

Manchester Times

"Reverse 911" System Can Get Word Out During Emergencies

By Christina Cuesta

In Manchester, 911 can now call *you* in the case of an emergency.

A newly activated Global Connect system is described as a "reverse 911 program that, if there is an emergency of some kind, we can get a message out to residents who need to know about it first," business administrator Constance Lauffer said.

The new system allows a message to be recorded and sent by phone to all residents whose numbers are listed through Verizon. In case of a storm, forest fire, water main break or other serious emergency, residents in any specific area of the township can be notified "so people aren't wondering what is going on or what they should be doing," Lauffer said.

A recent test of the Global Connect system was a success. It included about 70 members of a volunteer Community Emergency Response Team, or CERT, who received a three-minute message with the new system. The calls went out in 15 minutes and only three did not receive a message because of wrong listing. Every other place where there was a person or an answering machine received the test message.

"We will not be using it to bother you," Lauffer continued, citing that messages about concerts at Whiting lake or recreation camp will not be what the Global Connect system is for. "The point is to let you know about things of an important nature that can involve a dangerous situation or a township service that is timely."

Manchester Police as well as the public works department plan on using the system to contact employees for work during such crises like snow storms.

After much deliberation about which provider to use, administrator's chose a Global Connect system, which cost \$11,000.

"We are very pleased with what we have come up with and think it is a true service to the community," Lauffer said.

