

2018 LGFCU Excellence in Innovation Award Project Evaluation

Project ID	PIP-9
Title of Program	Cumberland Alerts Campaign
Program Category	
Submission Date	6/1/2018 4:43:44 PM
County	Cumberland
Employee	Sally Shutt
Employee title	Assistant County Manager/Public Information Director
Email	sshutt@co.cumberland.nc.us
County Department	Public Information Office
Phone	910-437-1921
Address	117 DickSt., Suite 512 PO Box 1829 Fayetteville, NC 0
County Manager	Amy Cannon
Supervisor	Amy Cannon
Implementation Date	Aug-17
FLSA Designation	Exempt
Project Team Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Claudia Sievers, Graphic Design Information Specialist II •Geneve Mankel, Marketing and Communications Coordinator •Jon Soles, Public Information Specialist •Sally Shutt, Assistant County Manager/Public Information Director

Description of Productivity Improvement

After Hurricane Matthew roared through Cumberland County in October 2016, the County determined a new emergency notification system was needed to better serve our residents. In August 2017, Cumberland Alerts was introduced. The system is powered by a contracted platform provider, but the system is managed by County Emergency Services staff. Additionally, all facets of the design, marketing and advertising of the new system were the responsibility of the County.

Because subscribers of the prior notification system could not be automatically transferred into the new system, the Cumberland County Public Information Office developed a multi-platform marketing plan to ensure the widest audience possible. It was imperative that residents sign up for Cumberland Alerts to ensure they received important weather and emergency notifications.

Anyone who lived or worked in Cumberland County including businesses, organizations and institutions were all encouraged to subscribe to the new emergency notification system for important alerts and updates.

Description of why this project was initiated

Cumberland County needed a notification system that could inform residents of weather and emergency situations in a fast and efficient manner. During Hurricane Matthew, deficiencies in the emergency notification system that the County used were identified and the search for a new system began. Cumberland County Emergencies Services contracted with Everbridge to provide the platform for the new notification system.

Cumberland Alerts provides many features in an easy-to-use format. Users can personalize their notifications by selecting the location-based weather alerts they want to receive as well as how they would like to receive those alerts. Additionally, users receive geographic-based alerts for situations such as law enforcement activity, missing persons and more. Alerts can be sent by voice or text communication to multiple devices including computers, land lines, cellphones and tablets. When an alert is issued, a notification about a potential safety hazard or concern is sent to subscribers by the communication path they chose when they registered. Users can confirm they have received the message and will not be contacted by any subsequent methods regarding that notification. If a user does not confirm, the system will continue to attempt to reach the user using all the contact paths they registered for.

With the implementation of Cumberland Alerts, the County had to market the new system to our residents. The overall goal was to inform as many members of the public as possible about Cumberland Alerts and have them sign up to receive the notifications. We also needed to explain to those who were subscribed to the old system that they were required to sign up for the new system to continue receiving notifications.

We also set a goal to have more Cumberland Alerts subscribers than the previous notification system. We established a goal of having 10,000 subscribers in the first year. The old system had about 10,000 residents subscribed over several years.

Quantifiable results (sustainability, cost savings, cost avoidance and/or a higher level of service).

Indication of what resources were used and what was done with any accrued time savings

The new system can deliver more than 2.1 million messages per hour, or 35,000 per minute, and there are no notification or minute limitations, which allows Emergency Services to ensure communication with residents when it's most important.

From August to December 2017, more than 7,000 individuals signed up for alerts. After five months we were only 3,000 subscribers away from our goal of 10,000 in a year. The old system had about

10,000 total subscribers. We are well on the way to surpassing the number of subscribers to the previous system.

Other descriptive information

Marketing Cumberland Alerts was key in acquiring subscribers. The Public Information Office did this through the following multi-platform campaign:

Branding & Graphic Design

Created a name, slogan and logo for the new system. Several logo designs were created by the Public Information Office along with several names and slogans. Between PIO, Emergency Services and leadership staff, a consensus was reached to name the system Cumberland Alerts, with a slogan of "Stay Alert, Stay Safe," and a logo with a lightning bolt with red, black and yellow colors.

Posters and fliers were also created using the new branding. Fliers were handed out at outreach events and posters were hung in County facilities.

Media Relations

A press release was written explaining the change in the system with directions on how to sign up. Two television media crews visited the Cumberland County Emergency Operations Center to interview Emergency Services personnel about Cumberland Alerts. Emergency Services staff were on three radio programs. County management, commissioners and emergency management staff were encouraged to always mention Cumberland Alerts when working with the media on any weather-related story.

Articles written by Public Information Staff were printed in the two local area newspapers, the Fayetteville Observer and Up & Coming Weekly.

Video

To encourage residents to sign up for Cumberland Alerts, an eye-catching, professionally produced PSA was created. The Public Information Office was responsible for coordinating the video shoot, writing the script, assisting during production, providing photos and b-roll. The video starred a County Emergency Management employee. It aired on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and on Fayetteville/Cumberland Education TV.

<https://www.facebook.com/CumberlandNC/videos/1826695700677140/>

Short videos of several community leaders signing up for Cumberland Alerts were created to be used on social media. The videos were shot on an iPhone and enhanced with music and graphics through the "Clips" app. At the end of each video, the community leader would end with the line "I'm signed up for Cumberland Alerts, are you?" These videos also showed people signing up on different devices to demonstrate the flexibility of the system's sign up process.

Social media

Social media was instrumental in spreading the word about Cumberland Alerts. An initial posting was created announcing the new system on Aug. 2, 2017. Videos (as described above) were posted to Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Additionally, we encouraged residents to sign up for Cumberland

Alerts any time a weather notification was posted. We also leveraged National Preparedness Month in September to acquire subscribers. We used Ready.gov campaign materials on social media, while including information about how to sign up for Cumberland Alerts.

Website

The Cumberland Alerts logo was added to the header and footer of the county website, which links to the sign-up page.

Advertising

A billboard ad was designed. The County contracts a billboard with unlimited ads, no additional costs were incurred to run the Cumberland Alerts ad. A quarter page ad was designed for the Discover Fayetteville publication.