff's Department and the City of Moorpark Regarding Use of the Ventura County Emergency Telephone Notification System "VC Alert"

**SUMMARY**

The Council is being asked to approve a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Ventura County that would enable the City to use an emergency notification system known as "VC Alert" which replaces REVERSE 911<sup>®</sup>. This could be effective in rapidly alerting residents and businesses about imminent public safety issues including evacuations, serious crimes, and similar incidents.

**BACKGROUND**

In the event of an emergency, one of the most critical components in a response is the City's ability to communicate quickly with its citizens. In August, 2008, Ventura County launched an Emergency Notification System (ENS) developed by REVERSE 911<sup>®</sup>. In 2010, Ventura County issued a Request For Proposals for a possible replacement system. A working group was formed consisting of OES, County Information Technology Services, additional county departments, emergency services representatives from cities, and other agencies. Various types of public notification systems were reviewed, vendors interviewed, and their products were tested. In late 2011, the proposal by Everbridge was selected by a review committee. It was further decided to give the new system a unique name so that future changes in the ENS system would be less intrusive to the public and participating agencies. "VC Alert" was selected as the name of the new system.

## **DISCUSSION**

VC-ALERT is a telephonic community notification system that utilizes a combination of database and GIS technologies to deliver outbound messages. In the event of an emergency, the system is accessible from any location that can access the Internet.

Notifications can be generated in a recorded vocal format or in a text-to-speech format for quicker message delivery. GIS technology integrates the ENS with geo-coded contact data (that can be uploaded from customer databases and/or local telephone companies) and intelligent street centerline data. This allows for precise message delivery to a specific geographic region. This feature is vital in the many events such as mandatory evacuations, severe weather warnings, and shelter-in-place instructions during hazardous materials spills. Upon sending out this message, the ENS system provides an active confirmation of message receipt following successful delivery. In addition to notifying communities, the ENS can be used to mobilize first responders by using preset notification lists.

Administration of the system is the responsibility of the Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES).

Formats compatible with VC Alert include:

- A. Telephonic (Recorded voice, text-to-speech, upload wav file) for Home phone, work phone, mobile phone
- B. SMS Text Message – Limited to 120 characters. Messages over 120 characters will be split into multiple messages in increments of 120 characters.
- C. Email
- D. Instant Message (AOL AIM, Yahoo Messenger, or MSN Messenger)
- E. Fax

### **Events Authorized for Activation of VC-ALERT Emergency Notification System**

Appointed public officials or public safety command officers may request activation of the VC-ALERT system. This includes public health officials, human services officials, emergency managers, city managers, police and fire officials, or other public safety officers involved in the management of an emergency incident. Emergency activation of the system will require that the event meets one of the criteria as defined below. For those who do not have remote access to the system, requests for activation will need to be funneled through the appropriate channels.

**Evacuation Notices** - The system can be used to deliver voluntary or mandatory evacuation notices to citizens in areas affected by major fires (i.e. structure or wildland), flooding, or tsunamis.

**Hazardous Material Incident** - This system can be used to notify citizens whether it is appropriate to evacuate or shelter-in-place when a hazardous material release has occurred.

**Community Policing** - The Ventura County Sheriff's Department and local police departments may use the system for a variety of community emergency policing activities. Community policing activities may include:

- AMBER Alerts
- Endangered missing adults
- Investigative canvassing
- Prisoner escapes
- Search for Outstanding Suspects

**Public Health Alerts** – The Ventura County Public Health Department and Human Services Agency may use the system to disseminate emergency public health information such as:

- Boil-water alerts
- Biting animal alerts
- Infectious disease outbreak
- Heat and cold advisories to vulnerable populations

**Severe Weather Event** – Severe weather usually affects a significant portion of the County and is **not usually** an appropriate occasion for activating the VC-ALERT system. The EAS should be used in this capacity. However, the system does have the ability to import shape files generated by the National Weather Service (NWS) when issuing a warning statement. It may be appropriate to send out a Flash Flood Warning for a dam failure generated by NWS to citizens within a dam inundation zone or to advise residents of severe weather predicted by spot weather forecasts.

**Any other threat to public health or safety** – It is impossible to list every situation for which use of VC-ALERT is appropriate. A warning should be issued if the situation threatens human health and safety or serious damage to property. However, the warning must be issued in a timely manner that gives the public enough time to react and follow instructions. The capacity of the system needs to be taken into account when determining whether it is appropriate to launch a calling session. Please see “system limitations” for more information on the capacity to make calls.

**Non-Emergency Situations** requiring mass notification.

- Broken water mains
- Power system failure

Special consideration shall be taken when activating the VC-ALERT system between the hours of 10 pm - 7 am. Outbound sessions conducted during these hours should be a matter of public safety. Courtesy notifications of non-life threatening situations shall be made during normal daytime hours.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Initial costs are to be paid for with federal Homeland Security grant funds through Calendar Year (CY) 2013. In FY 2013-2014, Moorpark’s cost to access VC Alert would be \$3,713.92, and remain at that level through CY 2017. A Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection to the County will no longer be needed, bringing the City an immediate cost reduction of about \$915.00 per year. Apportionment of costs to the cities is based on the population of the community. Once the grant runs out in 2014, the annual expense would be about 10% greater than the current expenditures for emergency notification.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Approve the Agreement subject to final language approval by the City Manager and City Attorney, and authorize City Manager to sign the Agreement.

