

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY IN GOVERNMENT

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October 15, 2009

Start: 10:15 am

Recess: 11:55 am

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:

JAMES VACCA
Chairperson, Fire and Criminal
Justice Services

GALE A. BREWER
Chairperson, Technology In
Government

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Council Member Tony Avella
Council Member Elizabeth Crowley
Council Member Mathieu Eugene
Council Member Vincent J. Gentile
Council Member Erin N. Gioia
Council Member Letitia James
Council Member G. Oliver Koppell
Council Member Peter F. Vallone Jr.

A P P E A R A N C E S [CONTINUED]

Gale A. Brewer
Opening Statement
Chairperson
Committee on Technology In Government

Colleen Pagster
Policy Analyst
Committee on Technology In Government

Jeff Baker
Counsel
Committee on Technology In Government

Konoma Hacha
Staff Member
Council Member Gale Brewer

James Vacca
Opening Statement
Chairperson
Committee on Fire and Criminal Justice Services

Joseph F. Bruno
Commissioner
Office of Emergency Management

Ronald R. Spadafora
Chief
Fire Department
New York City

Michael Lebow
Chief Technology Officer
Department of Information Technology and Communication

Henry Jackson
Deputy Commissioner for Technology
Office of Emergency Management

A P P E A R A N C E S [CONTINUED]

Rachel Stein Dickerson
Deputy Commissioner
Administration and Finance
Intergovernmental Affairs
Office of Emergency Management

Brett Whitney
Manager
Notify NYC

Marc Ameruso
Assistant Secretary
Community Board 1

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2 [START 1001.MP3]

3 MR. JERRY STAFFIERI: October 15th,
4 the year 2009, Joint Committee Hearings, the
5 Committee on Fire and Criminal Justice along with
6 Technology in Government, recorded by Jerry
7 Staffieri.

8 [END 1001.MP3]

9 [START 1002.MP3]

10 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay good
11 morning. I'm Gale Brewer. And I am delighted to
12 co-chair here with my wonderful colleague who will
13 make his opening speech in a minute. And I am
14 Chair of the Committee on Technology in
15 Government. And with Chair Vacca, we are co-
16 chairing today's hearing on Citywide
17 Implementation of Notify NYC. And we're here with
18 Council Member Avella.

19 This particular hearing, we can
20 talk first about the methods of crisis
21 communication. New York City's OEM delivers
22 emergency warnings and I'm sure they'll talk about
23 it in a minute through an Emergency Alert System,
24 EAS that issues warnings through analog radio and
25 television stations. It is activated by the Mayor

2 from an EAS device or a phone. The Office of
3 Emergency Management also transmits alerts over
4 the internet through an automated message
5 notification system in which city residents can
6 retrieve messages from a computer or an email
7 capable phone. And I think we'll hear later about
8 it but I would like the City to know that more
9 people need to know about it and you'd be
10 surprised at how few of our colleagues know about
11 it. [Clears throat] Methods of crisis
12 communication, dial out systems or reverse 911 can
13 place call to every listed land line in a targeted
14 area with warnings and information on what kinds
15 of actions should be taken. And I hope we'll hear
16 more about that. Public safety officials can
17 disseminate emergency warnings by text messaging
18 alerts to PDAs, pagers, cell phones and other
19 mobile devices that have been registered with the
20 system.

21 I'm sure that my colleague will
22 talk more about the Fire Department notification
23 and evacuation procedures but the Citywide
24 Incident Management System, CIMS, is an incident
25 management doctrine for managing emergency

incidents and planned events in our City and instructs which agency should take the lead in an emergency. I'm sure it's still in the planning stage but it's very exciting.

In addition to structural evacuation and search and rescue, the Fire Department plays a role in notifying the public about emergencies and instructing them on what actions to take. The notification provided by the Fire Department is dependent on the type of emergency, the location of the incident, the type of occupancy, the height of the building and whether or not the building has a fire safety and evacuation plan.

And then specifically on Notify NYC, which I use and read carefully, on December 4th, 2007, Mayor Bloomberg announced a launch of Notify NYC, a pilot program to deliver emergency public information by email, text and reverse 911 alerts in four City Community Districts, Lower Manhattan, the northeast Bronx which Council Member Vacca represents and we never wanted to have anything to do the system until Council Member Vacca said it was okay. The Rockaway's and

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3 southwest Staten Island. It's a collaboration of
4 effort between the Fire Department, OEM, DOITT,
5 Community Affairs Unit and the City's Public
6 Safety Health and Housing Agencies. In May of
7 2009 Notify NYC expanded its services throughout
8 the five Boroughs making emergency alerts
9 available by email, text and auto-dial-in to your
10 home, office or cell phone and RSS, Really Simple
11 Syndication.

12 So we're delighted to be here. I
13 want to thank certainly Colleen Pagster [phonetic]
14 who's the Policy Analyst and Jeff Baker, Council
15 and Konoma Hacha [phonetic], from my office. My
16 wonderful co-chair, Council Member Vacca.

17 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I want to thank
18 my co-chair, Council Member Gale Brewer. As Chair
19 of the Fire and Criminal Justice Committee of the
20 Council I thought it was important today that we
21 assess Notify New York City that we find out how
22 this can better service our neighborhoods as we
23 try to alert people to emergencies. Many of them
24 are Fire Department based where we require
25 evacuations; where we require notification of
people when an emergency exists; traffic backups

3 that may be generated by a fire situation; or a
4 related emergency.

5 I know that in my District we have
6 this--we've had this in place for several months
7 and now it's been expanded citywide. Many people
8 do not know about Notify New York City. We need
9 to increase our public awareness. In the case of
10 my District, originally it was put on because we
11 are a waterfront community and my District was
12 prone to northeast storms, hurricanes and the like
13 where many times evacuations could be required if
14 we ever received--ever had to endure a level 3 or
15 level 4 hurricane.

16 But in other cases the Fire
17 Department plays a particular role in making sure
18 that first responders are there on the scene and
19 in making sure that people in a community are
20 aware of the fire impact that could result from an
21 emergency, god forbid, an attack of any type, or
22 an unsafe situation relating to gas or fire.

23 So I'm glad to join with my
24 colleague, Gale Brewer, today in calling this
25 Oversight Hearing. I think Notify New York City
is definitely a step in the right direction. I

commend the Administration for this innovative technological tool. I do think though we have a way to go in making sure that we service as many people as possible through a notification system. So I thank the Fire Department. I thank Commissioner Bruno for your presence and I look forward to hearing your testimony.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Go right ahead, whomever would like to begin. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER JOSEPH F. BRUNO: Well thank you. Good morning Chairwoman Brewer and Chairman Vacca, other members of City Council here, Councilman Avella and the folks who work with you. What I want to do is give you an idea of where we are. I think you asked some very good questions and I think my testimony will talk a bit about where we are and what we're trying to do.

Notify NYC is a service designed to enhance the delivery of emergency and non-emergency information to the public. And our newly established Office of Emergency Public Communications at OEM, is the entity charged with that. I'm joined here today by Chief Ron Spadafora. You can tell he's got the uniform on

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3 from the Fire Department. From DOITT, Michael
4 Lebow, Chief Technology Officer, and this is Henry
5 Jackson, Deputy Commissioner from OEM for
6 Technology. I'd also like to mention a couple of
7 people who are here. Deputy Commissioner Rachel
8 Stein-Dickerson, Administration and Finance for
9 OEM and Intergovernmental Affairs is here, she did
10 a lot of work on putting this testimony together.
11 And Brett Whitney who is the Manager of Notify NYC
12 who works at OEM, works for us. And he and others
13 worked very hard in trying to develop the system
14 which is now, I guess, started in December of 2007
15 and went citywide this year in 2009. And they
16 worked very hard in trying to make this thing work
17 as best as possible. And I agree with you.
18 There's much more to be done. But we are on a
19 good track. It's a good program. And I also
20 believe that it being at OEM is probably a good
21 spot for it because of our role which I'll talk a
22 bit more about.

23 So let me get down a bit to what I
24 think you're interested in. In recent years, many
25 cities and states have begun to reevaluate their
public communications programs in the context of

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3 emerging technologies. The constantly evolving
4 nature of emergency management practices and the
5 fact that over time each community will
6 undoubtedly face a unique series of emergency and
7 unplanned events. Vincent, thank you very much.
8 I just started. I'm just going over where we are.
9 Two events here in Lower Manhattan, the 911
10 attacks and the fire at 130 Liberty Street
11 illustrate the different ways in which public
12 communications are evolving. The impact of the
13 911 attacks were incense [phonetic] in this issue,
14 challenge us to develop and disseminate public
15 communications that were citywide in nature. You
16 have the testimony? You don't have it? We have
17 an extra copy.

18 [Pause]

19 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Oh we'll
20 provide it. We probably have an extra copy here.

21 [Pause]

22 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: So I was
23 saying that the two incidents, the 911 attacks the
24 130 fire have really indicated how we have to
25 evolve our communications. The impact of 911, for
instance, challenged us to develop and disseminate

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3 public communications that were citywide in nature
4 while the fire at 130 Liberty in August of 2007
5 highlights the need for localized communications
6 about potential environmental and public impacts
7 associated with that event.

8 These events and others led us to
9 reexamine and enhance the City's ability to
10 communicate with the public during emergencies.

