



Innovative Use of Technology: Kansas Homeland Security Notification System

Submitted by: accessKansas, a service of the Information Network of Kansas
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Title of Nomination: Kansas Homeland Security Notification System

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Executive Summary

The Kansas Homeland Security Notification System is an Internet-based subscription system dedicated to providing real-time notification to citizens and state government officials when the national or state Homeland Security Alert System changes.

Governor Kathleen Sebelius describes the need for this system. *"Welcome to the Kansas Homeland Security Web site. As your Governor, I would like you to know that we are taking every possible step to protect Kansans in every corner of the State. I call on all Kansans to stand united with the rest of the country and with freedom-loving people everywhere. Let us keep our troops and each other in our prayers. Together, we will see our way through today's challenges. And, someday soon, I pray that all people, in every nation, will know the blessings of liberty."*

This application allows citizens, state and local government officials to subscribe at no charge to receive notification of changes to the federal and state Homeland Security Alert levels. They can select to receive the notifications by email or by text message to their wireless phone, personal digital assistant (PDA) or pager. Subscription to more than one device is offered per individual.

A subscription management interface was also built for the Kansas Division of Emergency Management to allow it to enroll groups to the system. The administrative interface also allows the Kansas Division of Emergency Management to **change the alert level status for the state via the Web on a 24/7 basis, providing instant notification** to Kansans and emergency officials.

accessKansas, a service of the Information Network of Kansas, Inc., built and developed the Kansas Homeland Security Advisory System at no cost to the Kansas Office of the Adjutant General or the Kansas Division of Emergency Management, nor were any taxpayer dollars used to build these services. With the investment of time and thought leadership to build this notification system, state goals of achieving timely and appropriate public information are achieved.

The service may be found at: www.kansashomelandsecurity.org.

Project Description

accessKansas, a service of the Information Network of Kansas, Inc., facilitated development and review by a group including representatives from the Kansas Division of Emergency Management, the Office of the Adjutant General and the Governor's office. The Kansas Homeland Security Notification System is an Internet-based subscription system dedicated to providing real-time notification to citizens and state government officials when the national or state Homeland Security levels change.

The Kansas Homeland Security Notification System is located:

<http://www.kansashomelandsecurity.org>. (If not available (expected live date is 05/30/03), please go to: <https://devel.accesskansas.org/kdem/kansashomelandsecurity/>. The administrative interface is accessible at: <https://devel.accesskansas.org/securityAlerts/admin.html>.)

The application allows citizens, state and local government officials to subscribe at no charge to receive notification of changes to the federal and state Homeland Security Alert levels. They can select to receive the notifications by email or by text message to their wireless phone, personal digital assistant (PDA) or pager. Subscription to more than one device is available per individual.

Additionally, an administrative interface built for the Kansas Division of Emergency Management allows the agency to subscribe large groups at one time, such as county emergency management contacts and first responders, fire chiefs throughout the state, and other who are instrumental to responding to and preparing for homeland security threats.

An aggressive public relations campaign to generate awareness by the general public will be initiated upon launch of the application. A postcard will be distributed by the Kansas Division of Emergency Management to targeted county and local officials encouraging subscription. (Sample of the postcard included in this nomination.)

Future Plans

In the future, additional alerts may be added to the system, such as weather, Amber Alerts (child abduction system) and other subscription-based notifications.

Significance to the Improvement of Government

We are measuring success in a variety of ways.

- Kansas recently ranked 36th in the nation for initiatives to address Homeland Security. We anticipate the Kansas Homeland Security Notification System, along with other initiatives undertaken by the state, will dramatically increase Kansas' ranking.
- Reduction of calls to KDEM requesting information on homeland security.
- General public awareness will increase and offer a sense of readiness and security to Kansans.

Benefits

Kansas is committed to the efforts of the president and the Office of Homeland Security., as well as commitment to the safety of Kansans. The Kansas Homeland Security Notification System is another effort by the state to communicate quickly and efficiently to its citizens with regards to their well-being.

State Benefits

This initiative has improved government operations in the state by providing an opportunity for the state to disseminate accurate, up-to-date information to those who are interested in or need to know information related to homeland security. The system provides immediate notifications to necessary personnel and the public from a centralized, authoritative source, which has tremendous benefit to emergency preparedness.

Multi-Agency Collaboration

The two agencies that defined the requirements of the Kansas Homeland Security Notification System are the Kansas Office of the Adjutant General and the Kansas Division of Emergency Management. These primary agencies were integrated in development and design to complete the subscription and administrative applications.

The governor's office was also instrumental in providing content and guidance for public information. The governor's office convenes cabinet-level Public Information Officers (PIOs)

routinely. The notification system was reviewed and tested by the PIOs, increasing inter-agency knowledge and utilization of the system.

Return on Investment

The agencies and the state portal anticipate realization of significant public relations value as a result of the launch of this project. The benefits to the agencies and to their constituencies will be significant. Specifically, the agencies anticipate:

- Enhanced public information on the federal and state's response to threats to homeland security
- Enhanced public information on actions citizens should take when homeland security is threatened
- Reduction of calls to KDEM requesting information on the state security alert level and emergency preparedness
- Reduction in labor for KDEM by allowing them to instantly change the state threat level online through an administrative interface

The project is extremely cost-efficient in that this system did not cost the state or taxpayers any funds.