



District of Columbia Emergency Management Agency

Public Emergency Notification Systems

May 27, 2003

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Sirens

- The old Civil Defense system is no longer usable
 - DC ceased operations in early 80ís after FEMA discontinued funding
- Research underway to study feasibility of siren system
 - Oklahoma City & Ft. Worth, TX recently purchased systems

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Sirens

● Advantages

- We can obtain a 100% geographic coverage
- Only outdoor warning device
- No cost to citizens or participation required
- Visible device

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Sirens

● Disadvantages:

- There will be dead spots within structures both above and below ground
- High cost of acquisition and ownership
- Requires major public education campaign

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Sirens

- Recommendation ñ Do not pursue
 - Too costly to purchase
 - High cost of ownership
 - ìHeads-upî alert only ñ no detailed information

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Other Notification Systems

- Emergency Alert System (EAS)
- Citizens Emergency Notification System (CENS ñ Reverse 911)
- Emergency Text Notification System (Roam Secure)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Alert Radios

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Other Notification Systems

- Capital Wireless Integrated Network (CapWin)
- Emergency Information Atlas

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Emergency Alert System (EAS)

- A modernization of the old Emergency Broadcast System
- Uses existing broadcast facilities to communicate to listeners
- Current capabilities - broadcast radio alerts over a wide area

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EAS

● System Interoperability

- Maryland
- Virginia
- District of Columbia

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EAS

● Advantages

- Inexpensive to operate
- Allows broadcast of detailed information
- Reaches people in cars or buildings other systems might not reach

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EAS

● Disadvantages

- Requires citizens be tuned in
- Requires citizens to own radios or televisions

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EAS

● Approach

- Expand the system to include broadcast video over existing local television outlets
- Include the ability to broadcast a message crawl over the emergency broadcast or regularly scheduled broadcast
- Cost - @ \$300,000

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Citizens Emergency Notification System (CENS)

- System to issue voice alerts to areas impacted by an emergency event
- Define impacted area on a map
- Use landline and cellular phone technology to communicate

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CENS

- Advantages
 - Define highly specific areas of any size for notification
 - Citizens need not actively participate
 - Detailed information can be communicated
 - Most citizens have devices for receiving information

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CENS

● Disadvantages

- Citizens must have phone service
- Citizens must be home or have their cell phone on
- Moderate on-going costs

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CENS

● Approach

- Request proposals from vendors
- Implement by summer @3
- Cost - @ \$200,000

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Emergency Text Notification System

- Roam Secure Alert Network (RSAN) can notify portions of the population using broadcast text messaging
- Uses email, pagers, fax and cellular devices such as phones and PDAs
- Send messages to selected groups of recipients based on the location, scope and severity of an emergency incident

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Emergency Text Notification System

- Advantages
 - Already serves as internal DC and RICCS communications vehicle
 - Currently or soon to be deployed in surrounding jurisdictions
 - Speed ñ Notification is rapid
 - Reasonably passive system
 - Citizens have a choice to subscribe

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Emergency Text Notification System

● Disadvantages

- Citizens must own receiving device
- Citizens must keep devices operating
- Citizens must actively subscribe to the system

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Emergency Text Notification System

● Approach

- Request proposal from vendors
- Implement by early summer 03
- Cost ñ @ \$380,000

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NOAA Alert Radios

- Radios tuned to NOAA predefined frequencies

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NOAA Alert Radios

- Advantages
 - An effective way of reaching additional citizens with a warning message
 - Tuned to a constant channel
 - Low cost of acquisition

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NOAA Alert Radios

- Disadvantages
 - Low penetration of the population
 - Few owners

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NOAA Alert Radios

- Approach ñ already issued to
 - Local schools
 - Nursing homes

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Capital Wireless Integrated Network (CapWIN)

- Bridging the Public Safety communications gap between Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia
- Integrate transportation and public safety data and voice systems
- The first inter-jurisdictional integrated wireless network in the United States

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CapWIN

- Approach
 - January 2002 ñ Congress provided funding to the Office of Domestic Preparedness to advance project from concept to operations
 - Funding awarded and managed through a grant from NIJ to University of Maryland Center for Advance Transportation Tehnology

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CapWIN

- Approach

- August 2002 ñ IBM awarded contract as systems integrator
- Project on schedule for first phase rollout summer of 2003

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Emergency Information Atlas

- Web site devoted to preparedness and response

- Publicly available via the Internet
- Repository of preparedness information
- Active information updates during emergency events

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For More Information - please contact:

The District of Columbia Emergency Management Agency

2000 14th Street, NW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20009 USA



Phone: (202) 673-2101

FAX: (202) 673-7054

www: dcema.dc.gov



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