



Press Release

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Reverse 911 Enhances City's Ability to Notify Public

Most residents know they can call 9-1-1 to get immediate assistance in the event of an urgent police, fire or medical situation. Emergency services personnel in Gatlinburg are now able to take that reassurance to the next level.

With its new Reverse 911 Community Notification System, the Gatlinburg Fire Department (GFD) can alert residents, businesses and visitors about a potential emergency circumstance and rapidly notify specific geographical areas of town by telephone with minimal impact on emergency services personnel.

"This system enhances our ability to notify the general public and will serve as an adjunct to our flood warning system and the evacuation procedures currently listed in the City's emergency plan," said Gatlinburg Fire Chief Greg Miller.

How does Reverse 911 work?

In the event of an emergency, the GFD can identify the affected area and record a message that describes the situation and recommends the protective actions residents should take. The Reverse 911 system can automatically call all listed telephone numbers within that geographic area and deliver the recorded message.

"The Reverse 911 system is an immediate asset to all communities and the county as a whole," said John Mathews, Emergency Management Agency Director for Sevier County. "This technology enables us to notify the citizens and visitors concerning hazards in their immediate area."

Funded by the Sevier County E911 Board under the direction of Vince Loveday, the system uses existing telephones to alert citizens. There is no need for people to buy a specialized warning device. System administrators can also program additional telephone numbers into the database, allowing the addition of unlisted telephone numbers and cell phone numbers to the system.

The system can deliver text messages to TTY/TDD devices as well. This feature has the potential to greatly enhance the City's ability to warn and protect citizens who are deaf or have hearing challenges.

The incorporation of the REVERSE 911 system represents the City of Gatlinburg's continuing commitment to providing its residents with the most advanced technologies available to ensure that our local public safety is as effective as possible.

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Some of the many uses of the system include:

- Emergency Evacuations
- Missing Person Alerts
- Natural Disaster Alerts
- Hazardous Material Leaks
- Search and Rescue Operations
- Neighborhood Emergency Incidents
- Homeland Security Notifications

The telephone number database contains only those telephone numbers listed in the telephone book for Gatlinburg addresses who have not registered their phones for the National Do Not Call List (www.donotcall.gov). Unless manually added to the database, it will not include unlisted numbers, cell phones, Voice over IP (Broadband) phones, or those phones registered on the National Do Not Call List.

Those phone numbers can be manually entered into the system linked to a specific address. Once linked, the cell phone or unlisted number becomes essentially fixed to that location. Citizens who have recently moved into Gatlinburg should register with the system and visitors can also temporarily register for a given time period.

To register your address and phone number, please stop by and fill out the form available at the Reagan Drive or East Parkway Fire Halls, or visit www.ci.gatlinburg.tn.us and click on **R911 Registration Form** on the right-hand side of the page to print then complete the registration form and return it to Fire Department Headquarters at 1230 East Parkway.

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