



CITY OF MOUNT AIRY



PRESS RELEASE:

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MOUNT AIRY TO UTILIZE NEW TECHNOLOGY TO ALERT RESIDENTS

The City of Mount Airy will utilize a new communications service, effective February 1, 2011, that allows city agencies to send important, valuable community information directly to residents using the latest technology.

The Nixle Community Information Service allows us to create and publish messages to be delivered to subscribed residents instantly via cell phone text message and/or email. Notifications can also be accessed online at Nixle's web site at www.nixle.com.

Messages may include emergency notifications such as Amber Alerts, hazardous road conditions, missing persons details, major fire emergencies, road closings and detours, notifications of utility line breaks and service interruptions, as well as other relevant safety and community event information.

Nixle will allow city agencies to send out immediate alerts or advisories to registered users that they will receive on their cell phones and by email. The technology is being used by many local governments and public safety professionals all over the U.S. It is instant, very effective, reliable, secure, and best of all, no cost to the city. Users that sign up for the service may be subject to text charges from their cellular phone providers, and should check to see if their carrier charges for these emergency alerts. Standard text rates may apply. There is also no spam and information provided to Nixle is not sold or shared. E-mail messages are of no cost to users.

It is an optional service, but one that can be very useful. No one will be required to sign up. Messages are sent from city administrators, and not through third parties or call centers. A dispatcher in the MAPD building can send an alert message 24 hours a day if an emergency arises without having to go through someone halfway around the world. When a crime occurs The Mount Airy Police Department could instantly notify users with an instant message on their phone of a physical description of the suspect, a license plate number, and to stay indoors and lock doors. Another example would be a main water line break that results in water service being cut off to a block or neighborhood. If the city wanted to notify residents that might be affected that water service is off, the system can be set so that the message can be sent only to

users within a defined radius, and only those in that radius will receive the message.

The messages can be sent globally or specifically to residents registered within as little as a ¼ mile radius, giving them the opportunity to receive trustworthy information relevant only to their neighborhood. Residents decide from which local agencies they want to receive information. Subscribers can also choose the way in which alerts are received, whether it is by email, text message, or over the web. We will have three city departments using Nixle, the Mount Airy Police Department, Mount Airy Parks & Recreation, and the City Manager's Office. Police will generally use the system for emergency alerts, Parks & Rec to inform of games or event cancellations due to rain that are not generally of an emergency nature, and the City Manager's office can send messages for the other city departments as alerts, advisories, and general information of various levels of importance.

Residents of Mount Airy and those in neighboring communities can immediately begin receiving pertinent information via text message, email, and web by registering at www.nixle.com. The city will also be making residents aware of the service through local media, Cable 6, Facebook, Twitter, promotional fliers, inserts in utility bills, and at various offices and public facilities in the city. The city cannot sign anyone up, but instead each user must go online to register.

Mayor Deborah Cochran stated, "We are very excited to have the opportunity to provide this service to our residents, and hope that it can help us build a better informed and safer community."

About Nixle

Nixle is a community information service provider built exclusively to provide secure and reliable communications. It is the first authenticated and secure service that connects municipal agencies and community organizations to residents in real time, delivering information to geographically targeted consumers over their cell phones (via text messages), through e-mails and via Web access. Nixle has secured a partnership with Nlets (the International Justice and Public Safety Network), allowing local police departments nationwide to send immediate alerts and advisories. Privately funded Nixle, which has offices in New Jersey and California, is free to all governments, their agencies and organizations, nongovernmental organizations and consumers. For more information, visit www.nixle.com.

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