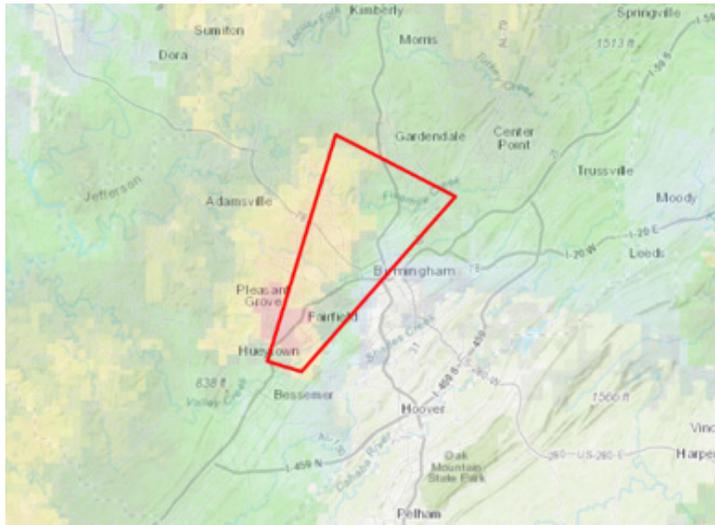




Jefferson County, Alabama



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James Coker
Jefferson County, Alabama

OVERVIEW

Jefferson County is the most populous county in the state of Alabama. The county is susceptible to a range of severe weather events, and many communities and organizations in the region, including the neighboring City of Tuscaloosa, the City of Northport, Tuscaloosa County and Tuscaloosa County Emergency Management Agency (EMA), leverage Everbridge to improve emergency coordination and preparation, as well as engagement with residents and visitors.

PROBLEM

When a tornado comes without warning, the impact can be devastating. In June of 2017 a tornado struck Jefferson County, Alabama and the surrounding region despite there being little or no notice prior to its appearance and the issuance of a warning.

SOLUTION

After a tornado warning was declared by the National Weather Service Birmingham Office, Emergency management officials quickly and decisively issued a tornado warning through Everbridge to over 70,000 area contacts. The Everbridge system was then used throughout the recovery efforts to keep residents safe and informed.

A Few Words from James Coker (Jim), Director, Jefferson County, Alabama Emergency Management Agency



On June 22, 2017, at 12:27pm (CDT) a tornado struck Jefferson County, Alabama. This tornado caused damage in the City of Fairfield and the City of Birmingham. The tornado was spawned by the remnants of Tropical Storm Cindy; Jefferson County was not under a tornado watch at the time the warning was issued. There was little or no notice of the impending tornado prior to its appearance and the issuance of a warning.

The tornado warning was issued ultimately to over 70,000 contacts (white pages, yellow pages, and opt-ins); the initial warning went to over 28,000 contacts. The warning was issued via Everbridge in less than a minute after the tornado warning was issued by the National Weather Service Birmingham office. This tornado was observed by many people; it was broadcast live on local television, and observed by air traffic controllers at the Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport.

This tornado damaged or destroyed businesses and several hundred homes; while there were slight injuries, there were no critical injuries or fatalities.

Everbridge was used as part of the recovery effort; a message was sent to the mayors of the 35 cities located in Jefferson County requesting the assistance of their public works departments in debris removal. A message, based on a shape drawn around the affected area on the map, went to residents giving them information on how to receive assistance with debris removal, where to go to receive donations, and where to receive additional information.

Everbridge was also used to contact members of the Jefferson County VOAD (Volunteers Organized to Assist in Disaster); these volunteers included the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Seventh Day Adventists, the Southern Baptist Disaster Services, and many others.

It should be noted that the two prior tornado touchdowns were under similar circumstances; on Christmas Day, 2015 a tornado struck the City of Birmingham causing significant damage; on March 1, 2016 a tornado struck the western side of Jefferson County. The June 22, 2017 tornado, along with the 2015 and 2016 tornadoes, were not part of the usual Spring “long track” tornado pattern. These tornadoes appeared with little or no notice; while there were injuries, there were no fatalities.

Surveys after the three storms included the question “how did you get your warning”; many respondents stated that they got a telephone call or got a text message via Everbridge. Jefferson County does have a warning siren system; however, those who received their warning via this method were in the minority.

About Everbridge

Everbridge, Inc. (NASDAQ: EVBG) is the global leader in critical event management and enterprise safety applications that automate and accelerate an organization’s operational response to critical events in order to keep people safe and businesses running faster. Everbridge is based in Boston and Los Angeles with additional offices in San Francisco, Lansing, London and Stockholm.

For a full product description, along with best practices and product details please see the Everbridge User Guide and Everbridge University.

