

PRESS RELEASE



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Bluewater Community Alerting Network

Roy Dewhirst, Fire Chief of St. Clair Township, Ontario and Jeff Friedland, Homeland Security and Emergency Management Director of St. Clair County, Michigan announced today the implementation of a cooperative cross-border project called the Bluewater Community Alerting Network. The network will utilize Alert FM devices to deliver emergency notifications and alerts to the public and other recipients such as emergency responders, schools, public officials, and cross-border emergency managers. Emergency messages can be targeted toward organizational groups or geographical areas to deliver weather warnings, evacuation or shelter-in-place instructions, Amber Alerts, and homeland security notices.

“As St. Clair County [MI] contains several neighboring communities with St. Clair Township [ON], being divided only by the St. Clair River, what affects one community is likely to affect the other. Collaboration on keeping our residents safe was a logical step,” commented Friedland. In agreement, Dewhirst said, “If severe weather is impacting St. Clair County, we know it is headed our way. I am very pleased about this partnership and the communication gaps the project will bridge between government officials and residents.”

Alert FM deployment was possible due to the cooperation of Wonderful News Radio (WNFA 88.3 & WNFR 90.7) and Radio First (WSAQ 107.1) on the American side of the river and Blackburn Radio (CHKS 106.3) on the Canadian side. Emergency information is delivered to Alert FM devices through data subcarriers on the towers of the participating radio stations.

To receive potentially life-threatening information, residents and businesses will need to purchase an Alert FM receiver. The receivers, which are portable and light, use a battery backup in case of power outages and send an audible alert as well as text to alert the residents. Alert FM devices can be purchased at:

St. Clair Township, ON

St. Clair Township
Emergency Services Building
392 Lyndoch St
Corunna ON
(519) 481-0111

St. Clair Township
Civic Centre
1155 Emily St
Mooretown ON
(519) 867-2021

Corunna Home Hardware
372 Lyndoch
Corunna ON
(519) 862-5100

St. Clair County, MI

East China Township
5111 River Rd.
East China
(810) 765-8879

Lakeport Market
7096 3rd St.
Lakeport
(810) 385-3330

Port Huron Township
Fire Department
3848 Lapeer Rd.
Port Huron
(810) 982-7129

Steve Arnold, Mayor of St. Clair Township, is very excited about this cross-border project. “The Bluewater Community Alerting Network will offer a notification system that will target the appropriate people with the right information to protect our families in the event of a pending natural disaster or an incident that could affect our communities. I would like to thank all of those on both sides of the St Clair River for their vision and cooperative nature to make this system a reality for the citizens in our communities.”

Jeff Bohm, Chairperson of the St. Clair County Board of Commissioners, said, “I am proud of the efforts put forth to establish cross-border collaboration and get the network up and running. I hope this is one of many projects that can be implemented through partnerships with our Canadian neighbors.”

A press conference on the Bluewater Community Alerting Network will be held on Tuesday, October 25th on the Blue Water Ferry on the St. Clair River. It will take place at 1:00 PM between and Sombra, ON and Marine City, MI. Canadian participants should contact Steven Bicum, Deputy Fire Chief, St. Clair Township at 519-481-0111 or sbicum@twp.stclair.on.ca. A passport, nexus card, or proof of citizenship (birth certificate) will be required by Canada Customs for those traveling to Canada. American residents wishing to attend the press conference should contact Jodi Simpson at 810-989-6965 or jsimpson@stclaircounty.org and provide name and birthdate to be pre-vetted for U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

For more information on the Bluewater Community Alerting Network, contact Steven Bicum, Deputy Fire Chief, St. Clair Township, ON at 519-481-0111 or sbicum@twp.stclair.on.ca or Jeff Friedland, Director of the St. Clair County, MI Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management at 810-989-6325 or jfriedland@stclaircounty.org.