11 To be effective we determined that any public
12 information program must have two components.

13 One, it must be able to deliver a message as
14 accurate, relevant and timely. And that's a big
15 job. And work to ensure--and second, work to
16 ensure a consistent message across government
17 sources so that the people do you receive
18 conflicting or inaccurate information.

19 As you know the City has already
20 built a number of public communication systems
21 that meet those standards: 311; NYC.GOV; the
22 City's TV stations, have all been used to
23 effectively communicate with the public during
24 past emergencies including the transit strike in
25 December of 2005. We have also enhanced our
ability to transmit directly to the public by

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3 developing a number of emergency television and
4 radio sites, the ETVRS system, across the City
5 with the Mayor and other senior Administration
6 officials such as the Police Commissioner, the
7 Fire Commissioner, the OEM Commissioner, can hold
8 public briefings with little or no notice. These
9 facilities are connected by fiber to video
10 switching facilities which allow members of the
11 media to access and broadcast our feeds even when
12 circumstances prevent them from getting their
13 trucks or their reporters to where we physically
14 are. That's an important enhancement.

15 And we've established a local EAS
16 or Emergency Alert System which allows the Mayor
17 or his designee to broadcast a short audio message
18 over radio and TV stations and cable systems. EAS
19 was not operational in the City on September 11,
20 but since September of 2004, we have developed and
21 maintained strong voluntary partnerships with
22 local broadcasters and media organizations. I can
23 assure that EAS is invaluable for large scale
24 emergencies that could require a citywide
25 evacuation or action.

The value of Notify NYC within our

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3 toolset of public messaging options is to allow
4 granularity, for us to get down more deeply into
5 what we want to do. Many of these other
6 communication methods rely on broadcast media to
7 reach their intended audiences. Notify NYC allows
8 us to focus emergency information by geography,
9 getting the information to the constituents most
10 likely to be impacted by an emergency event.
11 Messages, therefore, are geo-targeted currently by
12 zip code. In the future, perhaps more granular,
13 to achieve the option of pinpoint messaging while
14 also allowing us to direct this messaging to
15 larger areas, entire Boroughs or citywide.

16 The other unique value of this
17 program is that it allows constituents to receive
18 these messages on mobile devices, through email,
19 voice and text messaging. No longer do you need
20 to be in front of a TV, a radio or even your
21 computer to receive critical information. We are
22 bringing this information directly to you through
23 the devices with which you are most comfortable
24 and using.

25 Additionally with the proliferation
of mobile devices throughout our communities, we

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3 are utilizing the tools that would be most
4 effective in getting critical information to the
5 people we want to get it to, as quickly as
6 possible. Currently Notify NYC provides
7 information in the following categories: emergency
8 alerts, reserved for priority use during life
9 threatening situations; Amber alerts; natural
10 disasters. Every registry will automatically
11 register it's received these alerts.

12 Significant event notifications,
13 information about unplanned events and planned
14 events, which have a more localized impact in the
15 area; utility disruptions or other events. Public
16 health notifications; information about important
17 public health issues in your community. Public
18 school closings; delay advisories, updates about
19 unscheduled public school closings, delays and
20 early dismissals. Unscheduled parking rules
21 suspensions; updates about unscheduled suspension
22 of citywide parking rules.

23 We are consistently reevaluating
24 opportunities for expanding the capacity of the
25 program. Just go off message for a second,
obviously we have 311 which is a great system and

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3 people call it in enormous numbers every day, so
4 for the localized things that you want to know
5 about the parking in your area, that's where you
6 get it, but for the broader things like citywide
7 parking we would certainly be using Notify for
8 that.

9 When an emergency happens we work
10 with the Mayor's Office to develop a message and
11 then issue media releases, provide updates to 311,
12 NYC.GOV and our own website, and send messages to
13 our corporate partners through CORP.NET and our
14 special needs partners through our Advanced
15 Warning System, we call it AWS. For serious and
16 large scale events or emergencies we can also
17 utilize EAS, Emergency Alert System, ETVRS and now
18 Notify NYC.

19 During an emergency OEM also
20 manages the City's Joint Information Center.
21 We've called it a JIC, which is a one-stop shop
22 for information related to an incident. The City
23 is also using the concept of a virtual JIC to
24 allow agencies to communicate with each other and
25 offer the best alternative to address an
information need or address the public. Notify

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3 NYC complements all of these mass communication
4 tools.

5 OEM's role in the Notify NYC
6 program is two-fold. First our agency is serving
7 as the lead agency, working with DOITT, City Hall
8 and other partner agencies, such as the Police
9 Department, the Fire Department, Department of
10 Health, the Department of Buildings, the
11 Department of Education, and the Department of
12 Environmental Protection, to coordinate and
13 operate the program. This effort includes the
14 refinement of response protocols, the management
15 and training of dedicated staff, and the marketing
16 of Notify NYC, which I'll say a few words about
17 later on.

18 The second role for OEM is one that
19 Henry Jackson, the techie guy likes, and that is
20 of Notifier. We are the ones who ultimately click
21 the button that sends the alerts and notifications
22 to the public. This function is consistent with
23 our role established by CIMS, the Citywide
24 Incident Management System, to coordinate the
25 City's response to an emergency and collect and
disseminate critical information.

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3 We've fulfilled this obligation
4 through a combination of our response staff which
5 deploys to the field to coordinate activities and
6 collect real-time situational awareness. And
7 through our 24/7/365 watch command that monitors
8 various sources of data to maintain continuous
9 situational awareness throughout the City and
beyond.

10 From Watch Command, we coordinate
11 with other City agencies, both in the field and
12 via their command centers. This includes
13 monitoring radio traffic and dispatch systems of
14 all public safety agencies, PD, Fire, EMS. The
15 National Advanced Warning System we also monitor,
16 NAWS, and a direct line to the state and federal
17 government as well as to our regional partners,
18 our operating authorities that operate in the City
19 of New York, private sector utility providers,
20 NGOs, Nongovernmental Organizations, and the
21 airports, of course. Thus as the Notify program
22 developed, it was a natural decision to have OEM's
23 Watch Command play the role of information
24 aggregator for the purpose of this public warning
25 system.

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3 A great deal of the City's effort
4 during the rollout on Notify NYC has focused on
5 the operational protocol, deciding how we could
6 make this work and be as accurate and effective as
7 possible. How do we gather emergency information
8 quickly? How do we verify it with field
9 commanders and agency operation centers? After
10 all they're the people in the field. They have
11 the first hand knowledge. And then deliver that
12 information promptly.

13 A big note--I believe frankly that
14 no jurisdiction in the United States has spend the
15 time and effort that we have to focus on this
16 critical aspect of public messaging, and given the
17 complex nature of emergencies in New York City it
18 was appropriate to do so.

19 The City has also dedicated
20 resources to manage this program. At OEM we have
21 created a Public Warning Specialist position that
22 is staffed 24/7/365. A program such as this
23 requires a dedicated effort to focus on public
24 warnings and the early stages of an emergency.
25 Responsibilities of the Public Warning Specialist
include monitoring multiple sources of local,

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3 regional and federal emergency information and
4 distinguishing which incidents have an impact on
5 New Yorkers. As part of the Office of Emergency
6 Public Notifications, these public warning
7 specialists are also responsible for initiating
8 important public warnings through the EAS and
9 ETVRS systems should that be necessary.

10 Additionally they manage the
11 customer service activities of Notify NYC by
12 answering constituent questions and helping with
13 technical difficulties that the public may have.
14 And we've learned something from that and I'll
15 talk about that in a second. Together these staff
16 members ensure that we have an effective,
17 professional program that focuses on the timely
18 delivery of relevant emergency content to the
19 public.

20 The initial pilot launched in
21 December 2007 to provide notification services for
22 our Community Boards throughout the City as
23 Chairman Vacca mentioned, the pilot was expanded
24 to provide these same services citywide in May of
25 2009. Since December 2007 we have initiated 136
messages representing 111 unique incidents. We

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3 have also implemented a protocol that separates
4 messages into two types: a notification which
5 provides general information about an event,
6 what's happening in a community, why there are
7 sirens out there, why there are lights flashing;
8 and an alert, which provides information about an
9 event and directions to the receiver.

10 There are 59 Community Districts in
11 this City and a myriad of emergency events at any
12 time and in any given day. The focus of Notify
13 NYC is to identify those events that have the
14 potential to affect public health and safety or
15 cause significant public disruption or property
16 damage. Events such as utility outages, large
17 disruptions in transportation systems or other
18 types of high impact events in your communities
19 often fall into the significant event category.

20 Currently there are 19,513
21 registrants in the Notify system. This is twice
22 as many people as we had during the pilot, the 4-
23 area pilot. We have processed hundreds of
24 customer services requests during the time since
25 this program went citywide.

First of all I want to talk about

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3 the lessons we have learned from our customer
4 service initiatives. Then I'll discuss the
5 lessons we have learned from looking at other
6 systems around the country. And I will conclude
7 with discussions about what we are doing to drive
8 more registrations into this program.

9 From feedback we have received from
10 the public we have learned, I think you will be
11 interested in these things in particular, I'm sure
12 we've given them to you before but try to put them
13 in on order today. People genuinely appreciate
14 the service. They would like more choices and an
15 ability to filter what they receive. Some
16 subscribers would like to receive all Notify NYC
17 messages and others only want information
18 pertaining to where they live or work.