- Attachment 1: Draft Memorandum of Understanding  
Attachment 2: VC Alert Overview, System Policies, and Guidelines

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**  
**BETWEEN THE COUNTY OF VENTURA AND THE CITY OF MOORPARK**  
**REGARDING THE EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM**

**THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (“MOU”)** is made and entered into this 19 day of December, 2011, by and between the County of Ventura (“County”), by and through the Ventura County Sheriff’s Office (“VCSO”), and the City of Moorpark (“City”). The County and the City may be collectively referred to as “Parties” or in the singular as “Party,” as the context requires.

**RECITALS**

The County and the City have entered into this MOU with reference to the following facts and circumstances:

**WHEREAS**, the Emergency Notification System (“ENS”) is primarily a telephonic information delivery system intended to enhance public safety by providing notification and actionable information to residents in the event of an emergency and also provides for internet-based notification to and mobilization of emergency responders; and

**WHEREAS**, the ENS is intended to be used in conjunction with existing notification systems in situations deemed appropriate for notification (as defined in the County's written policies and guidelines as hereafter described) and shared regionally by participating cities and the County; and

**WHEREAS**, the VCSO’s Office of Emergency Services (“OES”) purchased the first year of service for the ENS through State Homeland Security funds and seeks to divide the cost of all subsequent years of service among participating cities and the County based upon their percentage of the total number of residential addresses located within their jurisdiction.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, in consideration of the mutual promises contained herein, the Parties hereby agree as follows:

**1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this MOU is to establish the guidelines and payment terms for the use of the ENS.

**2. GUIDELINES**

Use of the ENS by the City shall be governed by the Ventura County Emergency Notification System policies and guidelines attached hereto as Exhibit A, as amended from time to time by the County (“Exhibit A”). The ENS may be used in conjunction with the City’s existing notification systems but shall be used only for situations deemed appropriate for notification as defined in Exhibit A.

**3. PAYMENT**

The County will charge the City for ENS use and maintenance, in advance, on an annual calendar year basis, commencing with calendar year 2013. (The County shall pay the costs for ENS use and maintenance for calendar year 2012.) The annual calendar year charge to the City shall consist of

the City's share of the service fee to be paid by the County to Everbridge, Inc. pursuant to the terms of County of Ventura Contract Number 6493 ("Everbridge Contract") as set forth in Exhibit B, as it may be amended from time to time. The share of the participating cities and the County, as set forth in Exhibit B, is based on the number of residential addresses within each participating agency and the County unincorporated area as measured by the most recent available U.S. Census Bureau data. The County will invoice the City for payment no later than five (5) days after the County receives an invoice from Everbridge, Inc. under the Everbridge Contract, and payment will be due from the City to the County within fifteen (15) days from the date of the County's invoice.

The County may amend Exhibit B from time to time to take into account changes in the service fee charged under the Everbridge Contract; changes in the rates charged by telephone service providers used for ENS (including, but not limited, AT&T Phone Data and Verizon Phone Data); changes in the number of participating agencies; and the release of updated information by the U.S. Census Bureau regarding the number of residential addresses in each participating agency. The County shall give written notice of any amendment to Exhibit B to the City by no later than April 1 of each year, with any such amendment to be effective by no earlier than July 1 of the same year.

Any additional training or project costs beyond those specified in the Everbridge Contract or this MOU shall be separately invoiced by the County to the City, with payment due from the City to the County within fifteen (15) days from the date of the County's invoice. The Parties shall agree to additional training or project costs prior to said costs being incurred. In the event that the Parties are unable to agree about additional training or project costs, no additional training or project costs shall be incurred.

In the event that any participating agency terminates its MOU, in compliance with the terms of that MOU, the service fees in Exhibit B, as it may be amended from time to time, for the following calendar year will be paid by the remaining participating agencies, based on each agency's percentage share of residential addresses within the remaining participating agencies.

#### 4. TERM OF MOU; TERMINATION; OTHER MOU's

This MOU shall be effective when signed by both Parties. This MOU will remain in force and effect until such time as a Party terminates the MOU, as described below, or the ENS is no longer used as a notification system.

Either Party may terminate this MOU with or without cause upon written notice given to the other Party pursuant to Section 5 below. The termination notice must be in writing and, unless agreed to otherwise by both Parties, be given no later than July 1 of any year, to be effective on January 1 of the following year. If a Party fails to comply with the foregoing notice requirement, the Party shall remain responsible for its obligations under this MOU for the next calendar year, and the termination shall not be effective until January 1 of the year following that next calendar year.

Other cities have entered into, or are anticipated to enter into, substantially similar memoranda of understanding. A city that enters into such a memorandum of understanding is a "participating agency" as that phrase is used in this MOU. The foregoing notwithstanding, neither the term of this MOU nor any other provision of this MOU is dependent upon the execution or existence, the terms or the termination of any other memorandum of agreement between the County and any other city.

## 5. NOTICE

Any notice required during the term of this MOU, including, without limitation, notice of termination, shall be deemed given when placed in the United States Mail, postage prepaid, and addressed as follows:

Notice to VCSO:	Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services, Manager 800 S. Victoria Avenue #3450 Ventura, CA 93009
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Notice to the City of Moorpark	Steve Kueny, City Manager 799 Moorpark Avenue Moorpark, CA 93021
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Any Party who desires to change its address for notice may do so by giving notice as described above.

## 6. ADMINISTRATION

- A. For purposes of ongoing administration an ENS user group ("User Group") shall be maintained and led by the VCSO ENS System Administrator. The City will designate a representative to the User Group as a standing member with authority to represent the City on issues related to use of ENS. The User Group shall meet on a quarterly basis or more often as needed to coordinate ongoing administration, training, public outreach, modification to policies and guidelines, or other issues related to ENS.

