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## **Port Washington-Manhasset Office of Emergency Management Launches the NorthShoreAlert Platform to Enhance Region-wide Preparedness and Communication**

*Test Call Planned to Ensure Residents are Ready to Receive Important Messages*

PORT WASHINGTON & MANHASSET, NY – MARCH 12, 2010 – The Port Washington-Manhasset Office of Emergency Management (PWM OEM) announced today it has launched the NorthShoreAlert mass notification system, supported by Blackboard Connect, enhancing communication and emergency preparedness. The first community-wide test call is scheduled for March 15, 2010.

PWM OEM has implemented the NorthShoreAlert platform so that officials in all participating villages, the town, and police, fire, and other special districts within the Port Washington Peninsula, (which covers Port Washington and portions of Manhasset) can directly and quickly notify the community in an efficient, timely manner, should a need arise. Using the NorthShoreAlert platform, officials can send voice, text, e-mail, and TTY/TDD messages to residents, businesses, and local agencies in just minutes.

Before implementing the NorthShoreAlert platform, most of the participating organizations could only reach residents and businesses by regular mail and few had the information to e-mail or call their residents. This new NorthShoreAlert service will not only enable the participating organizations to reach out to the community, but importantly, will also allow the community to maintain its own contact information (landlines, cell numbers, text, TTY, and e-mail addresses) at the NorthShoreAlert.org Web site.

According to Commissioner Peter A. Forman of the PWM OEM, one of the biggest challenges and expenses in communicating with the community is “getting and maintaining the often changing landline, cell numbers, and e-mail addresses that the residents and business have.” The NorthShoreAlert Web site permits the community to maintain their own contact information for the districts in which they live or operate.

“As an example, a resident of Baxter Estates belongs to the following districts: Village of Baxter Estates, Town of North Hempstead, PW Police District, PW Fire District, PW Garbage District, and PWM OEM operating area,” Forman said. “Through a single update to the NorthShoreAlert.org Web site, all of these districts are automatically able to send information to the desired destinations. In the future, communicating

with residents digitally is inevitable and this is both an economical and efficient way to do so.”

The system will enhance safety and improve information flow, permitting messages to be sent for both urgent situations as well as important civic matters as determined by officials. In addition, the NorthShoreAlert platform enables officials to communicate with residents when they are away from their local home or office, as they may receive important information on their cell phone, text device, or e-mail account, anytime, anywhere in the United States.

Each participating district will be able to target specific areas within their operating region. For example, officials could send a message to all homes and businesses within a quarter mile radius around a specific point on the map, alerting people to be on the lookout for a missing child wearing a specific colored shirt. Another example would be sending a message to residents living on one side of a street if needed.

“We are holding a test call on March 15, 2010 to alert the community of the new service and to encourage people to update and add their contact information at the NorthShoreAlert.org Web site,” Forman said.

Publicly available primary residential and business phones within participating jurisdictions will automatically be included in the system. Participating jurisdictions include the Incorporated Villages of Sands Point, Port Washington North, Baxter Estates, Manorhaven, Plandome, Plandome Manor, Plandome Heights, Munsey Park, the Town of North Hempstead (covering unincorporated Port Washington), Sands Point Police Department, Port Washington Police District, Port Washington Fire District, Nassau County Police Department – 6th Precinct, Port Washington Garbage District, and the Greater Port Washington Business Improvement District.

However, to ensure that PWM OEM has the most up-to-date contact information, residents should visit the NorthShoreAlert Web site (NorthShoreAlert.org) and click on the link to the city or area in which they live or work within the NorthShoreAlert map to provide their complete information and indicate if they have a TTY/TDD. Additional records for members of the same address can be created as needed. Those without Internet access are encouraged to use the computers at the local library. Residents with call blocking services should add the municipal and special districts telephone numbers to their approved number list. The list of telephone numbers can be found on the NorthShoreAlert.org Web site.

“The best way to keep residents informed and, therefore safe, is through communication, and the NorthShoreAlert platform makes it easy,” said Karl Engkvist, Executive Vice President of Blackboard Connect. “With the NorthShoreAlert platform, administrators have a powerful tool for mass communication without having to purchase new computers, software and telephone lines.”

To reach the PWM OEM, please visit [pwmoem.org](http://pwmoem.org).  
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