

SAFER DURHAM Emergency Notification System

Last year in her state of the state address, Governor Jodi Rell listed reverse 911 type emergency notification systems as one of her priorities for all ST of CT municipalities. Since then, Emergency Management Director Francis Willett and I, along with Chiefs of Service, Scott Wright and Harry Hall have been researching different options for the Town of Durham. Hopes that the ST of CT would provide funding were soon dashed and we focused our attention on choosing a vendor and writing grant applications to the Department of Homeland Security. We were successful in receiving grants to fund 82% of the first 18 months of the service and we are proud to announce that the SAFER DURHAM – 3N Citizen Alert system is ready to be rolled out to the public.

SAFER Durham will allow us to notify thousands of residents in seconds when there is an emergency or major announcement affecting all of our residents. There have been several occasions when it would have been useful to have this system in place in the 15 months I've been in office including road closures due to flooding and/or accidents, Crooked Hill Road opening and construction updates, when we opened up the high school for counseling after a student fatality, not to mention school closings and delays. Two years ago the emergency shelter had to be activated because of a potential hazardous situation regarding one of our industrial businesses necessitating an evacuation of a section of town. I'm sitting at my desk right now during a major storm when it was necessary to close the library and the town hall, a valid reason to notify our residents. We will also have the ability to notify certain neighborhoods or sections of the town with location specific information without having to blast the message to the whole database, an important feature that will aid our businesses and neighborhood watches.

How does it work? We have populated the database using names, addresses and phone numbers from public lists. But we need your help to make the database even more robust. Please use the flyer that will be delivered to your home or click on the sign up link to the self registration page on our website to give us alternate ways to contact you including cell phone, fax, and email. The system will continue to use your alternates until it receives confirmation that you were contacted. You will also be able to tell the system what is your preferable contact choice and will be able to opt out any time for whatever reason.

Your safety is a top concern of the Board of Selectman and the reason why so many volunteers in the public safety departments and committees put in countless hours of training and preparation to handle disasters and emergencies. I am pleased to institute a system that will enhance the way our public safety personnel do their work. Please participate. Remember – If we can't reach you... we can't alert you!