19 Subscribers would like the ability to change the
20 device they receive at different times of the day.
21 Subscribers want as much flexibility as possible.

22 Secondly there are limitations to
23 the amount of information that we can provide in a
24 text message. So those messages need to be
25 carefully crafted.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Those people

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3 must all live on the west side.

4 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Chuckling]

5 Many of them do. There can be problems with
6 receiving messages on mobile devices based on
7 inconsistent cellular coverage. There is a
8 delicate balance between sending out too much
9 information and too little information. People
10 receive their information from many sources. To
11 that end we are implementing technologies that
12 allow the push of information to websites. For
13 example, you may go to Notify NYC website and sign
14 up for an RSS feed which you mentioned, Real
15 Simple Syndication feed that will post your
16 messages to your website. If you get them,
17 they'll push it to your website or to your blog if
18 you're so inclined to have a blog.

19 Information received--and by the
20 way, lots of media are hooked into Notify. So
21 while we have 19,000 registrants, media are very
22 smart. They pick up exactly what we have and they
23 push it out also which is very helpful to us.

24 Information received from a 911
25 call or a radio transmission is not always
completely accurate. In other words when we're

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3 listening, what's happening, that may not be full
4 accurate when we hear in on the radio. So it's
5 always--or we hear it whatever way. It's always
6 necessary to verify before a message can be sent
7 out. Thus the challenge can be to verify the
8 event as quickly as possible by coordinating with
9 the Incident Commander in the field or the agency
10 operations units at FD or PD or the other agencies
11 that are operating to determine what messaging
12 needs to be crafted so that we are accurate in
13 what we send out.

14 We've been doing this for more than
15 a year in the current pilot. And now--in the
16 prior pilot, and now in the citywide program. And
17 we continue to hone our skills and update our
18 protocols as needed.

19 This is a difficult job and it's
20 one of the toughest things we do is when we're
21 ready to go out with a message. We have to be
22 accurate all the time, not some of the time, not
23 most of the time. And so a lot of the people, I
24 mentioned Brett Whitney is here with the people
25 that he supervises or coordinates. Most of those
people are generally supervised by Watch Command

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3 but he coordinates--they have to be very, very
4 clear on what we have. And that is what the
5 Incident Commander is telling us is happening.
6 Not what we've heard on radio, our own radios,
7 agency radios or media. So we have to do that.

8 We have heard suggestions from the
9 public and have incorporated them into our
10 evolving program today and in our ability to
11 provide these features in the next phase of Notify
12 NYC. What about that?

13 A Request for Proposal, an RFP, has
14 been sent out to procure a final messaging system,
15 the next phase. And responses from the RFP are
16 currently being evaluated. We have them and we're
17 looking at those right now. All the suggestions
18 that we have heard from the public and others and
19 from you all have been incorporated into the scope
20 of services for the next release.

21 Therefore throughout the country
22 and the world, notification systems face some very
23 similar and inherent challenges. We have spoken
24 with many of the other jurisdictions about the
25 challenges they have face and have found many
common issues.

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3 First technology is dependent upon
4 public infrastructure. For example there are
5 limited telephone lines to carry the message and
6 cell towers that deliver text messages may be
7 affected by excess usage or technical problems.

8 Second there is heavy reliance on
9 private vendors or soft infrastructure that is
10 used within the public warning programs. That is
11 notification vendors and cell carriers. And this
12 creates additional points of potential failure.
13 With regard to sending SMS messages or text
14 messages, this technology is not always as
15 reliable as we want since SMS messaging channels
16 are not given the highest priority and message
17 size is limited by the size of the display on the
18 phone or the PDA that you're carrying. Our goal
19 is to send one message that does not get broken
20 into many pieces or be delivered over a long
21 period of time. Therefore we limit our character
22 count to 108 characters so that we deliver one
23 text message that people can pick off their PDAs
24 or phones. In email we have a broader capability
25 and we can use more characters.

Making a large number of phone

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3 calls takes time. The metrics of how many calls
4 we can make in a certain amount of time are
5 significant and sending a large number of phone
6 calls may require a timeframe that may not be as
7 quick as we would like.

8 We have also heard from
9 jurisdictions about the issues they have had with
10 getting people to sign up or register for services
11 such as these. Washington, D.C. has had a system
12 for five years and currently has about 84,000
13 people registered. Philadelphia launched a system
14 prior to our launch and currently has 8,000 people
15 in their system. We have found that registrations
16 go up after incidents that draw significant
17 attention.

18 For example a few weeks ago when
19 the F Train was shut down we had over 130 new
20 registrations right after that notice went out.
21 This fact has driven us to add Notify NYC
22 information to the incident-based mailing we do
23 that when a particular event happens in a
24 community we follow up with a mailing to that
25 community to help them be better prepared and to
suggest that they sign up and register for Notify

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3 NYC service. This is just one of the efforts we
4 are taking to drive more registrations.

5 Others include the following.

6 Engagement in a marketing campaign that ran over
7 the summer and into this early fall, that campaign
8 was comprised of mostly web ads and newspaper ads.
9 The effectiveness of that campaign is currently
10 being evaluated. We will modify future campaigns
11 on these lessons learned for a new campaign that
12 will begin to run in January 2010. Incorporating
13 Notify NYC information into all of OEM's Ready New
14 York training which we conduct is another way in
15 which we outreach. Last year we did 251
16 preparedness events and instructed thousands and
17 thousands of people and we will continue to say
18 that those folks should sign up for Notify NYC and
19 make it easier for them to do that when we have
20 those events.

21 We have expanded Notify NYC
22 notifications to the social networking sites to
23 increase our reach. The objective of Notify NYC
24 program is to get critical information out to the
25 public. In this regard we view the information as
the important as the important commodity. We are

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3 happy to have our Notify NYC messages rebroadcast
4 by other entities. Information from these
5 notifications can be rebroadcast across multiple
6 social media, such as Twitter, Face Book, NYC.GOV,
7 other websites, 311, or the media that operates
8 every day in the City. And that is what is
9 happening. This creates a larger distribution
10 focus than just Notify NYC subscribers. As I
11 noted that when I began this testimony, Notify NYC
12 is part of a total package of information options.
13 And when we push information to subscribers and
14 they pass it on it has a positive viral effect.

15 We are currently working on a PSA
16 to be broadcast in taxicabs, on radio and other
17 local media outlets. And that should be out soon.
18 We are planning an advertising campaign on the
19 sides of sanitation trucks where are out several
20 times a week and people can look at. We are also
21 talking to our other City agency partners about
22 ways we can incorporate Notify NYC information
23 into their outreach programs.

24 The challenges of driving
25 registrations in a program like this are not
unique in New York City. We have developed an

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3 aggressive campaign that will continue to work to
4 encourage people to sign up for emergency
5 messages, continue to listen to the feedback from
6 our constituents and third, seek to use the most
7 appropriate technologies to get emergency public
8 information out to the citizens of New York City.
9 We also rely on our partners including those in
10 the private, nonprofit, academic sectors to assist
11 us in getting the word out about Notify NYC.

12 And as you did during the pilot, we
13 rely on our elected officials, particularly the
14 City Council to encourage their constituents to
15 sign up and get involved in getting information
16 from Notify NYC. As we move forward a citywide
17 fully implemented program will be in effect. We
18 will continue to modify these procedures and our
19 approaches. As I hope has been made clear, we
20 take our role as provider of public information
21 very seriously. This is an important service and
22 one that we will continue to develop because we
23 think it is necessary. And we'll do that with
24 significant and due care. But thank you for
25 having me here. I and the other folks here will
try to answer whatever questions you have. The

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3 more technical questions I might turn to Henry or
4 to Ms. Lebow to do that operations stuff. From
5 the Fire Department which I know you're interested
6 in, Chief Spadafora can talk about it. And I can
7 talk about a lot of those areas as well. Thank
8 you.

9 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you
10 Commissioner Bruno and I'd like to mention Council
11 Member Gentile and Council Member Gioia from the
12 Fire and Criminal Justice Committee have joined
13 us. I had some questions. First of all is there
14 a difference between an alert and a notification?

15 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Yeah. A
16 notification is an information packet we sent out
17 through Notify that says an incident is occurring,
18 locally, if it's going to be sent locally by zip
19 codes or several zip codes. And you--an incident
20 is occurring, there's Fire Department activity,
21 Police Department activity within 180 characters
22 generally in our SMS message that something is
23 occurring. So that people who are hearing it
24 maybe late at night or seeing equipment coming in
25 have an understanding of what might be happening.
So it's telling them about an event.

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3 An alert is when we're telling them
4 about the event and we are suggesting action.

5 During the tornado that occurred in 2007?

6 [Off mic]

7 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: 2007. The
8 tornado, where two alerts we sent out. One is
9 we're in a tornado and the other was during
10 flooding in the Bronx, where we told people to
11 either remain indoors or to move out of the
12 structures or be aware of the damage that could be
13 occurring. So those are the alerts. Alerts give
14 the information what's happening, tell you why
15 there's activity and can tell you what to do.
16 Obviously an alert is a very important message and
17 one that we are very careful about sending out
18 unless it's absolutely necessary. And we've sent
19 out two.

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Explain to me,
21 you can sign up for Notify New York City and I
22 know I have from the very beginning and I get
23 information about a backup on the FDR Drive or the
24 Henry Hudson Parkway being closed down for
25 emergency work.

COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Right.

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3 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: However you are
4 allowed, when you sign up for Notify New York
5 City, you are encouraged or required now to list
6 five zip codes that you wish to be notified of
7 should there be an issue--?

8 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
9 You'll get all citywide alerts but you can--

10 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [Interposing]
11 You get all citywide alerts--

12 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --we're asking
13 you to limit the areas you're interested in. Are
14 we--are we proposing that they cannot as for all--
15 they can simply ask for all alerts.

16 MR. HENRY JACKSON: Yeah, that's so
17 you can filter where you get notification. So we
18 give you right now five zip codes so where you
19 work, where you live--

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [Interposing]
21 Where you live.

22 MR. JACKSON: --where your kids go
23 to school that you can get information when we do
24 geo-specific targeting--

25 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
Yeah.

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3 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [Interposing]

4 But you can also get--

5 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: -- - -

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --you will also
7 get a general citywide--you would get a general
8 citywide--

9 MR. JACKSON: [Interposing] Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --alert
11 regardless.

12 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Right.

13 MR. JACKSON: [Interposing] Yes.
14 From--

15 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [Interposing]
16 And then you would also get neighborhood specific
17 when you give the five zip codes.

18 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Right. But
19 the reason we do that is we're trying to listen to
20 what people are saying. We want to know what's
21 happening in our area or I work, so we're giving
22 them the option to say we particularly want to
23 know if something is happening there. But if we
24 do a citywide alert then they will get those.
25 Anyway that's a larger incident.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. Let me

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2 follow up. I had met with Deputy Mayor Skyler
3 about this; I think two--on his staff, on two or
4 three occasions. And you list items that you
5 notify people of. And then you include an Amber
6 Alert which I think is very, you know,
7 constructive, very good. I question whether or
8 not we could include Level 1 sex offenders when
9 they move into a particular community. This is
10 something people do want to know. And have you
11 thought about this or has this been discussed
12 further in the Administration as widening the
13 notifications to include that?

14 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: There are two
15 areas that I have heard. That is one and the
16 other is senior alerts which has now become an
17 issue, Senator Schumer has raised it and a few
18 people have raised it. I think those are things
19 that we will consider. We're always going to talk
20 to the Police Department on those as to what
21 should or should not go out depending on what
22 their activity is. And we'll always talk to the
23 emergency service agencies to ensure that we are
24 not sending information that comprises what they
25 have.

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3 It has been discussed. It's not
4 part of what we send out right now. The
5 capability is there 'cause that might be a
6 citywide or a localized. Also it is something
7 that I would talk--and I have talked to and will
8 continue to talk to the Police Department on how
9 they view that. The Police Department also has
10 this NYC or NYPD Shield which is something else
11 that has more police-centric information but on
12 Notify, certainly the system has the capability.
13 And if you want to pursue that you should continue
14 talking to us about that.

15 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Yes--

16 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
17 And I will look into it.

18 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --I would like
19 you to look at it--

20 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
21 We will.

22 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --I did suggest
23 it several months ago. I'm suggesting it again
24 today. I think it would perform an invaluable
25 public service.

COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Certainly I

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understand that.

3 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: And I would
4 like that looked at. And I think that it can be
5 done. I don't think there's much of an issue that
6 it can't be done.

7 I noticed the amount of people
8 signed up for the pilot program and the amount of
9 people that is now signed up but the numbers are
10 very low. And you mentioned some vehicles for you
11 to do further public outreach. I think we have
12 such a potential for this. First of all I do know
13 that public schools and senior centers are not
14 included in your outreach list and I think would
15 think that with 1 million school children and with
16 senior centers that are very active, we have 328
17 in New York City, I would think that they serve as
18 a basis for an outreach.

19 My question to you is umber one, is
20 this a way that you think is feasible to go? And
21 my second question is do you have the capability
22 to register the potential numbers that could come
23 out of that type of outreach?

24 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: All right.
25 I'm going to answer your question and I'm going to

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3 give you a couple of other things that I think are
4 out there. Certainly on DOE schools, you know
5 there's legislation on 110. It's mandated that
6 every school have the capability of communicating
7 with parents. So there will--that will come onto
8 the Notify NYC at that time. And how that emerges
9 in Notify really is right now a discussion between
10 DOE and us and other people.

11 But we have the capacity to do the
12 schools. And in 110, every school will have to;
13 again, using a system to allow that type of
14 notification and Notify will be the system.

15 Remember we're still in this "pilot
16 stage" although we are citywide. And we have a
17 new system we are building, this RFP's all about
18 that. And much of the capability we would need to
19 go really very large in this program is going to
20 be the consideration for that system. And we're
21 making the system much more robust.

22 Senior citizen centers, well we do
23 a lot of work there. We obviously through the
24 advanced warning system where we reach out to
25 seniors through the centers, we want seniors to
sign up for the program. Many of them are not

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3 computer literate but they have phone and so they
4 can take the phone service. And lots of seniors
5 have signed up.

6 Could we do more? I'll take your
7 suggestion that perhaps we could even do more.
8 We'll see how we can do that with them although I
9 think we've blanketed that pretty well.

10 The future for this whole program
11 really goes in a couple of ways. Cell
12 broadcasting is a program where it will allow us
13 through cell towers to hit the faceplates of your
14 cell phone which many people in New York City
15 carry. Millions of people carry. So we would--we
16 have been pushing the FCC to allow this and to
17 force this on the cell industry to--in the new
18 generation of phones that come out, to allow an
19 emergency faceplate.

20 So that we could almost pick by
21 cell towers who we want to hit and almost hit
22 anyone. That's not here yet. It's something
23 we've been talking about since the day we started
24 this program. And it's something we are working
25 really, and I push personally, the FCC executives
and others, to push.

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3 This is an important way for us to
4 work. It's going to require some time because it
5 will require some new technology and the phone you
6 carry or the PDA you carry. And certainly it will
7 require the cell carrier to agree and to share.
8 Because we want to send a message out that hits
9 Nextel and AT&T and Verizon.

10 And we don't want to be having to
11 go through the aggregator for each of those. We
12 want to send one message out and get it out. So I
13 think this is the wave of the future and it would
14 touch a lot of people.

15 And probably the last one is one
16 you mentioned in your opening Chair Brewer,
17 reverse 911. Reverse 911 has the capacity to give
18 us a lot of people in the system, maybe more than
19 we should and that might make it technologically
20 impossible to get to enough people. The more we
21 can pinpoint which is our new system, we're going
22 to look more to pinpoint where we want to go, the
23 more we can geo-code by almost by drawing a circle
24 of what we want, and that's really where we're
25 hoping to go that we can say well something's
happening here. Here's a good circle. Let's hit

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3 that. And then we can then limit the numbers we
4 have to hit.

5 So the two areas of reverse 911 is
6 an area of interest but it's one that can
7 overwhelm us so and maybe not give us what we
8 want. But cell broadcasting is something that
9 really, if put together through the federal
10 program, and there are problems with the feds,
11 they want to aggregate everything through one
12 spot, FEMA. And that sounds like a bad word. But
13 we area concerned about that. We would like to be
14 able to have the capacity to put it out and not
15 have to do that.

16 So we're really talking in very
17 nuts and bolts details with them saying we want
18 you to do that. The other side is you have to get
19 the industry to step by regulation to say this is
20 something you're required to do. It's important.
21 And in there you could do a lot of what you
22 suggested earlier on about sexual offender alerts,
23 Amber Alerts and also senior alerts.

24 So I've given you more than you
25 asked for but those are some of the things that
we're thinking about and how we think it's going

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2 to grow. The good news is our RFP is taking
3 account of a lot of what we think the capacity is
4 going to be required. And so we're building a new
5 one to do that. That's why we're looking at it
6 very, very carefully, to the responses.

7 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: You're now
8 developing an RFP.

9 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: It's already
10 done--

11 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [Interposing]
12 It's already don?

13 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --the responses
14 are already in.

15 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: We're
17 analyzing the responses.

18 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: What has been
19 the cost so far of Notify New York City and are
20 you prepared for an expansion and the cost that
21 that will involve? Do you have a commitment--?

22 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
23 I, I actually have that for you. I'm going to go
24 to the budget. Do you want to say something?

25 [Off mic]

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3 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Yeah, well I
4 have it. So far we have spent, overall, \$1.96
5 million on it. And we have a future budget well
6 in excess of that. Some of it currently funded to
7 do what we're doing and we will continue to get
8 the remaining funding into it to allow this
9 program to proceed. The Mayor believes in this
10 program. You know, it wasn't a hard sell to him
11 when we--he really, 311 is his brainchild. He
12 went after it. When we talked to him more about
13 even building off of that and putting this
14 together, he was all ears and he supported us. So
15 we've already spent almost \$2 million. And we are
16 still in this first stage.

17 When we go to the big one it's
18 going to cost more and we'll spend some more of
19 that budget. And our budget is out there, you can
20 see it.

21 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. What is
22 the role of the Fire Department? Perhaps Chief
23 Spadafora can answer but where does the Fire
24 Department come in, insomuch as the notifications
25 are concerned in relation to high-rise buildings,
in relation to your evacuation procedures, what is

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2 the role of the Fire Department?