## 7. PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES

- B. The City will designate a System Administrator. The System Administrator will be the primary contact from the City for VCSO concerning the ENS. Annually, the System Administrator shall send to VCSO, in writing, the names of those personnel who are authorized by the City to activate the ENS.
- C. The System Administrator will be responsible for ensuring the City adheres to Exhibit A. VCSO has the right to amend Exhibit A at any time during the term of this MOU. However, prior to VCSO amending Exhibit A, VCSO will provide notification in writing to the City no less than 60 days prior to the proposed implementation date of the amendment. This 60-day period is intended to give the City and the User Group adequate time to review and comment on the amendment.
- D. Personnel authorized by the City to activate the ENS system will take all reasonably feasible precautions to safeguard system and user passwords and security systems and to prevent any unauthorized use of the system.
- E. The City will not use the ENS for purposes of telemarketing, political announcements or activities that could be considered telemarketing or political announcements. The City shall use the ENS only for events or information directly related to public safety, in

compliance with Public Utilities Code sections 2872 and 2891.1, or as otherwise described in Exhibit A.

- F. The Emergency Services Listing (“ESL”) is a listing of telephone numbers of residents and businesses, to be used by the ENS. The ENS will be updated with new landline telephone information as it becomes available.
- G. VCSO and the City shall conduct system testing on a periodic basis. The System Administrator shall coordinate testing with the VCSO OES.
- H. In the event of the City’s inability to launch an emergency notification session, and upon request from the City, VCSO shall provide assistance through the OES Duty Officer (805-947-8210) and may launch emergency sessions on behalf of the City.
- I. If VCSO learns that a participating agency other than the City intends to use the ENS system to send notification to citizens within the City’s jurisdiction, VCSO (OES Duty Officer) shall coordinate with the City and participating agency prior to launching the notification to insure the participating agency is in compliance with Exhibit A.
- J. In the event the Ventura County Operational Area Emergency Operations Center (“EOC”) and City EOC(s) are activated for the same incident, the ENS messages shall be coordinated through the Joint Information Center (“JIC”) and disseminated only after all stakeholders have collaborated and agreed upon information and objectives relative to the incident. In the event the JIC is not activated, all messages shall be approved by the EOC directors from both agencies. Upon successful collaboration, the agreed upon ENS session may be launched from the County EOC or an alternate location.

## 8. TRAINING

The County shall provide each designated System Administrator with an electronic copy of the ENS User Manual and a hard copy of the ENS training manual. VCSO, upon the City’s request, shall provide training for up to four participants from the City annually. As enhancements to the system are made available, VCSO will provide the System Administrator with additional training as needed. The System Administrator shall disseminate this information to other trained users authorized by the City.

The City has the right to train other personnel who are not able to participate in the annual training provided by VCSO. The System Administrator shall maintain a list of all trained users and provide updates to VCSO, in writing, as they occur.

## 9. REGISTRATION WEB SITE

Because cellular telephone numbers and Voice Over IP (VoIP) telephone numbers are not included within the ESL, the ENS provider shall maintain a website (“Registration Web Site”) where residents may register additional telephone numbers and contact information. This site may also allow residents to opt-in to receive non-emergency messages if the City maintains a public web site. The City shall provide a link to the Registration Web Site on the City’s public web site.

#### 10. ACCESSIBILITY TO DEAF/HEARING IMPAIRED INDIVIDUALS

Because telephone numbers of Teletypewriter ("TTY") users are not included within the ESL, the ENS provider shall maintain a website, as stated above, where residents may register their TTY telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.

#### 11. PERSONNEL MATTERS

In the performance of any of the services under this MOU, each of the Parties' employees shall act as independent contractors in relation to the other Party and its employees. Each Party shall assume responsibility for all personnel costs for its respective employees, including salaries, fringe benefits, overtime, workers' compensation insurance coverage, and federal and state income tax withholding, including, but not limited to, federal income tax, state income tax, Federal Insurance Contributions Act, state unemployment insurance, and State Disability Insurance, and any other deductions from income that such Party is required to make.

#### 12. NO JOINT VENTURE

This MOU shall not create between the Parties a joint venture, partnership, or any other relationship of association.

#### 13. NO GRANT OF AGENCY

Except as the Parties may specify in writing, neither Party shall have authority, express or implied, to act on behalf of the other Party in any capacity whatsoever as an agent. Neither Party shall have any authority, express or implied, pursuant to this MOU, to bind the other Party to any obligation whatsoever.

#### 14. MEDIA RELATIONS

The City shall send to the VCSO OES public information officer a copy of all press releases concerning the ENS upon dissemination to the media or to the public. In a case of significant public interest, VCSO may issue a joint press release, at its sole discretion.

#### 15. INDEMNITY

The City shall assume the responsibility and liability for, and the City shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless, the County (including VCSO), its agents, officers and employees from and against any and all liabilities, obligations, losses, damages, penalties, fines, claims, actions, suits, costs and expenses and disbursements (including legal fees and expenses) of any kind and nature imposed on, asserted against, incurred or suffered by the County (including VCSO) or its agents, officers or employees by reason of damage, loss or injury (including death) of any kind or nature whatsoever to persons or property caused by or in any way relating to or arising out of any negligent act or action, or any neglect, omission or failure to act when under a duty to act on the part of the City or any of its agents, officers or employees in its or their performance of services hereunder.

