



MEDIA RELEASE

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Public Can Register their Cell Phones to Receive Emergency Notifications

Austin, Texas – Residents of the 10-county Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG) region are now able to register and receive notifications on their cellular telephones for emergencies that may affect their homes and businesses or those of their relatives. Through a web-based application, individuals are able to enter their name and cellular telephone number then attach one or more locations to that number in order to get important public safety messages. Residents can go to the website at <http://wireless.capcog.org> and follow the instructions to add their information into the ENS cell phone registry.

In 2004, responding to requests from members of the CAPCOG Homeland Security Task Force, CAPCOG used a combination of homeland security grant funds and funds from participating local governments to implement the ENS. This system allows public safety personnel in participating jurisdiction to relay critical emergency information to their citizens when human life or property is in danger. Originally, the system would only contact only those persons with regular, land-line telephone service.

With the rise in the popularity of cellular telephones, an increasing number of persons no longer maintain traditional telephone service. Instead, they rely exclusively on their cellular telephones as their residence telephone. To address the need to extend the availability of emergency notification to persons without land-line telephone services, CAPCOG's staff worked with a software developer to implement a web-based interface that allows persons to locate their residence on a map and thus receive emergency notifications. This interface was designed to extend the functionality of the CAPCOG ENS to cell phones.

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An additional benefit of this service is that persons may link their cellular telephone number to one or more locations, such as their place of business or the homes of relatives. If a participating local government activates the system for an area that contains a location that has been registered to a particular cellular telephone number, the system will attempt to send the emergency message to that cellular telephone.

The addition of this service is part of CAPCOG's ongoing efforts to ensure that the ENS is the most capable telephone-based notification system possible. Earlier this year, the capabilities of the system were expanded to include the ability to deliver emergency messages to hearing-impaired persons who rely on Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) technology. CAPCOG's implementation was among the first in the country to have this capability.

For more information regarding the Emergency Notification System (ENS) refer to the CAPCOG website at site <http://www.capcog.org/divisions/homeland-security/> or contact Ed Schaefer, CAPCOG Homeland Security Director at (512) 916-6026 or eschaefer@capcog.org.

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