3 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: If you--can I
4 just maybe--

5 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [Interposing]
6 Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --just give
8 you from our point of view and then can--

9 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [Interposing]
10 Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Very skilled.
12 We'll tell you more. The Fire Department is that
13 Incident Commander many times, many, many times
14 out in the field. When we are starting to
15 determine that we see something happening that
16 looks like it's a Notify issue, we are
17 communicating with the Incident Commander either
18 directly in the field and sometimes that's not a
19 good thing when they're putting out fires, saving
20 lives. So we'll go to the Operations Section or
21 the Operations Unit of the Fire Department. And
22 if the operation is this, which is like us,
23 24/7/365, we have a close relationship. We talk
24 all the time. We will start talking about give us
25 the basic information we need to start crafting

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3 this message. And we will tell them what we're
4 intending to do. And then we'll get it out. And
5 that has to be done in quick time. But Chief
6 Spadafora will tell you a lot more.

7 CHIEF SPADAFORA: Good morning.

8 I've been involved in this program from its
9 inception in 2007 so I've worked very closely with
10 OEM. One of the things that we thought was very
11 important was crafting the messages so that people
12 at the scene wouldn't perform any action which
13 would be detrimental to first responders and their
14 operation. So we went over template information
15 with OEM for a long period of time. We performed
16 drills over at OEM's headquarters, mockup
17 situations where we had people acting as the
18 Incident Commanders. We had situations presented
19 to us and then we decided whether a notification
20 or an alert should have went out at all.

21 So we did our homework on this.

22 The Fire Department, we issued a document, an All
23 Unit Circular to all the units out in the field,
24 templating this whole program, how it works, what
25 we expect from our Incident Commanders at a scene,
whether it be a fire or an emergency.

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3 We had our Operations Center fully
4 involved in this from the beginning. I brought
5 them in for the meetings, people who were in
6 charge of the Fire Department Operations Center so
7 that they worked closely with OEM going over
8 templates, going over what messages would be sent
9 out, going over how the communication and feedback
10 was going to be performed back and forth through
11 the agencies. So they're pretty well--they're
12 well versed in this whole operation.

13 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Can I just add
15 one thing to that--

16 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [Interposing]
17 Yes Commissioner.

18 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: We also did
19 this with the Police Department as well as you
20 well know. They played exactly the same role as
21 the Fire Department. They were in every meeting.
22 Templates, why we have templates: 'cause we have
23 to get the message out quick. So we set up
24 templates so that we can put in the basics and
25 then put in the specifics as we get it from the
Incident Commander so we can get it out there

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3 quickly.

4 The other agencies heavily involved
5 are also our Department of Buildings, the
6 Department of Health, the Department of
7 Environmental Protection and the Department of
8 Education. So they have, to a lesser degree, with
9 their Operations Centers because they don't
10 operate exactly the way emergency service agencies
11 do and we do. But we have the same kind of input
12 from them so that's--

13 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [Interposing]

14 But.

15 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --what we've
16 been doing.

17 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: But my question
18 there is how specific can you be? Two weeks ago,
19 I had a fire on City Island. Now. City Island,
20 4,000 people, 10464 zip code. Those people, of
21 course, did not get a Notify New York City notice
22 but we should be at the point where perhaps they
23 should have been notified that there was a major
24 fire in a community like that. Are we getting to
25 that point where local neighborhoods will know
that there is something happening in their zip

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3 code since you do request that people list five
4 zip codes when they register for the program?

5 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Yes. I mean
6 obviously there's some judgment in whether we send
7 something out or not. What the prognosis is for
8 getting things under control, what the evacuation
9 status might be. All of the information comes in.
10 That's why we run it with these guys and try to
11 determine is this something we send out a
12 notification for or is this something that is
13 escalating quickly. Fire's got it. And to send
14 it out only heightens tension for people when we
15 know we've got it. And those--that's a tough
16 call. We--that's what they pay us for and that's
17 why we make those calls.

18 But I think we certainly are at the
19 stage where we can send notifications out. We're
20 still going to run it by the people on the ground.
21 And they give us that feel for really what's
22 happening, not the first guy arriving. Huge fire,
23 send it out. Cool heads would tell us, okay,
24 we've got this. We've got this fire. And we've
25 got everybody out. And there's limited disruption
in the area so we might or might not send that

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3 out.

4 But I think we have the capacity to
5 send more out and I think you'll see more and
6 more. We are sending more out. We are sending
7 more. We see events happening, things that people
8 might not understand, we're sending out. You
9 know, movie shoots, people flying around different
10 parts--

11 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
12 We got that one.

13 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Say that
14 again?

15 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: We got that
16 one.

17 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Right. You
18 know, that you got and--

19 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
20 And - - .

21 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --so those
22 are, you know, the system's evolving and we'll
23 learn more and more from you and from the public
24 of what they want as well as we have to be sure we
25 don't make this--we don't want this to become 311.
We don't want it to be 311. We don't want to send

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3 out every bit of information. We want to send out
4 important information that people have to know to
5 protect themselves or to lessen their anxiety
6 about something even though they may be outside
7 the zone of danger, if there is a zone of danger
8 in an incident. That's what we're trying to do.
9 And it's a hard mix. I know every time we do one,
10 I'm in the middle of that as well. So is Henry.
11 So are our operations people. And we're kind of
12 saying is, okay, Commissioner we're going to go
13 with this and I'm always going to err on the side
14 of going with it if there's any question. So
15 we're that kind of hands-on. And that's 24/7/365.
16 The great part of this job is that it keeps me
17 busy all the time. The bad part is I'm probably
18 getting too old to be kept busy that much but
19 that's a different issue.

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

21 Before I give the mic to my co-chair, I'd like to
22 introduce Peter Vallone who's a member of the Fire
23 and Criminal Justice Committee as well. Thank
24 you.

25 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: And Council

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3 Member Koppell who's a member of Technology in
4 Government. Thank you. A couple of issues.
5 First of all, I, too, like Notify and really
6 appreciate it. I can tell you that when the
7 horrible incident of the helicopter and the small
8 plane, that was helpful for my neighborhood to
9 know. And also just recently there was a
10 helicopter flying over Central Park for a movie
11 shoot. I know that's not an emergency by in my
12 neighborhood, if there's a helicopter everybody
13 thinks it is an emergency. So that was helpful.
14 Thank you.

15 Just one--two funny things. First
16 of all, I used to be able to get into Newsday and
17 put in an Op-Ed on acronyms for the Department of
18 Education. I think we can do it for you now--

19 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
20 [Chuckling]

21 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: --and the
22 second issue is City Hall, that newspaper comes
23 around with really stupid questions about what we
24 think. And now we can ask how many of our
25 colleagues besides Council Member Vacca and I are
signed up for Notify NYC. So I'm going to make

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3 that their next question.

4 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: In terms of
6 coordination, I know we get MTA information. How
7 do you coordinate with the MTA because I do think
8 that's a good place--they have their own system
9 and I'm wondering how you coordinate in terms of
10 notification?

11 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Well we have
12 direct communication with the MTA. So we are in
13 touch with them. We are monitoring--whenever an
14 incident occurs in the transit system, the MTA,
15 with all respect to them, can't handle that
16 incident necessarily, particularly an emergency
17 where people's safety is at risk. The Fire
18 Department, Police Department are immediately
19 there. You know, we have very good response
20 times. So we pick up from our agencies that
21 something has happened there along with, often,
22 direct communication from the MTA. We have the
23 following issue. We have the following problem.
24 And sometimes we are alerting other agencies to
25 say MTA has reports that it's going to have this
problem or it's having this problem. And so

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2 that's how we communicate with them. We generally
3 pick up incidents anywhere in the City through our
4 first responders. They are the first ones to get
5 it but we do have a direct relationship with MTA.

6 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Do they have
7 their own system for notification--

8 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
9 They have a system that's internal.

10 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
11 Yeah.

12 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
13 Internal.

14 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Internal only.
15 Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Okay. I'll
17 tell you an interesting point. The number of
18 vendors who have everything, you know, they've
19 figured it all out, oftentimes ask to come to
20 speak to me about systems they want to install in
21 the transit system. And many times I will let
22 them come in and tell us about a system they have
23 so that I can pass it on to MTA. Say, I saw these
24 people, take a look at it. Lots of them have
25 systems that they want to publish information, you

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3 know, what's going down below, at street level, so
4 people know about it. Good or bad, there's a good
5 question about that. I'm always going to be
6 worried about what they're pushing up and how that
7 affects people walking around. But the subway
8 system we see as part of New York City government,
9 even though it's a separate authority, so we are
10 not hesitant and you know PD has a major role in
11 the subway system, we are not hesitant to push our
12 way into the MTA and assist them, take over for
13 them, where they're incapable of doing it and
14 otherwise notify the public about what's happening
15 in their system. And we look at, you know, we
16 just did recently, the F Train was down and we
17 sent a notification out--

18 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]

19 Okay.

20 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --on that.

21 That's a big thing for people of our City.

22 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay. I have
23 many more questions but Council Member Avella had
24 a question.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: Thank you
Madam Chair. For somebody who's not on it, and of

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2 course I will be on it--

3 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]

4 - - .

5 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: --after

6 this hearing.