The County shall assume the responsibility and liability for, and the County shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless, the City, its agents, officers and employees from and against any and all liabilities, obligations, losses, damages, penalties, fines, claims, actions, suits, costs and expenses and disbursements (including legal fees and expenses) of any kind and nature imposed on, asserted

against, incurred or suffered by the City or its agents, officers or employees by reason of damage, loss or injury (including death) of any kind or nature whatsoever to persons or property caused by or in any way relating to or arising out of any negligent act or action, or any neglect, omission or failure to act when under a duty to act on the part of the County or any of its agents, officers or employees in its or their performance of services hereunder.

To the extent permitted by law, the scope of the indemnity provisions contained in this Section 15 include any violation of applicable law, ordinance, regulation or rule, including where the claim, loss, damage, charge or expense was caused by deliberate, willful or criminal acts of the County or the City, or any of their agents, officers, or employees in its or their performance hereunder

It is the intent of the Parties that the provisions of Section 15 be interpreted to impose on each Party the responsibility for the acts, omissions or alleged wrongful conduct of their respective employees, officers, agents and governing body.

#### 16. NON-WAIVER

Waiver of any breach of, or default under, this MOU shall not constitute a continuing waiver or a waiver of any subsequent breach either of the same or of another provision of this MOU.

#### 17. ENTIRE AGREEMENT AND MODIFICATION

This MOU contains all of the terms and conditions agreed upon by the Parties, and supersedes any and all oral or written communications by and between the Parties, with respect to the subject matter of this MOU.

Except as otherwise provided herein with respect to Exhibit A and Exhibit B, no waiver, alteration, modification or termination of this MOU shall be valid unless made in writing and signed by the Parties. In the event of a conflict between this MOU and any other agreement or understanding executed by the Parties subsequent to the commencement of this MOU, the terms of this MOU shall prevail and be controlling unless such other agreement expressly provides to the contrary.

#### 18. ASSIGNMENT PROHIBITED

No Party may assign any right or obligation pursuant to this MOU. Any attempted or purported assignment of any right or obligation pursuant to this MOU shall be void and of no effect.

#### 19. SEVERABILITY

If any term, covenant or condition of this MOU is held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, the remainder of this MOU shall remain in full force and effect.

#### 20. GOVERNING LAW

The interpretation and enforcement of this MOU shall be governed by the laws of the State of California.

21. COUNTERPARTS

This MOU may be executed in one or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

22. CAPTIONS

The headings or captions contained in this MOU are for identification purposes only and shall have no effect on the construction or interpretation of this MOU.

23. AMBIGUITIES

The Parties have each carefully reviewed this MOU and have agreed to each term of this MOU. No ambiguity shall be presumed to be construed against either Party.

24. INTERPRETATION OF MOU

By entering into this MOU, the Parties do not intend to violate or cause a violation of the terms of collective bargaining or other labor MOUs to which either may be a party, nor the policies, rules or regulations governing the employees of either Party. If any provision of this MOU is inconsistent with such collective bargaining or other labor MOUs, or with such policies, rules or regulations, then the applicable provisions of such collective bargaining or other labor MOUs, and such policies, rules or regulations, shall take precedence for purposes of the construction and interpretation of this MOU.

25. AUTHORITY

The persons executing this MOU have the capacity and are authorized to execute this MOU as the representative of their respective Party and to bind their respective Party to the terms of this MOU.

