

## OURAY COUNTY

# New emergency notification system test scheduled

PLAINDEALER STAFF REPORT  
plaindealer@ouraynews.com

Ouray County will be testing the new CodeRED system with an all-county call on Dec. 18 at noon. At that time citizens and businesses will receive a CodeRED test call on their landlines and registered cell phones.

The 911 board has been provided an initial database of residential and business telephone numbers; however, all residents living within Ouray County, City of Ouray and the Town of Ridgway limits are encouraged to visit <http://ouraycountyco.gov/272/Emergency-Management> and click on the CodeRED logo to enroll additional contact information including cell phone numbers, text and email addresses.

As of January 2014, following an extensive and thorough evaluation and review of alerting systems, Ouray County's Emergency Telephone Service Authority (commonly known the "911 Board") chose the CodeRED system, a high-speed emergency notification service provided by Ormond Beach, Florida-based Emergency Communications Network.

The system allows for so-called "reverse 911" calls to send recorded messages to landline telephones and registered cell phones in case of emergency, such as floods and fires.

The same system is also in use in adjoining counties, as well as most of Colorado's Front Range.

The CodeRED system will serve as the backbone of the 911 Board's emergency planning and communications outreach to both citizens and county personnel by using its capabilities to send telephone calls, text messages, emails and social media in an effort to effectively inform residents in emergencies to protect life and property. CodeRED, one of several notification systems available, was selected for its reliability and accuracy, as well as the system's widespread use. The costs for CodeRED are paid from the "911 surcharge" found on phone bills.

"CodeRED's system will provide city, town and county officials with a reliable, easy-to-use interface to quickly disseminate critical information to citizens during emergencies. We are very eager to use this technology to enhance our emergency preparedness plans," said Ouray County Emergency Manager Glenn Boyd.

The county, city and town anticipate using the system to notify residents in specific geographic locations to notify them of emergencies such as fires, floods, drinking water emergencies and missing children notices.

CodeRED also offers a free smartphone "app" that will allow cell phones to provide warnings to people who are out and about. The app is location aware and will notify of local emergencies anywhere in the U.S. where authorities use CodeRED.

"If, for instance, you drive into an area that has flooding going on, the app can notify you of the danger," Boyd said, adding that about half of the country is covered by CodeRED.

Public safety officials across the U.S. have credited CodeRED notifications for many successful events including locating missing children, apprehending wanted criminals and issuing timely evacuations.

Ouray County will continue to use WENS for general information throughout 2015. CodeRED will be used for major emergencies which require widespread warnings.

## Businesses eligible for state tax credits

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Ouray County is one of 29 Colorado counties that qualify for Enhanced Rural Enterprise Zone status for the 2015 and 2016 calendar years.

Counties with a population of fewer than 50,000 are defined as rural in the Enterprise Zone statutes. Businesses in the enhanced enterprise zones earn additional Colorado income tax credits when hiring new employees.

The Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade reviews qualifying data and updates EREZ status every two years.

To qualify, counties must meet two of the following five criteria:

- County unemployment rate greater than 50 percent above state average.
- County per capita income less than 75 percent of state average.
- County population growth rate less than 25 percent of state average.
- Total non-residential assessed value ranks in lower half of all counties.
- County population less than 5,000.

The legislature's goal in creating the zones is to promote business in economically distressed areas. State income tax credits are incentives to create new jobs in the enhanced zones.

Prior to beginning an activity to earn a tax credit, a business must file and be pre-certified.

For more information on EREZ credits, including applications, visit [www.advancecolorado.com/erez](http://www.advancecolorado.com/erez).

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505 Main Street, Ouray  
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