CITY WATCH PROGRAM

Emergencies come in all shapes and sizes. Usually the public (you guys) learn about them after the fact. Yet there are times when knowing about them earlier...as they are happening, would help people to react more wisely, prevent panic and rumor, and let everyone be safer. Through a program called “City Watch”, we can now communicate with the whole city or target a certain neighborhood in case of an urgent or emergency situation. Another name for the system is a reverse 911-program. This system is designed to deliver brief, timely messages to land-line phones, cell phones, and email addresses. It is first and foremost an emergency notification system, to notify citizens of an emergency situation that may require their increased awareness, assistance, or require a safety action like locking your doors or evacuation from homes or businesses. Such emergency situations could include natural disasters, fires, hostage situations or things like active shooter incidents. For instance, pretend that we had a tanker truck carrying a hazardous material, crash and spill onto State Street by Wal-Mart. We know that the fumes will be hazardous to our citizens, and we know that we have a wind from the west at about 5 miles per hour. Through “City Watch” we could place a simultaneous evacuation telephone call to every registered telephone and email address in the area that we designate, for instance everyone from the accident scene east to the mountain and North of 400 North. We could include what the problem is, how to protect yourself from it, or identify a safe evacuation route.

A secondary use of the system would be to notify citizens of urgent situations that may require an increased awareness or assistance of the public but are not immediately or very likely life-threatening. These situations could include missing persons or children, disruptions of public utilities or things like imminent severe weather events. Although the system is a great tool, it is not perfect. The telephone companies do not supply numbers for those people who are unlisted in the white pages. So if a message goes out, if you’re not listed, you won’t be notified through your land-line phone. The cellular phone companies also don’t supply us with telephone numbers, so if you’re home and can’t be reached through your land-line number, your cell phone’s not going to ring either! City Watch is up and running right now, we have actually already used it once on a SWAT team “Man with a Gun” situation. That’s when we discovered that we missed notifying some people. We are asking you as residents of Lindon City to get registered with City Watch. Self-registration is quick, free, and allows emergency officials to have access to unlisted resident land-line phone numbers, cell phone numbers, and email addresses in the event of an emergency. You can do this via the internet at http://notify.utahcountyonline.org/CityWatchWeb/CommunitySignup.asp.

Please read the privacy policy on the web page which outlines the security of your personal information. No one else will have access to your phone numbers or email addresses. This system literally may save lives. A Cop friend of mine from northern Utah related a story to me about a missing little girl they were looking for. Using City Watch, a call went out to the neighborhood requesting that people come out to help look, it then provided a description. He said that from his location he was looking down a long neighborhood street and almost at once, every door opened and people came outside to help! The girl was quickly and safely located. What a great resource. Please take the time to register for City Watch today while you’re thinking about it. You never know if tomorrow is when we’ll need it! I am so proud of and thank you for, the community ownership of Public Safety issues by the citizens of Lindon. The Police Department truly feels your support. This is another tool that we can use as we work together to keep our town safe!

Chief Cody Cullimore, Lindon City Police Department