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## **Village of Oak Brook Launches Blackboard Connect Communication Platform to Enhance Emergency Preparedness and Communication**

### *Test Call Planned to Ensure Residents are Ready to Receive Important Messages*

[OAK BROOK, IL – November 25, 2009] – The Village of Oak Brook announced today it has launched the Blackboard Connect mass notification platform, enhancing village-wide communication and emergency preparedness. The first community-wide test call is schedule for December 1, 2009.

Oak Brook has implemented the Blackboard Connect platform so that the Village can directly notify, update and provide direction to the community in an efficient, timely manner, should a need arise. With Blackboard Connect, the Village can record, send and track personalized voice messages to thousands of residents, businesses, and local agencies in just minutes, through a single phone call. The Village can also send text messages to cell phones, PDAs, e-mail accounts, and TTY/TDD receiving devices for the hearing impaired.

"In an urgent situation, it's crucial that we are able to quickly provide residents with important information in a timely manner," said David Niemeyer, Village Manager of Oak Brook. "With Blackboard Connect, we can reach out to residents directly to quickly notify them of an urgent situation, provide directions and update them as the issue unfolds, helping to keep them safe and informed."

Village administrators can target each message to an unlimited number of groups – everything from mobilizing emergency response teams to coordinating efforts with necessary agencies or volunteers. Authorized users can also use a map on the Blackboard Connect system to contact specific geographical locations, sending messages only to the residents within select neighborhoods when needed.

"Having the ability to send targeted messages to specific neighborhoods and groups will help to ensure that residents receive local information that's important to them," Niemeyer said. "I strongly urge all residents to add their contact information into the Blackboard Connect database to ensure they are ready to receive important notifications at any point throughout the day."

Publicly available primary residential and business phones in Oak Brook will automatically be included in the system. However, residents can opt-in to provide their complete information (up to three phone numbers and two e-mail addresses) and indicate if they have a TTY/TDD device by visiting the Oak Brook website ([www.oak-brook.org](http://www.oak-brook.org)) and clicking on the link that says "SIGN UP NOW – SERVICES BY BLACKBOARD CONNECT," to enter their information into the secure database. Those without Internet access are encouraged to use the computers at the local library to opt-in or can have their information added into the system

by calling (630) 368-5174. Residents with call blocking services can make sure to receive the village time-sensitive calls by adding (630) 368-5099 to their approved number list.

“The best way to keep residents informed and, therefore, safe is through communication, and the Blackboard Connect platform makes it easy,” said Karl Engkvist, Executive Vice President of Blackboard Connect. “With the Blackboard Connect platform, administrators have a powerful tool for mass communication without having to purchase new computers, software and telephone lines.”

For more information on the Blackboard Connect platform please visit <http://www.blackboard.com/Alert-Notification/Connect-Platform.aspx> or contact the company at (818) 808-1789.

Additional Information about the Blackboard Connect Platform

The Blackboard Connect platform allows officials to send thousands of messages in minutes, requires no additional hardware, and can be used from any computer with Internet access or telephone. This ensures that administrators can send vital messages from wherever they are located—even if they are evacuated. Additionally, officials receive detailed reports on contacts that did not receive a message, enabling them to follow up through alternative means as needed.

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