7 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Yeah we've

8 been teasing him.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: [Laughing]

10 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: You should

11 definitely do that.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: Let's talk

13 about the F Train incident. What was the actual

14 message that you sent out? I'm just curious--

15 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]

16 I don't have it in front of me but I'll pull it

17 up. I think it's' here--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA:

19 [Interposing] Well if, if you have any sort of

20 message, I'm just curious as to what the actual

21 message--

22 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]

23 I think I have it.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: --would say

25 in this situation.

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3 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Well it would
4 say, in this particular one it said that the F
5 Train is out of service and it'll tell the area it
6 was out of service totally. And that people
7 should be advised in their travel. And that would
8 be a text message because it's 108 characters--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA:
10 [Interposing] Right, right.

11 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --so it's
12 really short. The email message would be a bit
13 broader and say more, probably give you more
14 station information or how--the extent--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA:
16 [Interposing] Um-hum.

17 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --from where
18 to where. So it's that kind of thing. Service is
19 out, you know, adjust your travel plans. That's
20 really what we're telling people--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA:
22 [Interposing] Um-hum.

23 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --it's not
24 really an emergency in the sense that--

25 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA:
[Interposing] Right.

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2 SERVICES and TECHNOLOGY IN GOVERNMENT

3 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --it's
4 dangerous but it's something that affects their
5 lives--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA:
7 [Interposing] Do you have a situation where there
8 was a real emergency as to what that type of
9 message was?

10 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Oh sure. We
11 had, for example, a retaining wall collapse on the
12 Prospect Expressway on October the 9th. We wrote
13 at 6:40 PM, emergency personnel are on the scene,
14 a retaining wall collapse on the Prospect
15 Expressway in the vicinity of Church Avenue in
16 Brooklyn, northbound Prospect Expressway traffic
17 is closed. So that's again, more of a--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA:
19 [Interposing] Right, right.

20 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --
21 inconvenience but there were bricks all over so we
22 wanted to be sure.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: Right.

24 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Let me see if
25 I can get another one. Power outage on Staten
Island on the 7th issued at 5:00 PM. Due to high

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2 winds in the New York City area, parts of the
3 Huguenot and Huguenot Branch sections of Staten
4 Island are experiencing a power outage. We know
5 more specifically by what, you know, what loop it
6 is but we can't tell this to the public, so we
7 give them the sections, to report a loss of
8 electric service contact Con Ed. So we're saying-
9 -

10 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA:

11 [Interposing] Um-hum.

12 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --make those
13 calls because we know that Con Ed looks to message
14 calls to--from--however antiquated that is, they
15 look for calls from--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA:

17 [Interposing] Right, right.

18 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --their, you
19 know, customers. So.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: Right.

21 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: You want me to
22 see if I can find another one for you?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: No, no, no,
24 that's fine. But I'd like to do, if it's okay
25 with you, is I have one last newsletter that's due

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2 me before I leave office. I'd like to dedicate
3 that newsletter towards this program. So if you
4 can get my office--

5 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
6 Yes.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: --the
8 necessary information and how people can register
9 I'll--my last newsletter will do this--

10 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
11 We'd ask you to use this logo. This is our logo.
12 We have it in print media--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA:
14 [Interposing] Okay.

15 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --we'll give
16 you that too. We'll give you everything you need
17 on that.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: Great,
19 great.

20 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: So we got
21 that?

22 MR. JACKSON: Yep.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: Thank you
24 Commissioner.

25 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: We'll take

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care of that.

3 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Yeah he told
4 me. In terms of colleges and NYCHA, those are the
5 other two groups I was thinking about. Obviously
6 you hear about colleges. I think CUNY has a
7 system. How do you coordinate with all the
8 different universities, etcetera, with your own
9 systems?

10 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Well we have
11 offered to coordinate colleges in our system.
12 Most of the colleges have their own standalone
13 systems for their kids. So they put that
14 information in--or students I should say, and they
15 use that. They like that. They hook up to us to
16 get notifications.

17 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: So all of the
18 universities are hooked up or whatever.

19 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Well they
20 register up--

21 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
22 Okay.

23 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --not all of
24 them but CUNY certainly.

25 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay.

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3 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: CUNY we talk
4 to a lot. On our own--

5 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
6 Right, right.

7 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --the private
8 ones, we encourage them to do it. And we hope
9 they do and it would be wise do to it. The more
10 we, as we reach out to them and I do and you do,
11 it's a no-brainer--

12 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
13 Um-hum.

14 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --to be part
15 of what we're doing so you can send it out. But
16 they're very, obviously, campus-centric. And I
17 think they're probably correct in what they're
18 doing. Some have used New York Alert, which is
19 the State system. That's up there to hook some of
20 their information into, that they feel more
21 comfortable because they can carve out their own
22 little area. I think as we build out ours, our
23 view is to get as many colleges into our system as
24 well.

25 We think those things make sense.
Maybe we'll break out and allow DOT and other

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3 agencies to carve out areas of the system where
4 they can send out messages, to whom, to people who
5 would want what DOT is doing, what DEP is doing,
6 what Health is saying. So in the emergency area,
7 again, always in the emergency area. And colleges
8 will do the same. CUNY will certain be a part of
9 that--

10 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
11 Okay.

12 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --and we hope
13 the private schools.

14 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: What about
15 NYCHA? Obviously we all have, I certainly have
16 many, many developments in my District. People
17 have more technology than you think. People have
18 cell phones. How are you working with NYCHA? I
19 mean where that could be helpful, I can't tell you
20 how many times, unfortunately, boiler, elevator,
21 etcetera, information is not available. We're
22 constantly calling everybody imaginable, 311 in
23 particular. I don't know. Have you thought about
24 that as a place to provide information or to--?

25 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
First how we work with them. NYCHA is not a City

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3 agency but it is a City agency in our view--

4 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]

5 I understand. I know exactly what it is.

6 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: We have direct
7 communication with NYCHA. We know when they have
8 power problems. We know when they have elevator
9 problems. We respond to them also, OEM. So does
10 Fire and PD, so does Con Ed if necessary, if it's
11 that outside line problem. If it's not we make
12 sure that their emergency service unit responds to
13 the Housing Authority location. So we have a good
14 basis for that.

15 As far as whether we would use
16 Notify to say a NYCHA facility is experiencing
17 electrical problems and elevator problems, at this
18 stage no--

19 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]

20 Okay.

21 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --because I
22 don't think that's it. In another iteration as we
23 build out this, perhaps we can geo-code and do a
24 little bit--

25 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]

That's what I'm asking.

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3 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --more
4 granular stuff. Do you want to say anything on
5 that--?

6 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
7 If you would talk about that, I would be--yeah.

8 MR. JACKSON: Yeah, just that we're
9 also building capability for agencies to do their
10 own messaging--

11 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
12 Exactly.

13 MR. JACKSON: --for example for
14 coop [phonetic] needs for their own employees, so
15 it's possible in the future that we gave NYCHA a
16 front end to basically speak with their people.

17 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I would like
18 to see NYCHA as a priority. Obviously you have a
19 new chairman that understands technology and you
20 have interesting ways of--that is an agency that
21 should not be last on your list in terms of geo-
22 coding--

23 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
24 It is not.

25 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: --I know but
I'm trying to up it a little bit.

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3 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Right.

4 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: In terms of
5 their needs for support like this. I think it
6 would be extremely helpful.

7 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Yeah, you're
8 absolutely correct. One problem with NYCHA as you
9 well know, 'cause I know you're very familiar with
10 this, it's a very old system.

11 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I know.

12 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: And it suffers
13 severely because of that, in its elevator
14 capability--

15 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
16 I know only too well--

17 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --the
18 slightest power problem in the area can affect
19 that. So we have done a lot to try--and I think
20 they're doing a lot to try and upgrade that very
21 basic connection so that their elevators can
22 operate when they have a certain type of power
23 outage. They even get affected when we have, you
24 know, a reduction in service where Con Ed has to
25 step down its service a bit, that can affect them--

-

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3 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]

4 Um-hum.

5 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --they're much
6 better at it now. Now we get at least one or two
7 elevators running. Alan Gerson's favorite term is
8 Mrs. McGillicutty--

9 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
10 Mrs. McGillicutty--

11 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: --right.

12 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --we know her
13 well.

14 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: We do know her
15 well. And so for those of you who don't know her
16 well, it's Alan's version of Mrs. McGillicutty
17 does not have any technology, she's disabled and
18 she's in a wheel chair. How do we contact her?
19 Obviously that's a community that's actually
20 unlike Mr. Gerson, whom I love, quite technology
21 focused. So I'm wondering how are you working
22 with that community because that would seem to me,
23 between Access-a-Ride, we've a lot more technology
24 and that's a community that uses Access-a-Ride,
25 plus it's a community that actually is quite
technology savvy.

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3 How are you working with them and
4 Notify NYC 'cause that would be a community that I
5 think would like to be part of the system.

6 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: I agree with
7 you. For one, Mrs. McGillicutty and Alan's
8 proposal had a phone. So we had her on that--

9 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
10 Absolutely.

11 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
12 That's great and we assume, we know that most
13 people have some form and generally that wall
14 phone, you know--

15 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
16 Right.

17 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --still
18 dialing this way--

19 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
20 We know all that.

21 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --kind of
22 stuff. But the other thing is special needs
23 population; we have the advanced warning system,
24 AWS, which is part of our coastal storm outreach
25 system. It's how we will communicate with lots of
people who are being serviced by providers who

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3 meet with these people, provide them food,
4 service, visiting nurse service, many of the
5 different services, hundreds of them that are out
6 there. We communicate with these people through
7 the Advanced Warning System. We have regular
8 calls in to them.

