Emergency Management and Social Media
# The Talbot County Experience

Talbot County, Maryland Emergency Services

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Emergency Services Director

Emergency Management and Social Media

- Social Media has emerged as a powerful communications tool
- Government has been hesitant to embrace the resource
- Social Media is a "Game Changer" for Emergency Management
- Managing public expectations is key
- Without local EM's use of social media the public is vulnerable to misinformation which could cause panic
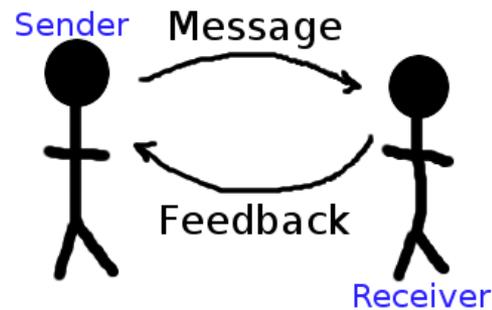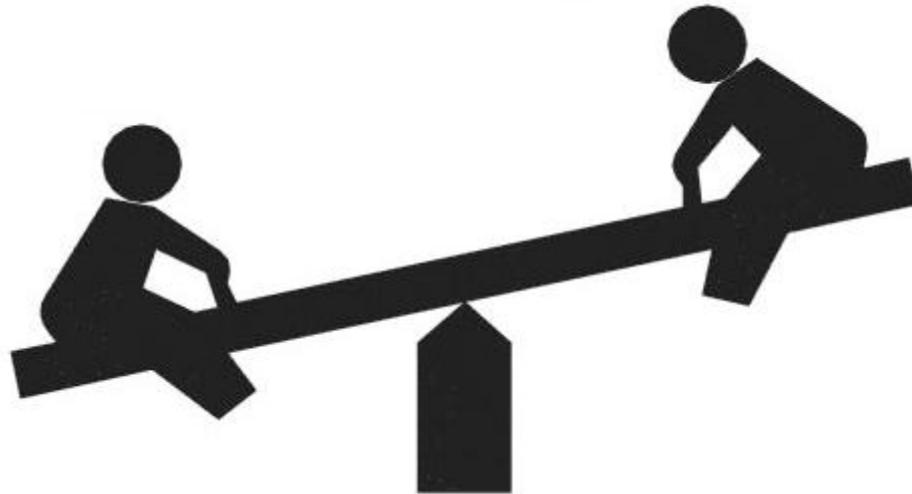
Emergency Management and Social Media

"The New Challenge"

To Much Information

Accurate and Timely Information

Emergency Management and Social Media

The Story will be told... Credible Source Information is critical in managing events

Emergency Management and Social Media

A key component to success - managing the public's expectation of your Social Media Use…

Welcome to those who have chosen to "LIKE" Talbot County Emergency Services (DES)

✎ Edit

by Talbot County Emergency Services (DES) on Friday, December 28, 2012 at 11:29am ·

Recognizing the power of social media, we have made a commitment to use Facebook and Twitter to keep you informed about the latest happenings in our DES divisions, provide you with timely information regarding threats to our County, and solicit information from you regarding conditions around the County when we experience events such as severe weather.

Another way to stay informed is to sign up to receive telephone, pager, and text alerts on your cell phone by visiting www.talbotdes.org and selecting the "Emergency Notifications" link in the lower right corner of the main page....

To be able to communicate is the single most valuable tool in our ability to successfully and safely respond to threats, "an informed community is a safer community"... Thank you!

Emergency Management and Social Media

- Provides multi-directional communication
- It has proven to work well in reuniting people after an event
- The public is able to remotely monitor the general wellbeing of friends and family
- Provides real time situation reports and pictures
- Reduces calls into the EOC

Sender   Message

Feedback

Receiver
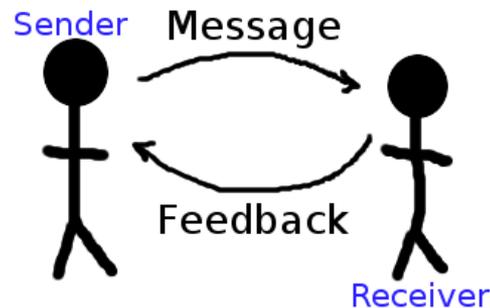
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Types of Postings

- General Information Postings:
  - Special events, Press Releases, Open Houses, etc…

- Live monitoring – 9-1-1 center:
  - Use caution if you are in the area of… for crashes, fires etc…

- Emergency Operations Center use during events:
  - Engage the community in providing timely information

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A primary tenant in Emergency Management is Communication