COUNTY OF VENTURA

CITY OF MOORPARK

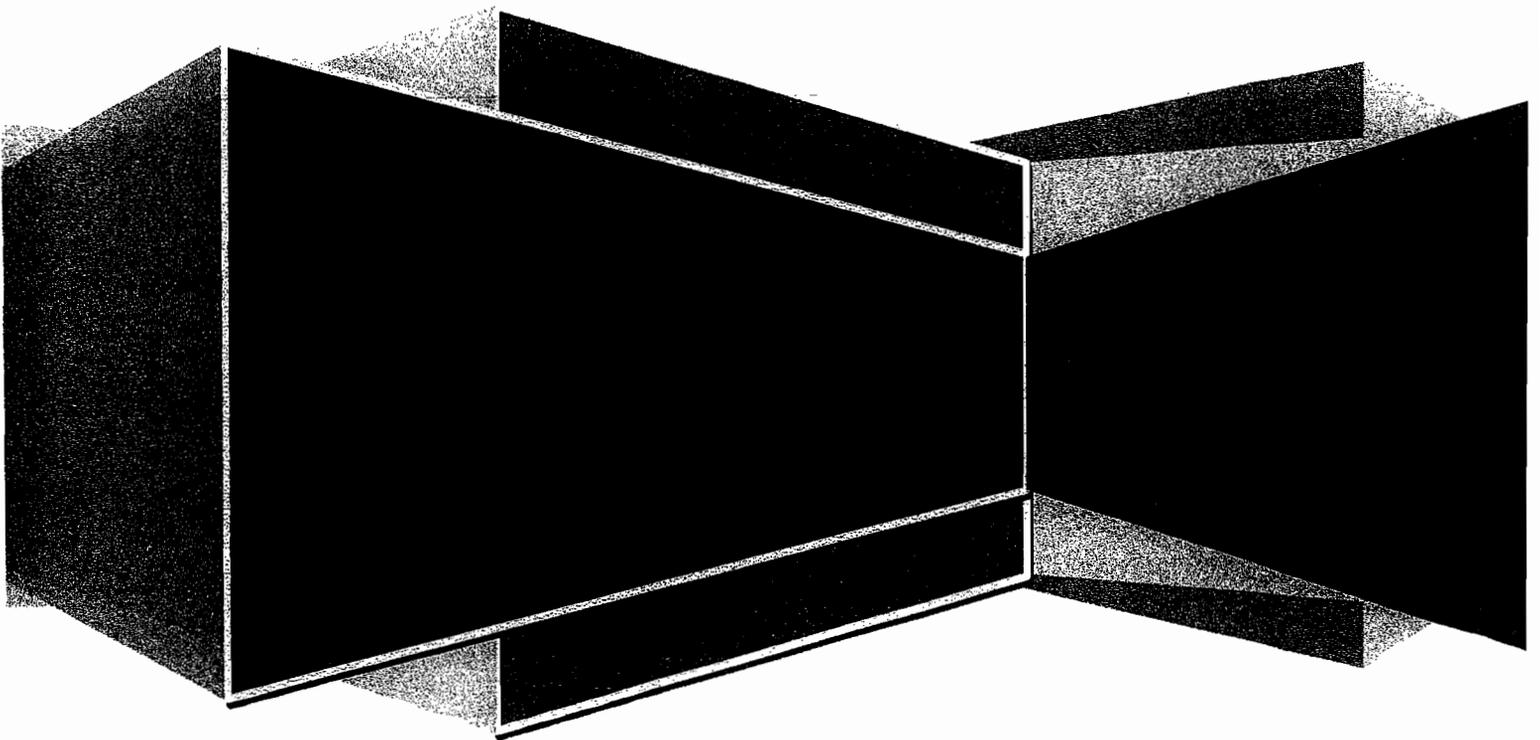
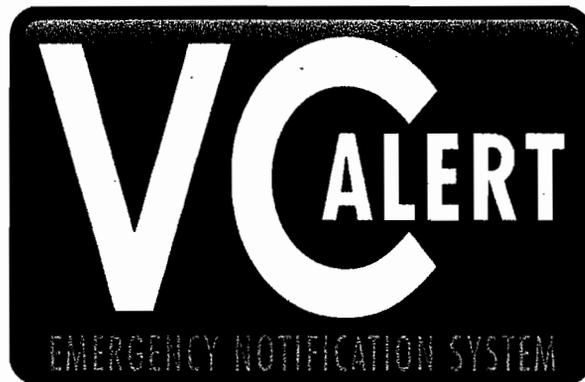
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Geoff Dean, Sheriff  
Director of Emergency Services

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Steve Kueny  
City Manager

# Ventura County Emergency Notification System



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## **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines on the use and administration of Ventura County's Emergency Notification System, VC-ALERT. This document is intended to serve as an overview of policies and agency roles and responsibilities. It *will not* provide step-by-step instructions on how to utilize the system and is not exhaustive in its description of system capabilities. The Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) will be responsible for administration and activation of the Emergency Notification System (ENS) unless otherwise defined through a signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the end user.

## **II. System Description**

VC-ALERT is a telephonic community notification system that utilizes a combination of database and GIS technologies to deliver outbound messages. In the event of an emergency, the system is accessible from any location that can access the Internet. Notifications can be generated in a recorded vocal format or in a text-to-speech format for quicker message delivery. GIS technology integrates the ENS with geo-coded contact data (that can be uploaded from customer databases and/or local telephone companies) and intelligent street centerline data. This allows for precise message delivery to a specific geographic region. This feature is vital in the many events such as mandatory evacuations, severe weather warnings, and shelter-in-place instructions during hazardous materials spills. Upon sending out this message, the ENS system provides an active confirmation of message receipt following successful delivery. In addition to notifying communities, the ENS can be used to mobilize first responders by using preset notification lists.

Administration of the system is the responsibility of the Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES). OES is the sole approving authority for any public notification message not outlined in this policy. This approval may be exercised on a case by case basis.

The VC-ALERT ENS system is only one component of Ventura County's public warning system and is intended to be used in conjunction with existing notification systems (Emergency Alert System [EAS], website, media) and should only be used for situations deemed appropriate for citizen notification as defined in the Policies and Guidelines.

### **A. General System Features**

- i. Ability to generate notification sessions to telephone numbers within a user-defined geographic area or a predefined list.
- ii. Ability to pre-record messages and outgoing calling sessions for subsequent use at a later time.

- iii. System is accessible by authorized users through Internet connection.
- iv. Multiple ways to upload message and attach to a notification, including text-to-speech, online recorder and microphone, selection of a pre-recorded text and/or voice message, or attaching a .WAV file.
- v. Ability to notify the Hearing Impaired if they have self-registered online for Text-Message alerts or TTY notification.
- vi. Ability to detect voice mail or answering machines and play messages.
- vii. Ability for citizens to replay messages via a touch-tone response (this option needs to be indicated when recording the outbound message).
- viii. Ability to exclude any number(s) from a calling session. Exclusion process varies when using group versus geo-notification selection.
- ix. Ability to send text or e-mail notifications to citizens through multiple contact pathways until system receives read confirmation from the intended recipient.
- x. Ability to stop notifications in mid-session if conditions change.
- xi. Ability to call telephone numbers based on the results of a previous session (e.g. successful notifications, answering machine, call timed out, operator Intercept, hung up, fax tone detected).
- xii. Ability to obtain real-time data on status of an outgoing calling session. Data remains on the system for up to 18 months. Archive reports may be downloaded if needed for longer storage.
- xiii. Ability to include polling capabilities for surveying and data collection. Survey information includes multiple choice questions with up to 9 responses.
- xiv. Ability for citizens to 'opt in' or subscribe to community alerts in addition to emergency alerts by visiting our website located at <http://www.readyventura.org>.
- xv. Ability to send notifications to one or more individuals, groups, or dynamic groups (or any combination thereof) in a single step.
- xvi. Customizable automatic (real time) reporting (to specified e-mail address) feature for System Use and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI).