9 Now if we have an individual notice
10 that has to go out, they have to have some
11 mechanism to receive that. We do a lot of
12 outreach through AWS, through the providers, to
13 get them onto Notify. They all, virtually all
14 have some type of system. Many of them do have
15 computers but not as many as we'd like. But most
16 of them have telephones.

17 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Right.

18 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: And so that's
19 where we're doing it. And we're sending outreach
20 through the AWS as part of this program. I even
21 mentioned in my testimony that we are reaching
22 out. That's what it means. We are unsung those
23 providers, here's the packet, this is what we want
24 to go out and we question back with them. How are
25 you doing that? How many people have you got?
Here's a new approach. Here's a new marketing

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3 material that you can talk to the seniors,
4 homebound, talk to them about how they can get on
5 the system and at least have some information.

6 The other part is we ask these
7 providers to work very closely with the families
8 of these people so that they know that when
9 something bad happens, they come and help--

10 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
11 Right. My--

12 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
13 We can't all do it alone--

14 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
15 No I agree. I mean does the Access-a-Ride now has
16 GPS, more or less, and so that would be another
17 place to tell people you can, you know, it's a
18 database and I'm always stealing databases. Maybe
19 you can't but I do all the time.

20 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: These are all
21 great ideas and we will pursue every one of them--

22 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
23 I'm very good at getting people to know what's
24 going on. And you talked about London and their
25 Bluetooth. I just didn't know how is that
relevant to New York 'cause in London, not having

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2 been there but having met the Mayor with the crazy
3 blonde hair that I think is--he's a lot--he's
4 really innovative and very, very, very funny.

5 But they're trying really hard on
6 technology in London just because they see it as
7 the future--

8 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
9 Yeah.

10 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: --as we are.
11 But I think they're actually training their
12 residents even more than we are. So how does what
13 London's doing how can that be helpful to us, the
14 Bluetooth?

15 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Well I mean
16 London is a good city for us to study and we
17 continue to. We have a good relationship with
18 them. I go there. I talk to them. We have
19 direct relationships. I think what they're doing
20 is what I was really talking a bit about is cell
21 broadcasting. Where we can start hitting
22 faceplates or phone plates of phones in an area.
23 When we can start doing that in New York City and
24 the United States, we will be able to really
25 pinpoint what's happening by taking one or two

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2 towers and hitting anyone in reach of that 'cause
3 that's maybe the locus of what is going on,
4 particularly when there's a real public safety
5 issue.

6 I think London's idea is a good
7 one. They have a little different system than we
8 do about how they can communicate with people.
9 Maybe perhaps a little less restriction. But we
10 are, our vision is to go the same way, Bluetooth
11 is just a mechanism by which you get--

12 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
13 Right.

14 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --your
15 information. But the access, we think, I think,
16 is through the cell phones.

17 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Council Member
18 Vallone had a question.

19 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: How are you
20 Peter?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Do you
22 have--Commissioners. As someone who has oversight
23 over OEM in most cases, I'm glad you're getting
24 the sense of some other Committees.

25 One quick question before I go,

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3 very useful program, and I've supported it from
4 the beginning. How do we ensure and provide
5 people the assurance that this list does not get
6 out to anyone other than you for emergency
7 purposes? It doesn't go to campaigns. It doesn't
8 go to advertisers. It doesn't go anywhere else
9 but you.

10 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: It's the
11 registration list, right. When we had to face
12 that early on and this is what we've done. One,
13 this list is held the same way the City employee
14 lists are held. In other words, in the same
15 system. But beyond that OEM has access to this.
16 That is it. We are the ones who know what is
17 happening there and we hold it as secure as we
18 hold City personnel data. And what's in it, City
19 Time?

20 MR. JACKSON: Yeah.

21 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: It's called
22 City Time, now it's the new name for the system.
23 So it's held as closely as my Social Security
24 number is as a City employee, as yours is, as
25 others are, who are part of City government. So
it is very secure. And we do not allow this to go

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3 anywhere. We have the ability to look at this
4 data, OEM, 'cause we are the notifier and the
5 manager of this program. But even that is
6 restricted. That's only available to the people
7 that run this program. So I think it's protected
8 as well as we can. New York City has a very
9 secure database of its information about employees
10 and this fits in there.

11 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Council Member
12 Gentile.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Thank you
14 Madam Chair and Commissioner thank you very much
15 for your very comprehensive testimony here--

16 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
17 [Laughing]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: --and your
19 opening statement--

20 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
21 Are you saying it was long?

22 [Laughter]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE:
24 Comprehensive. No it really does give one, anyone
25 who heard it the real comfort that things are
moving in the right directions in terms of--

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3 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]

4 Are you on the Notify NYC?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE:

6 [Interposing] No well that's-0-

7 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: --but you will
8 be next.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: That's
10 what I'm going to ask about.

11 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: you will then.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Because I
13 don't know, yeah, I want to ask you about the
14 efforts with Notify NYC particularly have--you
15 want Council Members to help with the outreach.
16 Have you mailed information or sent information to
17 individual Council Offices about--

18 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
19 I - -

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: --how we
21 can tell our constituents how to--

22 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
23 I would say off the top of my head, yeah, but I'm
24 just going to turn around and ask.

25 [Off mic]

COMMISSIONER BRUNO: All right, so

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2 if we haven't, we should have. I don't know the
3 answer to that. So I don't know why we didn't but
4 that's something we should have done, it's pretty
5 dumb that we didn't--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE:

7 [Interposing] Because it would be--

8 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --but we'll do
9 it.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: --easier
11 for all of us to take the information you give us--
12 -

13 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
14 Yeah.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: --to put
16 it in a newsletter.

17 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Right. But
18 what we're going to do is we're going to send it
19 now and we're going to give you our logo which is
20 good and I know you all are about sending out
21 newsletters at this time--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE:

23 [Interposing] Oh well not now. But soon--

24 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
25 Oh okay. Right.

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3 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: --in the
4 springtime--

5 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
6 Yeah.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: --in the
8 springtime, yeah.

9 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: We, I have
10 spoke to the Council many times about it but I
11 think it's our obligation to get you the material
12 ready for you to stick in your newsletter--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE:
14 [Interposing] Um-hum.

15 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --which makes
16 sense. We are doing a lot of advertising on it
17 but it's a big city, you know, for us to really
18 get out there, we need every avenue. And I was
19 just talking to my son last night, he's in this
20 marketing business and web marketing, and he gave
21 me a couple of good ideas which we're going to try
22 to pursue. For example to try to get some private
23 entities that do a lot of contact, for example
24 Netflix. That does a lot of work in New York
25 City; registers people all the time, to say well
as our public service, when you register with us,

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2 hey, sign up for this thing, click on this and put
3 you through to that website. Sign up for it.

4 Whether we can have them take the information and
5 sign up, I don't know, but we can push it that
6 way. That's a hard thing to do and I would say is
7 you all move around and talk to private sector
8 people, say you know what you should do? You
9 could do a public service. Put it on your
10 website. This little click on to Notify. You
11 want to know something that's happening, an
12 emergency in New York City? Click on it. Come
13 onto our--which--you can come onto NYC.GOV or our
14 website and just go onto it. And they'll click
15 onto it and hopefully 50% of them will actually
16 sign up. So it's that multiplier. I think we're
17 still in the stage of trying to make sure our
18 people know about the program but we're going to
19 try and do more of that outreach.

20 And that was just one idea he came
21 up with off the top of his head which I thought
22 was a brilliant idea. But he is my son, so what
23 are you going to do?

24 [Laughter]

25 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Now in

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3 asking this question I might reveal that I'm more
4 of the Mrs. McGillicutty generation than you might
5 think. But you said you were in the process of
6 working on PSAs that you can broadcast. I'm
7 curious why you didn't go to that mode to begin
8 with. You know, because it's--that broadcast
9 television, a PSA on broadcast television seems to
10 have been so effective for so many campaigns. You
11 remember the, you know, Only You Can Prevent
12 Forest Fires--

13 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
14 Right.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: --you
16 know, and as a kid, you would see that all the
17 time and still remember it. And the one with the
18 Indian with the tear coming down his face as he
19 saw the pollution--

20 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
21 Right.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Those are,
23 those have great impact and I'm curious why you
24 didn't try broadcast television as a PSA, from the
25 beginning.

COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Let me just

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3 tell you a little bit about broadcast that you're
4 talking about. Virtually all of those are run
5 through the Ad Council. The Ad Council takes on
6 national programs; it won't take on local
7 programs. But, you know, they are--they have
8 taken on a local program for us. They selected to
9 do our preparedness message, our Ready New York
10 Preparedness Message. And so we just launched
11 this, if your world turns upside down, you don't
12 have to--it's really kind of a snappy PSA, TV,
13 very costly but we put a certain amount of money
14 in, they multiply it by about 100 times 'cause
15 they can get this stuff for free. So one is cost
16 is a big factor.

