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Jersey City Launches Emergency Alert System to Communicate with Residents via Text, Phone Call or E-mail as Fulop Administration Continues to Expand Public Safety & Resident Communications

New program allows residents to receive emergency information in real time right to their phones and coordinates messaging across alerts, social media and city website

JERSEY CITY –Mayor Steven M. Fulop announced today the launch of a new, citywide emergency alert system to keep residents instantly informed in both emergency and non-emergency situations, as part of the Administration’s ongoing expansion of public safety and resident communications in Jersey City.

The new program allows residents to receive emergency alerts in real time, while also coordinating messaging across social media and the City website.

With the new system, the Jersey City Office of Emergency Management (OEM) can send immediate, emergency information right to where residents receive it the fastest: their cell phones. Using Swift911™, the City will be able to send emergency alerts to residents in three different ways: pre-recorded phone calls, text messages and emails, depending on the resident’s preference. Alerts can also be targeted to specific geographical locations.

“By signing up for these alerts you’ll be able to know – in real time – if a parade or race is causing traffic detours, or what to do in a snowstorm or other emergency situation,” says **Mayor Fulop**. “In an emergency, we want to deliver information to residents immediately and frequently, as situations develop. We’re being proactive in leveraging technology to keep our residents informed and safe.”

This alert system will allow Jersey City to communicate with residents in emergency situations, such as weather-related emergencies, natural disasters, large-scale shutdowns to the PATH, NJ Transit or ferries, and missing persons or AMBER alert situations. But it will also allow for the city to communicate with residents in non-emergency situations, such as street closures for parades, festivals or races.

The Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security is responsible for readying Jersey City’s emergency preparedness. Using both state and federal Department of Homeland Security funds, OEM readies the response of a major metropolitan city like Jersey City for a possible terrorist attack, weather emergency or other emergency situation. OEM employees were crucial in readying Jersey City for Superstorm Sandy, as well as recovery efforts. Funding for the new system will be paid for through an Urban Areas Securities Initiative (UASI) grant, in the amount of approximately \$200,000.

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The new emergency alert system is part of the Fulop Administration's expanded communications effort to residents, which includes growing Facebook by 267%, Twitter by 102%, creating a new Instagram account, as well as recently launching the @JCPARKING Twitter feed with daily parking regulation updates. The City also launched the first open data portal on its website, offering residents access to a variety of data sets from city departments and agencies.

Residents must sign up to receive alerts, and sign-up is completely free. Residents are encouraged to sign up for the service by visiting: <http://www.jerseycitynj.gov/alerts>. When registering, residents must enter a valid email address and valid phone number.

By creating a profile, residents can set preferences, such as how they want to receive alerts, whether it's via email, voicemail, text or all three. Residents can also add family members, and indicate their age, or whether anyone has special needs, such as a person who is sight- or hearing-impaired, or if a family member uses a wheelchair or requires oxygen. Residents can also choose whether they want to receive standard emergency alerts, or alerts about hazardous weather as well.

"One of the things that makes our emergency alert system really unique is how personalized it is," says Jersey City **Director of Emergency Management W. Greg Kierce**. "With this system, residents can let emergency workers know – well ahead of time – whether someone in their family is on dialysis or uses a service animal, for example. And emergency workers can respond accordingly to help people with special needs."

The new emergency alert system also uses social media: As an emergency message is broadcast, that same exact message will also simultaneously be posted our Facebook and Twitter accounts, and on the city's homepage.

"From a personal perspective, being able to receive notifications from my city government alongside every other notification on my mobile device is a game changer," said **Rob Crow, a 24-year Jersey City resident, father of three, and President of both the Village Neighborhood Association (VNA), and Downtown Coalition of Neighborhood Associations (DCNA)**. "Neighborhood associations use every tool possible to notify residents of important information, such as email blasts, websites, social media, and even papering street poles. Having all neighbors with direct access to these citywide emergency alerts will facilitate communication at the community level that will absolutely change the quality of life for all Jersey City residents."

In addition to keeping residents informed, OEM also works to ensure that Jersey City's business community is prepared for emergencies as well. Through a robust outreach program with Jersey City's business community for emergency preparedness, OEM officials meet quarterly with the Local Emergency Planning Council, a coalition of Jersey City businesses such as ICAP and JPMorgan Chase, to help each firm prepare in light of an emergency.

"The efforts of the Jersey City OEM are important to residents and business alike and we will encourage our members to utilize the new emergency alert system," said **Maria Nieves, CEO and president of the Hudson County Chamber of Commerce**. "We're pleased that the City is making improvements that will help business owners and their employees to better prepare for future emergencies."

Anyone requiring registration assistance should call the city's Resident Response Center at (201) 547-4900.

All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Steven M. Fulop at 201-547-4836 or 201-376-0699.////