Information Flow
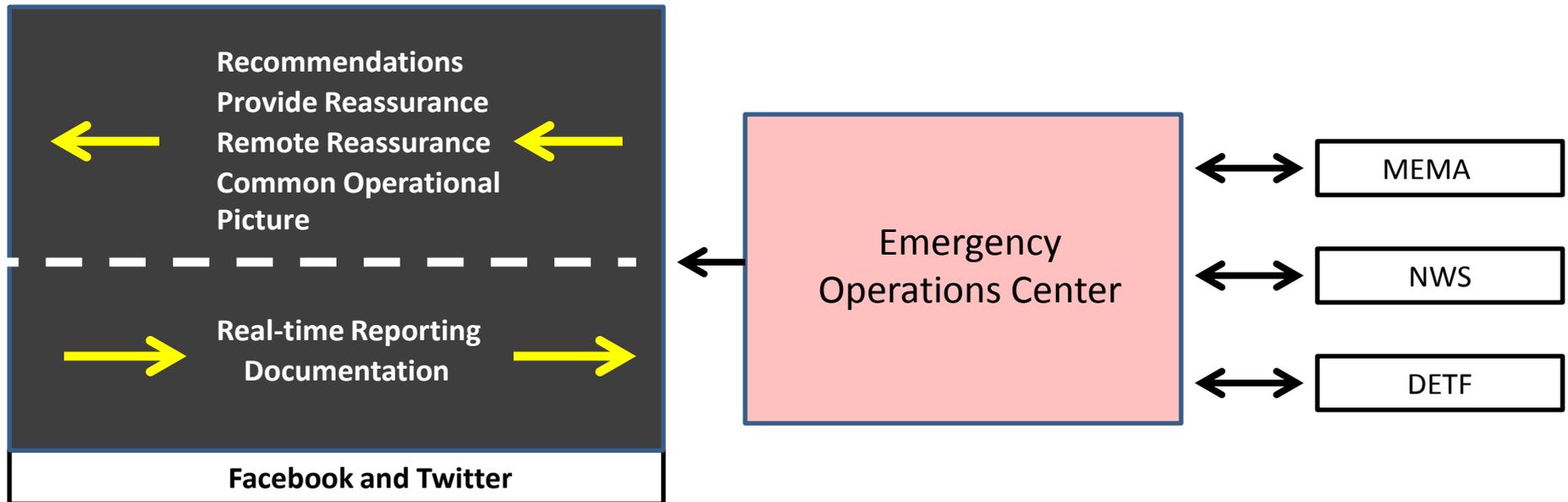

Emergency Operations Center

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Communication = #1 Tenant in Emergency Management

- Regular meetings and presentations
- Emergency Alert System
- Connect CTY
- Email Groups
- Village Board
- Chamber of Commerce
- Social Media ←

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Recommendations
Provide Reassurance
Remote Reassurance
Common Operational Picture

Real-time Reporting
Documentation

Facebook and Twitter

Emergency Operations Center

MEMA

NWS

DETF

SOCIAL MEDIA PROVIDES EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT WITH A MULTILAYER BIDIRECTIONAL COMMUNICATION NETWORK (WITH GROWING NUMBERS OF PEOPLE) AT NO COST TO THE TAXPAYERS

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Example - Public feedback through Social Media will allow for better service

Talbot County Emergency Services (DES)
October 30

Photos of damage from Hurricane Sandy

In an effort to document damage, please feel free to post pictures of storm damage to our Facebook page. Just please remember to not put yourself in harm's way to get us photos. Remember all power, cable, and phone lines can still be energized on the ground, please stay away from them. Thank you in advance for your fantastic photos and thank you for following our page for the most up to date info on Hurricane Sandy

Continue Reading ...

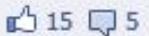Like · Comment · Share   👍 12 📄 1

Like · Comment · Share   👍 15 💬 5

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Example – Reassuring family members out of the area

Diana Lubow
Does anyone have any information about Claiborne? I can't get a hold of my parents and I haven't seen any posts from there.

Like · Comment · August 28, 2011 at 12:35pm

Talbot County Emergency Services (DES) As of now some parts of the Bay Hundred area still without power
August 28, 2011 at 12:44pm · Like

Diana Lubow Thanks. Has anyone driven into Claiborne? How's it look?
August 28, 2011 at 12:46pm · Like

Holley Tyler Guschke I was in Claiborne around noon. It looks like a tree took out several power/phone/cable lines other than that it looks OK
August 28, 2011 at 2:33pm · Like

Ted Jones I live in Claiborne and I never lost power or tv.
August 28, 2011 at 3:41pm · Like

Diana Lubow Thanks! I did finally get a hold of my parents and all was well. They did lose power last night but it was back this afternoon.
August 28, 2011 at 7:26pm · Like

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RULES

- A team of DES Facebook Page Administrators was established
- The FB Page is monitored by administrators on each 9-1-1 Shift as a 2nd tier function
- Posts must be limited to providing information and or providing recommendations for situations that could have an impact on the health and welfare of the public
- Posts are not designed to provide nice to know information… We are not in the media business
- Posts are monitored and inappropriate content is deleted, and if necessary a person may be blocked
- The team continues to monitor the applications and procedures continue to be developed as we continue to realize new capabilities

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Discussion Points

- Traditional Government Thinking – We must Build, Buy and Maintain our Communications Systems

- Internet Security Concerns – Run the application off stand alone computers (if possible) armed with up to date virus protection

- Setting Expectations – Regularly post the purpose of your site

- Managing the Site – Assigning a Team and keeping the site up to date

- Monitoring Posts – Be prepared to answer all posts and be prepared to delete improper posts

- Information Limitations – We ask the question - Will what your posting serve a purpose to alert, warn, or potentially make a reader safer as a result of reading the post ?

- The Technology is a Moving Target – Security, Management of Posts, Potential future fees etc…

Although it is clear Social Networking has emerged as the single most powerful communications tool we have seen in the Emergency Management Field…

We recognize that this is a powerful tool that must be monitored and carefully used

Thank You…

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