



NEWS RELEASE

WESTERN RESERVE PUBLIC MEDIA JOINS OTHER OHIO PUBLIC TELEVISION STATIONS IN PROVIDING AN INNOVATIVE NEW SERVICE TO SUPPORT PUBLIC SAFETY

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Kent, Ohio—Oct. 31, 2016 —Western Reserve Public Media is collaborating with Ohio’s 12 public television stations in developing and introducing a secure, alternative delivery system to provide the public with emergency information.

OEAS Public AlertNet is a new statewide, multilingual, technology backbone that uses television signals to deliver critical emergency alerts and messaging to other broadcasters and public safety officials, who in turn deliver them to the public. OEAS will automatically provide the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) alerts and messaging in both English and Spanish.

Ohio’s public stations are partnering with the Ohio Emergency Management Agency (EMA) and the state’s Broadcast Educational Media Commission to make this new technology the strongest and safest way to get the emergency information to the people who deliver it to the public.

“Existing emergency systems have sometimes failed during crisis periods such as Hurricane Sandy, but OEAS relies on broadcast signals immune to the hacking and information congestion that commercial Internet services can experience when the need is greatest,” according to Dave Ford, Communications Branch Chief, Ohio EMA.

A single digital data stream with all digital emergency messaging for the state of Ohio will be sent from the EMA headquarters in Columbus and distributed to the 12 public television stations for broadcast in support of the legacy Emergency Alerting System (EAS). OEAS has been built with the flexibility to accept new messaging formats as they are developed.

Funding for OEAS was made possible through a grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting through the collaboration of Ohio



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public television stations in partnership with the Ohio EMA and the Broadcast Educational Media Commission. Participants in the project also include the Ohio Association of Broadcasters and the State Emergency Communications Committee, representing both the local commercial and educational radio and TV stations that are the heart of EAS in Ohio.

With support from FEMA and the FCC, this innovative emergency alert service has received national attention from a variety of other states. This service is at the core of public broadcasting and speaks to Western Reserve Public Media's mission to serve our communities and help keep the public safe today and into the future.

Western Reserve Public Media uses the power of commercial-free television and related services to enrich the lives of people through high-quality programming and educational services that teach, illuminate and inspire. It serves the largest population of Ohio's eight PBS member stations.

For additional information on the emergency alert service, please contact Dave Carwile, administrator for Ohio Educational Television Stations at (614) 292.9567 or carwile.1@osu.edu.

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