

NEWS RELEASE

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OFFICIALS URGE COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Eden Prairie, Minn. — The City of Eden Prairie recently conducted a community survey to assist with crisis communication planning. As a result of the findings, officials are asking residents to take note of the nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) tomorrow at 1 p.m. (CST) and then update their emergency contact information in the CodeRED community notification system.

“We know that new technology has changed the way in which people communicate,” said **Katie Beal**, senior communications coordinator and public information officer. “So last March, we decided to ask those who live and work in Eden Prairie about their communication habits, because knowing which forms of media members of the public are interacting with most frequently helps us prioritize our communication efforts during a crisis.”

To accomplish this, an electronic survey was distributed to more than 10,000 members of the community – via the City’s email subscription service, website and Facebook page – and the nearly 1,400 responses now assist the City’s public information officers with emergency communication planning.

“One of the most important findings from this survey is that in the most severe of emergency situations, a large majority of the Eden Prairie community would prefer to receive a text message alert,” said Fire Chief and Director of Emergency Preparedness **George Esbensen**. “However, this is concerning as only 3,000 members of the community have provided the information we need in order to send them a text message.”

The City of Eden Prairie makes use of CodeRED, a community notification system which is not part of the nationwide EAS test, but is tested by City officials annually, with the next test taking place in early 2012. CodeRED is capable of distributing high-speed voice and text messages in an emergency; however it requires that community members provide current contact information and opt-in to receive text messages.

“Tomorrow, federal agencies will conduct a nationwide test of the EAS,” said Esbensen. “This system is capable of broadcasting emergency information over television and radio airwaves – but it does not send emails or text messages, so if you’re not tuned into the appropriate channels in an emergency, you won’t receive the message.”

For this reason, the City of Eden Prairie would like members of the community to utilize the nationwide EAS test as a reminder to visit the “CodeRED” link at edenprairie.org and not only provide current contact information, but also opt-in to receive text messages in an emergency.

The City of Eden Prairie is a vibrant community of more than 60,000 residents located just southwest of Minneapolis. Eden Prairie has been nationally recognized as a great place to live, work and raise a family. Since 2006, Eden Prairie has been listed among MONEY Magazine’s 100 “Best Places to Live” in America, and in 2010 topped MONEY’s list as the Best Place to Live in America.

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