## **B. Telephone Database**

- i. Telephone service data is provided to Everbridge by a commercial data vendor and is uploaded into our system by Everbridge.
- ii. Updates to the data are provided by the vendor on a quarterly basis. Implementation of updates is the responsibility of Everbridge and VCSO.
- iii. Cell phone, landline, and hearing impaired users can “opt in” for additional notification methods or non-emergency community alerts by completing a registration form on the County of Ventura Website ([www.readyventura.org](http://www.readyventura.org)) and clicking on ‘disaster information’ or by calling 805-648-9283.
- iv. Citizens may opt in or opt out additional contact devices to receive emergency or non-emergency alerts by completing a registration form on the County of Ventura Website.
- v. Citizens have the ability to create a secure user profile, set alert preferences, update contact information including physical addresses, email addresses & more.
- vi. Data is updated in real-time, and is reflected immediately on the map, provided a valid address is submitted.

## **C. Mapping and Geographic Notification**

- i. Mapping data is provided in ESRI shape file compatible format. The base map layer is supplied by NavTec and is updated quarterly.
- ii. Ability to isolate a specific geographic area for notification to the citizens within the selected area.
- iii. Ability to edit and save a geographic area for future notification sessions.
- iv. Ability to define a geographic area by designating a ZIP code, street address, neighborhood, or radius from a specific point.
- v. Ability to create custom layers identifying specific locations such as hospitals, police and fire stations, to target communications more precisely and effectively.
- vi. Ability for citizens to enter critical information to database such as special needs, interests in volunteering, or special skills.

## **D. Notification to Lists**

- vii. Ability to create, maintain, save and delete an unlimited number of lists with an unlimited number of records per list for outgoing calling sessions.

- viii. Allows users to build lists for notification of vulnerable populations or special response teams (i.e. In-home care residents or public health response teams).
- ix. Ability to record a message and launch calling sessions remotely using a pre-designated user ID.

**D. Mobilization of Responders**

- i. Ability to import a list of responders for mobilization in the event of an emergency. (The user is not able to restrict access by group to the responder information when importing a list.)
- ii. Ability to contact pre-determined responders.
- iii. Ability to track the responses of individual team members (i.e. SWAT) to see whether or not they will be reporting to the scene.
- iv. Active confirmation of receipt provides a comprehensive audit trail, and improved quality of contact data.
- v. Ability to record a message and launch mobilization sessions remotely using a user-defined ID for a specific team of responders.

**E. Types of Notifications**

- i. **Telephonic (Recorded voice, text-to-speech, upload wav file)**
  - 1. Home phone, work phone, mobile phone
- ii. **SMS Text Message – Limited to 120 characters. Messages over 120 characters will be split into multiple messages in increments of 120 characters.**
  - 1. Primary & Secondary SMS devices.
- iii. **Email**
  - 1. Personal email, work email, other email
- iv. **Instant Message**
  - 1. AOL AIM, Yahoo Messenger, or MSN Messenger
- v. **Fax**

### III. Events Authorized for Activation of VC-ALERT Emergency Notification System

Appointed public officials or public safety command officers may request activation of the VC-ALERT system. This includes public health officials, human services officials, emergency managers, city managers, police and fire officials, or other public safety officers involved in the management of an emergency incident. Emergency activation of the system will require that the event meets one of the criteria as defined below. For those who do not have remote access to the system, requests for activation will need to be funneled through the appropriate channels as defined in section IV. of this document.

- A. **Evacuation Notices** - The system can be used to deliver voluntary or mandatory evacuation notices to citizens in areas affected by major fires (i.e. structure or wildland), flooding, or tsunamis.
- B. **Hazardous Material Incident** - This system can be used to notify citizens whether it is appropriate to evacuate or shelter-in-place when a hazardous material release has occurred.
- C. **Community Policing** - The Ventura County Sheriff's Department and local police departments may use the system for a variety of community emergency policing activities. Community policing activities may include:
  - i. AMBER Alerts
  - ii. Endangered missing adults
  - iii. Investigative canvassing
  - iv. Prisoner escapes
  - v. Search for Outstanding Suspects
- D. **Public Health Alerts** – The Ventura County Public Health Department and Human Services Agency may use the system to disseminate emergency public health information such as:
  - i. Boil-water alerts
  - ii. Biting animal alerts
  - iii. Infectious disease outbreak
  - iv. Heat and cold advisories to vulnerable populations
- E. **Severe Weather Event** – Severe weather usually affects a significant portion of the County and is **not usually** an appropriate occasion for activating the VC-ALERT system. The EAS should be used in this capacity. However, the system does have the ability to import shape files generated by the National Weather Service (NWS) when issuing a warning statement. It may be appropriate to send out a Flash Flood Warning for a dam failure generated by NWS to citizens within a dam inundation zone or to advise residents of severe weather predicted by spot weather forecasts.

**F. Any other threat to public health or safety** – It is impossible to list every situation for which use of VC-ALERT is appropriate. A warning should be issued if the situation threatens human health and safety or serious damage to property. However, the warning must be issued in a timely manner that gives the public enough time to react and follow instructions. The capacity of the system needs to be taken into account when determining whether it is appropriate to launch a calling session. Please see “system limitations” for more information on the capacity to make calls.

