



“ Overall as a result of our opt-in enhancement and awareness strategy for the Everbridge citizen alert system, we’ve seen a 262% increase in resident opt-ins in less than a year!”

Josh Roberts
City of Lewisville

OVERVIEW

Lewisville, TX, is a suburban community in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex area with a population of about 100,000 just north of Dallas on interstate 35 between Dallas and Denton. Lewisville is also the gateway to Lake Lewisville, which is one of the larger lakes in the region and supplies drinking water to area residents and to Dallas Water utilities.

PROBLEM

The city required a communications solution to effectively notify residents during a wide range of emergencies and community events—but also faced challenges with demonstrating the value of this system and increasing the number of residents who subscribed to receive alerts.

SOLUTION

The city deployed Everbridge to power the “Lewisville Citizen Alert” system and use it for emergencies, such as severe weather, and also public service announcements. To increase resident opt-ins, Lewisville conducted an extensive awareness campaign that effectively reached residents and improved overall engagement with the system.

LEWISVILLE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:

There's just two of us that are full time personnel in the office of emergency management. The "Lewisville Citizen Alert" system is what we call our notification program from Everbridge. We use it for emergencies, such as severe weather, but also use it for more routine public service announcements like overdue library book notifications, and internally to notify employees of certain things.

EMERGENCY AND COMMUNITY USE CASES FOR THE EVERBRIDGE SYSTEM:

Weather alerts are a big use of the system. We use Everbridge during inclement weather days. If we get a 1/4 inch of ice or wintry mix on the roads, us southern folks lose our minds. We might notify employees through Everbridge to say, "Hey, it's dangerous to get on the roads so take some leave time if you want to stay at the house." We have all the employees (900) within the city of Lewisville organization loaded up and we refresh that data annually.

I also have our Emergency Operations Center personnel loaded in the system. We'll notify about 70 of those department directors, leads and managers around the city in a couple of templates that we built where I can alert them very quickly by using the app on my phone.

Our dispatch personnel can also use Everbridge whenever they're down a person or two and need to reach out to folks to see who wants a little OT. I think our SWAT team has also used it in the past.

There are also applications for the Everbridge platform that do not revolve around emergencies. For instance, our library uses Everbridge to notify residents of overdue library books and our utility customer and billing folks use it for delinquent utility payments.

ACTIVE SHOOTER DRILL AND PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS:

We recently had an active shooter drill run by our police and fire departments at a local church. We used Everbridge to notify the surrounding neighborhood so citizens didn't think it was real and get concerned with all the fire and police apparatus in the area.

We also have mosquito traps that test positive for West Nile Virus. We do a spray every time that happens so we sent out an Everbridge alert to everyone within a half mile-radius to advise them we are spraying and to take the appropriate precautions.

AWARENESS CAMPAIGN TO INCREASE RESIDENT OPT-INS:

During the same week as our weather awareness outreach campaign that took place in the Spring, we reached virtually all of the contacts in our database via their landlines. We did it under the guise of a PSA that highlighted the importance of the citizen alert system, particularly during springtime's severe weather season. We stressed how people could receive warnings of dangerous weather directly to their mobile devices if they signed up for the Lewisville citizen alert system.

The PSA was well received and caused people to enroll their other devices and contact paths, such as their cell phone. In addition to that, we got a real test of how quick these calls could be made to all of the people in our system. We also identified, after looking at the data, what other contact databases need to be integrated within our system.

In addition to the PSA, we sent information specific to multi-family housing residents because a lot of times they are the ones that do not add a land line. They typically operate completely on cell phones so we wanted to target them specifically. We did this by contacting all of the apartment office managers and management offices in town, giving them info specifically about how important it is to have multiple contact paths and provided a flier

Q&A with Josh Roberts, Emergency Management Coordinator



on how people can opt-in to our Everbridge system. We distributed additional fliers which instructed folks to be “Weather Aware” by signing up for alerts, produced posters and ran graphics on digital billboards and ran ads and stories in local media outlets. We even had billboards on the city’s major roads which pointed people to the relevant opt-in information. At some point along the way they think, you know, well okay, fine then, I’ll go ahead and sign up.

We also worked with our IT department since the city has utility customers. We bill those customers so we have to maintain their contact data. Well I now have a link that the IT department put together that’s internal to our network. I can click on it, and it automatically downloads a refreshed and current contact database that’s managed in real-time. Every few months, I’ll click, download and import the link. The platform is highly automated which helps alleviate some of the administration of acquiring and uploading contact data.

OPT-IN CAMPAIGN METRICS:

As a result of our opt-in enhancement strategy and implementing that opt-in enhancement strategy, which included the landline PSA, fliers, billboard and more, we increased opt-in contacts by 262% in about a year’s time. Our campaign generated over 1.8 million media impressions for a population of just over 100,000 people.

CAN YOU GIVE AN INTERESTING RECENT EXAMPLE OF USING EVERBRIDGE?

Our animal services department had recovered a bat recently that was dead in one of our parks. Per standard procedure, we tested the animal and it came up positive for rabies. Rabies, if not treated and identified in time, can be a

life threatening condition for humans. We used Everbridge to notify the nearby neighborhoods because we know kids play at these ball fields. The message notified parents of the positive testing and asked parents to contact our animal services department if their children had any run-ins with a bat. That message generated a significant number of return calls from folks who had children who played at that park. Everbridge proved its ability to get the word out quickly to Lewisville and prevent the incident from becoming serious and get people treated or vaccinated that needed it.

About Everbridge

Everbridge is a leading unified critical communications platform trusted by corporations and communities of all sizes that need to reach the right people for immediate action, collaboration, and decision-making. Connecting millions of people and internet-connected devices, the company provides reassurance that secure, compliant messages are delivered, locally and globally, received and responded to, no matter the recipient’s location. Everbridge is based in Boston, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Beijing and London.

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



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