

Citizen's Alert System Will Now Include Persons Of Interest Alerts

5/15/2014

Hall County will now use the Citizen's Alert System to inform the public about a person or persons involved in specific incidents such as missing child/person reports, inmate escapes and persons of interest searches.

"The notification will contain all pertinent information such as a physical description and last known location," Hall County 911 Director Gail Lane said. "The citizen will be told to call 911 if they have information about the individual, but the notification's main purpose is to keep citizens informed, especially if this is occurring in their area."

Lane said the new alert type may go out to all citizens countywide or may be sent to residents in a specific area, depending on the circumstances of the situation.

Hall County launched the Citizen's Alert System in February 2013. It has been used since that time to alert residents about severe weather, fires, floods, toxic environmental issues and in-process violent crimes. Messages can be sent to individuals subscribed to the system using a variety of contact mechanisms-- cell phone, landline, email, text messaging, fax, pager, and more-- ensuring that residents and Hall County staff receive life-saving emergency information and important public service announcements in minutes.

"This is really an enhancement to the system that's already in place," Lane explained. "We wanted to make sure that our staff was trained on this type of alert before releasing it to the public."

She said the new alert type will only be used occasionally for the most serious cases and may come at any time of day or night.

"We receive a lot of calls whenever citizens see heavy law enforcement activity in their area, and we hope this will be a tool we can use to keep them better informed about what is going on," said Lane.

Anyone who is registered to receive messages from the Citizen's Alert System will receive this new type of alert. Citizens listed in the AT&T white pages database were automatically subscribed to receive alerts by landline when the system launched last year. Citizens can also sign up to receive mass notifications by going to Hall County's website, hallcounty.org and clicking on the Citizen's Alert icon. That's where they can select what types of emergency notifications they would like to receive and through what method of communication they'd like to receive those alerts.

The new alert type will be used as needed beginning Monday.