

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TESTS EMERGENCY CALLING SYSTEM

LEE COUNTY, FL, AUGUST 13, 2010: On Wednesday, Lee County Emergency Management will test its new emergency public notification system that will alert residents and employers about health and safety issues ranging from a widespread mandatory hurricane evacuation to a partial neighborhood lockdown due to law enforcement action in the area.

Lee County Emergency Management, Lee County Sheriff's Office, the Lee County Port Authority and the cities of Fort Myers and Sanibel recently signed a contract with Emergency Communications Network to lease its CodeRED high-speed emergency notifications system. CodeRED, already in place in Cape Coral and Fort Myers Beach, now geographically covers all of Lee County.

J. A. Stakenburg, Operations Manager for Emergency Management, urges all individuals and businesses to enter their notification numbers for their home address or business address.

"Especially those with unlisted numbers, a changed phone number in the past year, a changed home address in the past year and those using as their primary contact a cellular phone or a Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone should enter their contact information on the CodeRED link," said Stakenburg. "You can't check to see if your information is in there, but the system will recognize duplicate phone numbers and not call you twice."

One can add their personal contact information by logging onto the website of any participating public safety agency or to Emergency Management's website www.LeeEOC.com and clicking on the CodeRED community notification enrollment link. Anyone without internet capabilities can register their information online through the Lee County Library's Reference Desk, a friend or neighbor's computer, or as a last resort by calling the system administrator at the Lee County Sheriff's Office at 239-477-1228, Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"Everyone will benefit during times of an emergency by having their information in the registry and being called quickly when an emergency exists near their home or work place," said Stakenburg. The information will never be sold or used to market anything. Its use is strictly limited to emergency health and safety notifications.

"If you have a listed phone number in a local directory, your phone number is currently included in the 9-1-1 database and you do not need to register in CodeRED," said Stakenburg. All residents whose phone numbers are registered with E9-1-1 will receive the test call this week.

One individual can program the system to call a home phone, cell phone, text number and email for one geographical address. The system can hold information for an unlimited amount of addresses, said Stakenburg.

The change to CodeRED is expected to expedite the process used to program a message and complete message delivery. Stakenburg said the old system took managers from three to 24 hours to program, whereas the new system will take less than 15 minutes to program.