

Press Release

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By John Harrington, WebKid Mobile Marketing, webkid.com

Village of Elmwood Nebraska Approves New Technology for Critical Alerts

Elmwood, NE – At a regular meeting of the Village of Elmwood, Board of Trustees on 12/3/2014, the Board approved a project to implement Critical Alert Messaging to residents of the Village and the surrounding area. The project is underwritten in part by a grant from Nebraska Community Websites (ncwp.org) and WebKid Mobile Marketing (WebKid.com). The project will provide critical alerts, such as tornado warnings, flooding, and any public safety issue. The alerts are delivered directly to the cellular phone of any person who subscribes to the free service. The critical alerts can be delivered to subscribers in any location with cellular service, and does not require the power grid to be in operation.

Julie Anderson of Elmwood, expressed excitement for the improvement in servicing public safety to residents. Mrs. Anderson was elected to the village board and will take office later this month.

“The technology is so simple, and inexpensive that the Board recognized very quickly the many improvements this could bring to our village. The village could get these critical messages to folks even if they had a phone that was really old, it doesn’t have to be a smart phone, and doesn’t even need an Internet connection. We can get these alerts out even when the power is out, so that is tremendous. The recipient doesn’t have to be around here to get the message. They could be at work, or they could be in another state, with family members back in our village.

We are grateful to John Harrington for providing this opportunity to Elmwood. It’s not often that we get to be on the leading edge of technology, with little risk and tremendous benefit.”

Elmwood is the first to adopt this technology in Nebraska. WebKid Mobile Marketing has offered the Critical Messaging Alert System to every community in Cass County and looks to 3 more communities to follow Elmwood very shortly. The critical alert messaging technology does not replace any of the existing emergency response such as sirens and 911 calls. John Harrington of WebKid states,

“The Critical Alert Message System is a simple, yet valuable enhancement to current emergency response procedures. It is an add-on to the systems already in place. Text messages are delivered very rapidly and recipients will open and read a text message over 93% of the time within 90 seconds so that rate is much higher than email or any other delivery method.”

Harrington also emphasizes that each municipality will be in complete control of managing when a message is sent, and what the message says.

To subscribe to the service, any user with a cell phone can send a text message with the word “68349” (which is the zip code for Elmwood) to the number 28748. The software behind the WebKid technology automatically registers the phone number to send out future critical messages to that phone, such as tornado warnings, and public safety information. A user can also subscribe by entering their cell phone number online at ElmwoodNebraska.com. Harrington is quick to point out that the technology follows CTIA federal regulations to allow subscribers to “shut it off” by texting the word “STOP” to the same phone number – 28748.

WebKid has reserved the number 28748 solely for the purposes of municipal alerts. WebKid also provides messaging services for commercial and organizational purposes such as promotions, contests, church organizations, clubs, and real estate as few examples.

When using text messaging services such as provided by WebKid, text messaging fees may apply to the owner of the phone, based on the service the user has with their phone provider, such as Verizon. Text messaging is often provided for free by the phone carrier. More information is expected to be released following the next meeting of the Village Board on December 17th.

About the Village of Elmwood, Nebraska

Elmwood Nebraska is located in southeast Nebraska, Cass County and is positioned between the metro areas of Lincoln and Omaha. The fire district and rescue squad are centered in Elmwood. Offices for Cass County Rural Water District #2 are also located in Elmwood as well as Midwest Farmers Coop and other small businesses. Population 668. School district is consolidated - Elmwood-Murdock Schools.

About WebKid and Nebraska Community Websites

John Harrington and his wife Irina are owners of WebKid Mobile Marketing and Nebraska Community Websites as well as additional technology companies. Harrington, until recently, was a resident of Louisville Nebraska and has been investing in technology for rural development since 1998. His company provides websites to every community in Cass County Nebraska as well as other communities. Nebraska Community Websites distributes newsletters online to over 25,000 subscribers.

Contacts

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