



Mass Communications from the West Milton Police Division

The West Milton Police Division has nine full-time officers and serves a community of just under 5,000 residents in Ohio. The Ohio Collaborative Group visited the West Milton Police Division and, upon his inspection of the West Milton Police Division, found they were not using a mass communications system. To be compliant with the state of Ohio's policies and procedures, West Milton needed to implement a mass communications system to help better serve the community and meet the needs of the area as new developments are growing the region quickly.

The police chief suggested they use a different platform, but ultimately decided Everbridge had a much wider range of capabilities and was better for the needs of the police division. Moreover, when the police division reviewed other potential options, they identified cross-departmental benefits of having a system in place, and worked with city council, fire and parks departments to invest in a system that they would all benefit from. With Everbridge, they can communicate directly with residents for incidents, events, and emergencies.



Challenges & Solutions

Prior to Everbridge, the West Milton Police Division was primarily communicating with the public through Facebook. This was inefficient and problematic for a number of reasons, including the fact that not all residents used Facebook, and they were not able to reach people quickly when needed.

For example, they had an incident a few years prior, when their only tool was Facebook, and one of the town's biggest events, trick-or-treating for Halloween, was cancelled due to weather. This is a beloved annual tradition in the town, and people were extremely upset, as well as confused when the event was moved to accommodate the weather. The police and city offices were bombarded with calls from residents who were trying to figure out when and if the town's Halloween was happening, and it was very overwhelming for them. If they had had Everbridge, they would not have had this issue as they would have been able to communicate with everyone directly.

Another issue the police faced prior to Everbridge was being able to notify all residents of a tornado. The only way they had to send a tornado warning was via sirens, but that was not practical as some people were out of range of being able to hear the sirens, so not everyone would receive a warning.

West Milton needed a solution for mass communications, and Wright began doing research on different options. Initially, he was just looking for a very basic system. However, when he began looking into Everbridge, he discovered that there was so much more the platform had to offer. Not only did Everbridge offer the widest range of capabilities, but it was the most affordable.

Cost was an important factor—as a taxpayer-funded service, they needed to be accurate and transparent with their budget. Once it was decided Everbridge was the best option, the chief presented it to the city council and it was approved right away. They saw it was a much-needed tool and were pleased to move forward with Everbridge.

Highlights

Communication with the public: The police department can quickly and efficiently reach residents for incidents such as: street closures, water line issues, construction, local events, weather emergencies, and more.

An affordable platform: Wright was able to coordinate the West Milton police division along with the city council and other departments to implement the Everbridge platform while staying well under budget.

Easy to sign up: Opting-in to receive alerts is easy for all, with residents simply submitting their phone number via a community website to begin receiving alerts.

One of the features of Everbridge that Wright has found to be very useful is the ability to contact internal staff separately from residents when needed. For example, when there is a snowstorm and they need certain crews to come in, they can send a message to those groups of people specifically. Previously, the only way they had to contact those groups was via email, but that was not always efficient and they weren't able to successfully reach as many people in a timely manner. Wright commented, "I was mainly looking for something that we could just communicate with the public, but it's great that we have an avenue to talk to our own people who are employees inside as well."

Wright and the West Milton police division would strongly encourage towns and other police departments to have a mass notification system in place. Nowadays, it's necessary to have a system like Everbridge for events and emergencies that easily and efficiently alerts those who need to receive updates and information.

What they say.

"We used to use billboards. We used to do news flyers years ago. Those days have gone. Public officials need something in place to communicate with the residents in their community—for all events, not just emergencies. That's why we moved to Everbridge."

Doyle Wright
Chief Police at West Milton Police Division



About Everbridge

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