

From the Office of the Sheriff: "Code Red Alert Notification"

There will be times when information will be your most valued resource. For many in and around Dodge County they know exactly what I mean. We have an obligation to keep you informed. So, a few years ago we purchased access to the Code Red Alert system, a reverse 911 calling system which allows us to call you with a pre-recorded message. We partnered with other county agencies and felt the system would be the most reliable and efficient means to warn/inform our residents regarding flooding, tornados, or to share information and enlist the help of our citizens.

Code Red allows us to focus in on a specific geographical area and send a phone call to each residence within the defined area. The use of Code Red is not taken lightly and the decision to use it vary based upon a multitude of factors such as time of day, seriousness of event, and value of information we could receive from the calls. The most significant event we experienced and used Code Red for was the Columbus Chemical Plant fire. Within a short time we sent a prerecorded message to thousands of residents regarding evacuation or shelter-in-place instructions. In a rural area there in no way to contact all the residents in a short time; Code Red allows for this to occur.

We have used Code Red twice in September as Beaver Dam Police Department was investigating missing children. In the first case we sent out a message to 5,975 predetermined city addresses in which 3,193 of you answered the phone or a message was left. In that case we used 2,580 minutes of our 100k minute contract at a cost of \$645. It's a small price to pay to alert you to the fact a child is missing and we needed your help. We also have the ability to send out a follow-up call when the child was located but we felt in that case it was unnecessary and saved \$645 in the process. We budget just \$25,000.00 per year for 100,000 minutes of calls.

There are issues. Some people despise getting those calls, unless of course it was for their loved one. There will be times we will send out the message at the most inopportune time of the night and awaken you from your best sleep. You have my complete assurance if we do that; you need to be woke up. Most importantly, our database feeds off residences with hard line telephones. If you do not have a home phone, you will be unable to receive these alerts. If you use a cell phone and want to be informed, you must visit our website and register your cell phone number. Go to dodgecountysheriff.com and click on Code Red top center of home page.

We feel Code Red is a valued resource and we will not abuse it. Our goal is, should you receive a Code Red alert notification call, you immediately understand the purpose is necessary and the message urgent. Code Red provides us great potential to "spread the word." We apologize in advance if we wake you up or interrupt your shower. Please understand, should you receive a call, someone is in need of your help, there is an emergency and we are just trying to help. Thank you to all who called in tips on the two cases of missing children in Beaver Dam. Recently, we in law enforcement are successful because of each of you and the partnerships we have between us and the community. Thanks for listening, tnehls@co.dodge.wi.us.