

Emergency Notification System in Place at Major University Since 2004



In the wake of the Virginia Tech tragedy, colleges and universities across America began beefing up their safety and response measures – including emergency notification.

The Ohio State University (OSU) and Franklin County (Ohio) have had emergency notification systems in place since 2004. As Fall Quarter begins, Ohio State introduces the “Buckeye Alert” system which will send users a text message in the case of an emergency, alerting them of the situation and giving them instructions.

The company providing the system is located right in the heart of Columbus, Ohio. In fact, Twenty First Century Communications (TFCC) was founded in Columbus in 1989, by Ohio State University graduate and former professor James Kennedy.

“Twenty First Century has provided crisis notification services to private companies and government agencies for over a decade. It is a sign of the times that colleges must now be prepared to handle events such as that of Virginia Tech on their campuses,” says James Kennedy, president of Twenty First Century Communications.

Twenty First Century provides high-speed, high volume alerting via phone, cell, text-message, e-mail and fax. The company is dedicated to critical communications, serving many public safety and emergency management agencies, as well as the Department of Homeland Security and the American Red Cross.

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Buckeye Alerts will be available to everyone with ties to the university including parents of students, nearby business owners and campus-area residents. OSU encourages participants to provide their cell phone and text-message contact information through www.buckeyealert.osu.edu/notify, a voluntary Web site operated by the Ohio State Department of Public Safety.

Users have to submit their name, campus location, cell-phone number, cell carrier, e-mail address and their tie to the university, such as student, faculty member, staff or parent. The service is free, but subscribers might be subject to text messaging fees by their wireless provider. People who have signed up will receive messages asking for their most current information a few times a year. Participants can opt out at any time.

Franklin County also offers such an option to citizens at <http://www.franklincountyohio.gov/emahs/>.

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