For Immediate Release
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City and County Evaluate Test Message

Harrisonburg, VA – The City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County reviewed the process and success of the emergency test message that was recently distributed.

Earlier in March, members of the community were alerted that there was a tornado going through the city and county. This was just a test and coincided with the statewide tornado drill on Tuesday, March 11.

The goal of sending a test message through the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Emergency Alert System (EAS) was to determine the efficiency of the process and to see if the system worked successfully. After the message was sent, the process was evaluated to identify any changes that needed to be made.

The test message was sent to approximately 13,000 telephone numbers, which included direct phone calls and text messages. Those telephone numbers that received this test message were registered with an address that was located within half of a mile of the tornado's path.
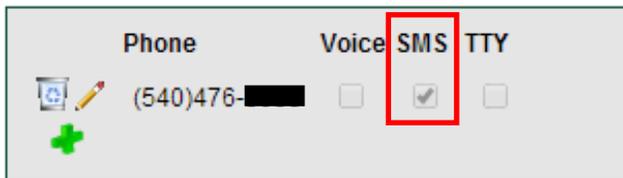
"Overall, sending the test message was a success," said Chief Larry Shifflett, Harrisonburg Fire Department.

"We are now working to make minor tweaks on improving the efficiency of getting the message out and to continue our education campaign in the community."

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Through the 9-1-1 database, all landline or wire line telephone numbers are automatically stored in the EAS system, regardless if the business or resident has registered to receive emergency alerts. Because each landline number has to be dialed, when an EAS message of this large scale is sent, this takes a significant amount of time.

Those who have registered their cell phones and signed up to receive text messages received this test message the quickest.

It was quickly determined that when community members register for this free service, it is important to register their cell phone number to receive text (or SMS) messages, if the cell phone is capable of doing so. This will deliver the emergency message to the community in the timeliest fashion (see graphic below).

Sample graphic to show which options to select to receive only text/SMS messages.

Those who live and or work in the city or county are encouraged to register for the Emergency Alert System.

Who will notify you if an emergency-related event is happening in Harrisonburg or Rockingham County? Register your cell phone to receive free text alerts through the **Harrisonburg and Rockingham County Emergency Alert System** *by visiting* www.HREmergencyAlert.com*.*

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