

Item 5: Department of Administrative Services

Statewide Alert System

Analyst: Paul Siebert

Request: Allocate \$1,400,000 General Fund from the Emergency Fund for the procurement of a Statewide Alert System.

Description: The recent wildfires and COVID-19 emergencies have highlighted weaknesses in the state and local government emergency communications capabilities. Some citizens are unable to access alerts, warnings, and notifications (known as AWNs). This is due to a variety of reasons including lack of capacity to disseminate AWNs and no standardized training or best practices. Half of Oregon's counties lack the ability to issue emergency alerts via the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Integrated Alerts and Warnings System, which is currently the only way to get AWNs to wireless phones which have not proactively opted into a local notification system.

The Department of Administrative Services, Enterprise Information Services (EIS) worked with the State Interoperability Executive Council (SIEC) on the need for a statewide approach to AWNs. The SIEC decided a statewide solution should be a priority and has included this as an objective in the State Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP). There is unanimous support from AWN stakeholders for an integrated, single statewide system.

EIS proposes to accomplish this goal through a statewide contract with a vendor utilizing a single master account that incorporates a system of federated "user" accounts for each agency/jurisdiction. Doing this would ensure that current state, county, and local investments in different systems are leveraged to allow individual agencies and organizations to add services above the standard base set of features, if desired. The Everbridge platform is currently believed to be the widest deployed platform within the state and the estimated \$1.4 million cost and listed base features assumes this platform would be selected.

Recommendation: The Co-Chairs of the Emergency Board recommend that the Emergency Board establish a General Fund appropriation for the Department of Administrative Services by allocating \$1,400,000 General Fund from the Emergency Fund for the procurement of a Statewide Alert System.



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Administrative Services

Office of the Chief Operating Officer

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October 16, 2020

The Honorable Senator Peter Courtney, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Tina Kotek, Co-Chair
Joint Emergency Board
900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301-4048

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

NATURE OF THE REQUEST

The Department of Administrative Services, Office of the State Chief Information Officer, requests a General Fund appropriation of \$1.4 million for a Statewide Alert System.

BACKGROUND

State and local agencies and organizations have noted that there is inconsistent access to emergency communications, alerts, warnings, notifications (AWNs), and information across Oregon. Awns are critical to effectively mitigating, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters and emergency incidents, including the current pandemic, an increasingly devastating and dangerous wildfire season and as winter approaches.

The inconsistent access to information can be due to a variety of factors including location, language, technology, and/or access to internet/broadband/social media. Some agencies and organizations with a responsibility to disseminate Awns lack the means to do so, and among those that do, there is no standardization of training or best practices within Oregon. Of Oregon's 36 counties, 16 lack access to issue emergency alerts via FEMA's Integrated Alerts and Warnings System (IPAWS), the only current way to reach wireless subscribers that have not chosen to opt in to a local system.

Technology related to public messaging and Awns has significantly evolved and represents a tool that Oregon can and should use to respond to disasters and emergency incidents. The State Interoperability Executive Council (SIEC) has indicated that a statewide approach to Awns should be a priority for the state and has included this as an objective in the State Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP). There is unanimous support of Awn stakeholders for an integrated, single statewide system.

October 16, 2020

Page 2

This statewide system will provide:

- A single, statewide approach, utilizing one platform and a single alerting plan.
- A federated system of accounts with data sharing.
- A set of identified tools that provides agencies with the capabilities they need for all phases of the emergency/incident but preserves their ability to procure other features needed to meet their mission needs.
- Full alignment with SCIP Goals, uses “Team Approach” to AWNs.
- Standardized training and interoperability between agencies during large emergencies.
- Encourage voluntary participation from counties/local jurisdictions by providing service for them.
- Increased capability to send IPAWS alerts for the 16 counties that do not currently have a solution.

This process will be accomplished through a statewide contract with a vendor utilizing a single master account that incorporates a system of federated “user” accounts for each agency/jurisdiction. This approach would leverage current state, county, and local investments in different systems and would allow individual agencies and organizations to add additional services above the standard base set of features, if desired. The Everbridge platform is currently believed to be the widest deployed platform within the state and the pricing and base feature set assumes this platform would be selected.

The software is reliable, currently approved and in use within Oregon, and is easily implemented once procured. The vendor also has extensive experience and expertise in statewide implementations of such systems. If procurement of the Everbridge software is approved, the Statewide Interoperability Program estimates a near-statewide implementation of Everbridge within six months of procurement; however, the system will be immediately accessible by several agencies including the Governor’s Office and the Office of Emergency Management - to respond to wildfires, the coronavirus pandemic, and other emergencies.

ACTION REQUESTED

Approve the Department of Administrative Services request for General Fund appropriation of \$1.4 million to support the initial purchase of a statewide communications, alerts, warnings, notifications and information solution across Oregon.

Sincerely,



Katy Coba
Chief Operating Officer / DAS Director