



NEWS from SEMO

NEW YORK STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE
1220 Washington Avenue, Building 22, Suite 101, Albany, NY 12226-2251

David A. Paterson, Governor

John R. Gibb, Director

Media Contact:
Dennis Michalski
(518) 292-2310
CA@semo.state.ny.us

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NY-ALERT GETS SPECIAL AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC SAFETY *Alert and Notification System Cited by Center for Digital Government*

The New York State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) has been presented a Special Award for Excellence in Public Safety by the Center for Digital Government in its Best of New York 2008 competition for development of NY-ALERT.

NY-ALERT, which debuted in June 2007, is New York State's all-hazards alert and notification system. This web-based portal offers one-stop access through which State agencies, county and local governments, emergency service agencies and institutions of higher learning can provide emergency information to a defined audience be it local, county, regional or statewide.

The Best of New York Awards program was established to salute IT professionals in New York state and local government organizations for their dedication, hard work and contributions. SEMO was one of 18 of New York's top technology innovators from state and local governments who were recognized in this year's awards competition, which were selected from dozens of entries. Final selections were made based on criteria that included collaboration among organizations, innovative uses of technology, and projects that best advance services provided to the public.

"We thank the Center for recognizing NY-ALERT's innovative use of technology and its collaborative effort with the private sector," said John R. Gibb, SEMO Director. "We are quite proud of NY-ALERT's capability to disseminate vital, lifesaving information to affected areas in a very timely manner."

With a subscriber base of more than 1.3 million accounts, NY-ALERT provides information from by State agencies and local governments of pending events, such as National Weather Service alerts of snowstorms, tornadoes or severe weather; consequential actions such as major road closures caused by those events; and protective actions that are recommended by State, local governments, colleges, universities, and the private sector where appropriate. Fifty-five of the campuses of the State University of New York as well as the entire City University of New York are using NY-ALERT to provide information to their students, faculty and staff.

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Subscribers can receive emergency information select the types of alerts, such as weather events, health alerts and major road closures, as well as the communications devices they will be disseminated through such as via email; telephone call at home, at work or through a cellular device; text message; fax; pager; and on the web through a RSS (Really Simple Syndicate) Reader or by visiting the NY-ALERT website at www.nyalert.gov.

NY-ALERT has been activated more than 600 times, including 125 public alerts. This robust system has cumulatively sent more than 7 million email messages, 3 million text messages, 250,000 fax messages and more than 500,000 phone calls.

A secondary, but equally important feature allows governmental participants (State and local agencies) to provide private notifications to identified, select groups through the same secure web portal. This feature utilizes the fax, email, text message and dial out messaging. For example, a county sheriff could provide information to a group of local police chiefs; the county fire coordinator could provide information to local fire chiefs in a given region.

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