**G. Non-Emergency Situations** requiring mass notification.

- i. Broken water mains
- ii. Power system failure

**H. Time of Broadcast**

Special consideration shall be taken when activating the VC-ALERT system between the hours of 10pm-7am. Outbound sessions conducted during these hours should be a matter of public safety. Courtesy notifications of non-life threatening situations shall be made during normal daytime hours.

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#### IV. Authorized Users of VC-ALERT

The Ventura County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) is responsible for administration and maintenance of the ENS. The ENS is available for use by Cities, Special Districts and other authorized entities located within Ventura County. The Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services personnel are the primary persons that have access to the system and are authorized to initiate calling sessions. Other users may access the system to send notifications to citizens with proper training and a signed memorandum of understanding with OES (i.e. Cities & authorized agencies).

Authorized users must notify OES (805-654-2551) during normal business hours or the OES Duty Officer (805-947-8210) on evenings and weekends, when launching an **emergency** calling session that may impact an additional jurisdiction other than their own. In addition, calling sessions that may create an influx of calls to any neighboring PSAP (public safety answering point) shall require notification of the OES Duty Officer. **Non-emergency** calling sessions do not require OES Duty Officer notification. These sessions may be conducted assuming the session is permitted by the guidelines listed in section III of this document.

Each user of the VC-ALERT ENS must possess an individualized user account to access the system. The sharing of user account information is not permitted. To obtain a user account, please contact OES at 805-654-3843.

#### V. How to Access the VC-Alert System

- A. Internet Access: <https://www.everbridge.net>
- B. Mobile Internet Access: <http://mobile.everbridge.net/>
- C. IVR Automated System: 1-888-440-4911
- D. Operator Assisted: 1-877-220-4911

## **VI. Use of ENS during Ventura County Operational Area EOC Activation**

In the event the Ventura County Area Operational Area Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and City EOC(s) are activated for the same incident, the ENS messages shall be coordinated through the Joint Information Center (JIC) and disseminated only after all stakeholders have collaborated and agreed upon information and objectives relative to the incident. Upon successful collaboration, the agreed upon ENS session may be launched from the County EOC or an alternate location.

Requests to activate the ENS may be submitted within WebEOC®. It is recommended that the requesting agency call the OES Duty Officer (805-947-8210) to confirm receipt of the request. Those authorized users that do not have access to WebEOC® may request a login by e-mailing [webeoc@ventura.org](mailto:webeoc@ventura.org).

Non-emergency routine activations of the ENS system used to notify citizens of routine events or mobilize personnel may be conducted without the notification and approval from the Duty Officer. Non-emergency calling sessions interfere with emergency calling sessions, they may be temporarily suspended by the OES system administrator.

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***Prior to Requesting Notification by OES***

**Prior to activating the VC-ALERT system, please ensure the following criteria are met:**

- **Step 1. Review Notification Criteria in Section III.**
- **Step 2. Fill in the Emergency Notification request form PRIOR to making request.** This will serve as your guide when speaking to OES. ***Be Clear and Concise in your message.***
- **Step 3. Call the Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) at 805-654-2551 during normal business hours or the OES Duty Officer at 805-947-8210 on evenings and weekends. Clearly identify yourself and state that you wish to activate the ENS system.** Be prepared to positively prove your identity to prevent any unauthorized use of the system. This will require providing your supervisor's name and contact information, your city/special district/agency name and your position within that city, special district, or agency and a call back number. This is for identity verification purposes.
- **Step 4. After verification of identity is complete, e-mail the Emergency Notification Request Form to 805-648-9258 or [oes.oes@ventura.org](mailto:oes.oes@ventura.org).** It is important to **clearly identify the geographic area or predefined list** that needs to receive notification on the request form.
- **Step 5. OES personnel will then record the message or provide instructions on how to record the alert message.**
- **Step 6. Stay in contact with OES personnel to receive the results of the calling session. If necessary, request termination of the calling session if changes occur that no longer warrant the alert.**



EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

**SYSTEM ACTIVATION REQUEST**

Agency:	
Contact Name:	
Contact Phone:	
Contact E-mail:	
ID/Badge #:	
Position:	
Supervisor Name/Contact #:	

Priority:	Emergency <input type="checkbox"/> Standard <input type="checkbox"/>	Interval Between Attempts (min):	
Residence and Business (Y/N):	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Leave a Message (Y/N):	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Number of Attempts Per #:		Pre-defined List Name:	

**Message Text (Keep Message Clear and Concise, see section V.B.) :**

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**Geographic Area to Receive Message:**

*Please be as specific as possible. Include city, zip code, and street names if available. When available, provide the street names of intersections in the event a perimeter has been established.*

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Please e-mail or fax the completed form to [oes.oes@ventura.org](mailto:oes.oes@ventura.org) (preferred method) or 648-9258.

## Message Content

The alert/notification message is one of the most important elements of the public warning effort. The content and style of the hazard notification message has a direct impact on the public's response to a warning and the willingness to comply with the recommended protective actions. An effective message is clear, concise and simplifies complex concepts. Most effective ENS messages are written at a 6th grade reading level and are free of agency jargon. The best chance of getting an audience's attention occurs within the first 9-seconds of an audio broadcast. The length of the message will have a direct effect on the capacity of the system to complete the calling session in a timely manner. Therefore, messages should be limited to 30-60 seconds in length but should include the following information:

- i. **Source of the message** – The authorized agency responsible for issuing the alert should be clearly identified.
- ii. **Description of the hazard or risk** – The message must include a description of the event that has occurred (or may occur) and the danger that it poses.
- iii. **Location of the hazard** – The message must include a description of the geographic areas that are at risk.
- iv. **Guidance for protective actions** – The message must include instructions on what citizens should do to protect themselves. Terminology should be defined so that citizens can take the proper action to ensure their safety.
- v. **Time available to act** – The warning message must include information on the time available for those in the affected area to take the appropriate protective action.
- vi. **Future Information Source** – The message should direct the citizen where he/she look to for more information in the future. E.g. Future VC-Alert Notifications, TV stations, press release, etc.

