

SHELBY TOWNSHIP PRESS RELEASE

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April 14, 2015

Township Board, public safety officials pleased with community outreach tools

Following a Board of Trustees work session April 8 to discuss Shelby Township's emergency alert protocols, the Board expressed its collective satisfaction with current tools and asked its top public safety officials to work on engaging the public more in terms of increasing usage for those tools.

Fire Chief Jim Swinkowski and Police Chief Robert Shelide presented to the Board a package to possibly expand the township's usage of Nixle.com services with costs up to \$15,000 annually to include services such as reverse 911 call capabilities to alert residents and local businesses of township alerts.

Board members agreed with the chiefs that funds spent from public safety budgets are better spent in area such as equipment, training and manpower, and they felt that current outreach tools, if promoted better, would prove more than sufficient.

"Our police officers and firefighters are the best trained and prepared life-saving professionals in Macomb County, if not the state, and if we're going to spend thousands of dollars it should be on an expense that furthers those capabilities," Township Supervisor Rick Stathakis said.

"I agree that it would be nice to spend money on a reverse-911 package, but based on the opinions of our chiefs and the precedent set by engagement during the recent boil water alerts, I feel we're more than capable of generating enough engagement to reach our residents without that added cost."

Following several boil alerts March 28 and April 5, Shelby Township saw a significant uptick in participation on its various community outreach platforms as more than 2,500 residents signed up for Nixle alerts, nearly 800 residents registered for alerts through www.shelbytwp.org/register, more than 950 people "Liked" the township's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/CharterTownshipOfShelby and the township's Twitter account, @TheShelbyTwp, acquired more than 100 new followers.

In addition to direct contact with residents, the township's steps to inform residents of the boil alert with its online tools and Shelby TV reached all metro Detroit newspapers, TV network affiliates and major news radio stations resulting in broadcasts on multiple radio and TV outlets prior to the alert .

"This boil water situation, while unfortunate, gave us real-world proof that our community outreach tools are working," Stathakis said. "More than 80,000 people were reached before the March 28 boil alert went into effect, and that was just through Facebook.

"When you combine the viral capability that Facebook, Twitter and email alerts give us with the immediate impact of Nixle text messages, Shelby Township has a system in place for reaching our residents across many, many platforms. But like any alert system, it does depend on engagement, so we're urging all residents to engage and sign up for alerts."

Residents can connect with Township Hall through its various platforms at http://www.shelbytwp.org/i_want_to/connect_with.html or by calling the Supervisor's Office at (586) 731-5154.

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