**Example Alert Message:** “The Ventura County Sheriff’s Department is notifying you of a mandatory evacuation in the Upper Ojai area due to the fast approaching Day Fire. Mandatory evacuation means that the fire poses an imminent danger to life and property. The fire is being driven by high wind and is anticipated to reach Ojai within four hours. A shelter has been setup in the City of Santa Paula at Isabel School. Please do not delay in leaving the area.”

## **B. Follow-up Communication**

Following the successful delivery of an outbound calling session, ENS users should determine whether or not a follow-up “all clear” telephonic message will be required. If the purpose of the session was to inform citizens of a future situation or activity, the call may not require a follow-up notification. In the case of an ENS notification warning citizens of a barricaded suspect in a particular neighborhood, it would be appropriate to inform citizens once the situation has resolved or circumstances have changed.

Outbound sessions that are stand-alone informational sessions should include directions to a source where more detailed information may be obtained.

## **C. Session Priorities**

VC-ALERT will process outbound alert sessions based upon your initial selection of “Emergency Message” or “Standard Message.” Emergency messages will always take precedence on the system.

## **VII. System Limitations**

**A.** The telephony server utilized by Everbridge carries a capacity to place 100,000 calls per hour, at minimum. In addition, 100,000 text messages can be generated per hour. More often than not, system limitations arise from “bottle-necking” of calls at the local telephone company central offices as opposed to delays generated at the data center.

**B. Multiple Language Alerts** – Agencies may need to consider recording multiple messages for various demographic groups. Messages can be recorded in multiple languages. The system has the ability to send alerts in any language as long as there is someone available to record the message in a particular language. These policies and guidelines do not suggest that it is mandatory to send alerts to the public in multiple languages. That decision will be left to the Incident or EOC Commander as to whether it is appropriate for a given geographic area. Those jurisdictions that have a high percentage of non-English speaking families may want to pre-designate geographic areas that should receive multiple language alerts. There are three ways to accomplish sending out messages in another language in addition to English.

- i. Record Both Messages within a Single Recording** – The user has the ability to record both messages within the same recording. For example, the English message could be recorded first followed by the Spanish

message. This will make the outgoing message longer and may affect the session results; citizens may hang up after the English message is complete causing a high number of hang ups that would normally be counted as successful calls.

- ii. **Record a Separate Message for Each Language** - The user may record a separate message for each language. The user has the ability to launch two sessions concurrently, one session in English and one session in Spanish (or any other language) to the same geographic area. This method will result in citizens receiving two separate calls, but will result in more realistic session results for the session launched in the primary language for that geographic area.
- iii. **Utilize the Survey Tool** – There is a survey tool on the system that allows the user to record a series of questions/messages that require a keyed response of 1-9 from the resident receiving the call.

**C. Cell phone numbers and Voice Over IP (VoIP)** – The system has a limited ability to capture VoIP and cell phone lines made available through commercial phone lists however not ALL cell phone and VoIP listings will not be automatically captured. Citizens who do not have a landline telephone will need to manually submit their cell phone, VoIP phone number or other notification device information on the County of Ventura Website to insure their information has been entered into the VC-Alert system.

**D. Factors that Affect the Ability to Receive the Alert** - Citizens will **not** receive notifications if the phone lines are down and some may **not** receive calls when the power is out. VoIP lines and phone lines provided by cable companies, and cordless phones, require the power to be on in order to complete a call. During an emergency, the circuits may become overloaded which will prevent the Central Office from completing calls originating from the VC-ALERT servers. These calls will return as an error and a subsequent calling session will need to be launched using a list of erroneous calls. Also, those citizens who have their call-blocking activated will **not** receive the emergency notification. These calls will show up as “operator-intercept.”

**E. Internal Private Branch Exchange (PBX)** - Businesses with internal Private Branch Exchange (PBX) phone systems present the potential to cause idiosyncrasies if they are included in an ENS calling session. The system will attempt to call all published numbers located within a geographic area if the calling session is

based on a geo-zone. Most problems can be minimized by careful screening of the database, but authorized users should be aware of the potential for:

- i. Some organizations may have more than one building location, but have a centralized telephone system. The address location of published phone numbers may be associated with the central office building when the actual telephone is located at a remote site.
- ii. The calling session may complete multiple calls to numerous offices within the same organization at the same location. System administrators from each City will be tasked with the responsibility of identifying large corporations within their jurisdiction in order to exclude them during calling sessions.

**VIII. Routine Testing**

The Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services will be responsible for routine testing of the system. OES personnel will use staff member lists in order to test the functionality of each module. Testing will be performed using the frequency defined in the table below. Authorized users of the system will be subject to a routine testing schedule as defined in their memoranda of understanding.

<b>System Component</b>	<b>Testing Frequency</b>
Ability to Make Outbound Calls	Weekly
Outbound Email Session Using OES Staff	Monthly
Mobilization Session Using EOC Activation Lists	Bi-Monthly
Geo-zone Creation	Weekly