17 Another is we tried to land with
18 the Ad Council to idea to pick up a program like
19 this, pick our Ready New York; they did pick up
20 the local program. So I think for the idea of
21 getting PSAs that we can afford in a budget that
22 we can afford, it's tough. And we will create a
23 budget and we'll do PSAs now. I think the other
24 reason, if we wanted to develop this program to
25 see exactly what it is we want to put out there
before we say and pick something, well I'm going

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3 to know about the little fire you had that
4 occurred down the block, food on the stove or
5 we're going to learn about, you know, a traffic
6 accident, they're not. So we want to make sure we
7 know where this whole system goes. I think we've
8 got a good picture of that. We also want to know
9 what the public wants in the system. And we go to
10 the PSA, we can touch those buttons. So I think
11 one is the cost is really expensive, especially
12 TV. Ad Council is a possibility and we continue
13 to pursue them on that. They were good enough to
14 pick up on the kickoff on National Preparedness
15 Month, our Ready New York message which is first
16 rate. And you will see, it's starting to come out
17 now. I just saw it on TV. I'm hearing it on
18 radio. Those are millions and millions of
19 dollar's worth of advertising that our investment
20 could only be a couple of hundred thousand
21 dollars.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: So I'm
23 not--I wasn't aware that it's a major investment
24 for a public--

25 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
It is.

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3 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: --service
4 announcement. You're paying for air time?

5 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: We pay some
6 portion of the development time, not air time--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE:
8 [Interposing] For the--

9 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --to develop
10 the message. That's the cost--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE:
12 [Interposing] That's the cost.

13 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --the air time
14 we get free.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Right.
16 That's what I thought--

17 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
18 That's through an Ad Council that has that.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Right.

20 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: New York City
21 doesn't quite have that reach yet.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: I see. I
23 see.

24 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: But we're
25 getting there.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: So I

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2 would, again, just ask you to send me and the rest
3 of us the information in our offices about how to
4 sign up. I'm sure that my colleague Gale Brewer
5 has--

6 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
7 Be happy to do it.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: --it
9 backwards and forwards already. But that's--we're
10 trying to catch up so [laughing] just another
11 question. And now I'm not clear from your
12 testimony, you said you were developing the
13 emergency broadcast system. Is the one that we
14 see all the time on broadcast TV not the one that
15 would be used in a case of an emergency?

16 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: No it is. The
17 ES system exists. It's a national system. We
18 have a local connection to local broadcasters. So
19 that is the one we're using, the ES system. The
20 ETVRS system is a system where we can go to
21 selected and agreed broadcasters and major media
22 in New York City and we can broadcast under that
23 system. So those systems exist. We are
24 continuing to build that out. What we've done is
25 we've taken that whole office and put it in OEM so

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2 that all the things, EAS, ETVRS, NYC.GOV, 311,
3 Notify and all of the things are all in our office
4 now in one Office of Public Notification. So that
5 we can get notification messages out through all
6 those avenues, Notify just being one of them. But
7 nothing has changed with those. They will just
8 get better and we'll continue to work more, more
9 connections, better connections, fiber
10 connections, as compared to wire connections that
11 we had in the past. So they work better in more
12 sites around the City so the Mayor can, if he has
13 to speak or one of us can speak, and people can
14 tie into that immediately, they can tie in
15 anywhere else in the City. So they can pick up
16 what's going out and broadcast it. They don't
17 have to be physically with us. So we--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE:
19 [Interposing] So the basic system is in pace--

20 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
21 The basic system is there and getting better.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: And you're
23 just--

24 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
25 We keep adding on--

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3 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: --you're
4 refining and developing that.

5 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --and we're
6 adding on Notify as a bigger part of that.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Right.
8 Just one final question, you know, there are
9 efforts going on it increase communication
10 internally among the Fire Department in terms of
11 locating fire fighters in--

12 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
13 Right.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: --in
15 buildings, and they're trying the radio frequency
16 ID technology. I'm just curious as you're the
17 expert on communication in the City, you and OEM,
18 and you're the former Fire Commissioner. I'm just
19 curious; do you have any role to play or any
20 involvement in trying to get that communication
21 system within the Fire Department?

22 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: No we are not
23 really doing that. That's an operational issue
24 for the Fire Department. And I have my area,
25 that's not one. I don't do the same with PD. If
they want our help they get it. And we will of

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3 course comment if needed. But that's a program
4 they are--Chief Spadafora is here so, he can talk
5 for a minute about that.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Sure.

7 CHIEF SPADAFORA: We have a pilot
8 program that we've started, electronic riding list
9 , where we have a receive on all the apparatus and
10 the Fire Department, the fire fighters have
11 uniforms that have a computer chip, radio, RFID
12 chip, and the reader in the apparatus picks up the
13 information on the individual fire fighter. That
14 goes onto a screen inside the apparatus. That
15 information we can get downtown at headquarters so
16 that we'll be able to know exactly who's working,
17 via the computer, via the internet, throughout the
18 whole City. So we're working on that and like I
19 said it's on a pilot right now. But that's like
20 the first stage in regards to accountability. And
21 then we're also looking at tracking technologies
22 using RFID. That's not there yet in regards to
23 the fire service. There are a number of groups
24 that are looking into it. It's being use din the
25 military but in the fire service it's a little
different environment with heat, smoke and the way

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3 we operate inside buildings. So we're looking at
4 various technologies in regards to tracking, fire
5 fighter tracking. Right now we're at the
6 accountability stage.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Well my
8 understanding was that the RFID, radio frequency
9 ID, could not only be used to determine who's
10 working but more importantly who's in the building
11 and who's fighting the fire and where they are.

12 CHIEF SPADAFORA: Right. Well like
13 I said, phase one is accountability in regards to
14 who's working. Phase two, what we're looking at,
15 to utilize this type technology in our handy-
16 talkies in order to track fire fighters in the
17 building. It can give maydays, that information
18 can go out over the handy-talkie to a database to
19 a screen outside the building so we know who gave
20 that message out in regards to the handy-talkie,
21 the mayday message so that we can track it. Right
22 now our radios only pick up that message for seven
23 seconds and then it's gone. So we want to be able
24 to capture it for a long period of time, during
25 the operation. So that's what we're looking at
now.

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3 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: How long
4 will this pilot go?

5 CHIEF SPADAFORA: This pilot, we're
6 going to run it for, I think, two months.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Two more
8 months?

9 CHIEF SPADAFORA: Yes.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: I see.
11 Great. Thank you, and thank you all for being
12 here.

13 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Fine, thank
14 you.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: thank you.
17 We've been joined by Council Member James and
18 Council Member Crowley. Council Member James has
19 a question. She's not on Notify NYC but she will
20 soon be.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Thank you.

22 [Pause]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: No? Thank
24 you Madam Chair for outing me, I appreciate that.
25 Question. There are a number of information
options and I guess this goes to the question as

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3 to why I am not on the system and that is there
4 continues to be a gap between the haves and the
5 have nots. And a significant number of my
6 constituents in Brooklyn and beyond Brooklyn still
7 are not on the internet. Still do not have access
8 to technology. I still can communicate to them
9 via the phone and via the old fashioned way,
10 paper. And I notify them with regards to all
11 events, at town hall meetings, at Community Board
12 meetings, and Precinct Council meetings, at block
13 association meetings, at church gatherings. The
14 church in my community is the largest conveyor of
15 information. That is where, when I want to get
16 the word out to Brooklyn, I go to my churches.
17 They tend to be the best lines of communication.
18 And so I know that we are in a technology age and
19 I know that it's most efficient and most
20 effective. But unfortunately because of the
21 technology gap, I tend to rely upon, as they say
22 in parts of Brooklyn, old school ways.

23 So to what extent are we still
24 relying upon that type of--that option as a form
25 of communication and are we just now moving
towards technology and leaving the rest of the

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community outside of the superhighway?

3 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Well for the
4 issue of, for example, knowing about Notify,
5 registering for it, you know, you can do that
6 through 311. Most people have telephones and they
7 can do that. So we are not doing--leaving those
8 people behind. What we're doing, for example, one
9 of the programs that will happen will be starting
10 posting this information on City vehicles so that
11 as they drive around the City, hey what's this
12 about? You know, this is the logo kind of--snappy
13 logo. It's in newspapers. So we're still going
14 to the hard media. We're not going all
15 technology. We are, of course, using Twitter and
16 the others where lots of people do hang out. But
17 we are definitely not doing that--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES:

19 [Interposing] Okay.

20 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --and we do
21 presentations now, which we do a lot of in
22 Brooklyn--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES:

24 [Interposing] Yes you do.

25 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --and a lot of

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2 that at faith-based groups. And now part of our
3 presentation is to say at the end, and there's
4 this thing called Notify. You want to know more
5 about it, here's a form right here. Come on up,
6 fill this out, we'll put you in the system. If
7 you don't like it you can come off it. But it's a
8 good way for you to start getting information.
9 And most of the information that we're seeking
10 from them are just how do we get in touch with
11 them--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES:
13 [Interposing] Right.

14 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --and what do
15 they want. How do they want to get notified? So
16 I know that in this world everyone talks about all
17 the super technology. It's a lot of fun--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES:
19 [Interposing] Right.

20 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --it doesn't
21 necessarily work for everyone.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Right.

23 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: It doesn't
24 even necessarily work for me--

25 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES:

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3 [Interposing] Right

4 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: -and I'm in
5 this business.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Right.

7 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: But we're
8 doing both. And we're going to--Letitia, we're
9 going to do both of that.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Thank you.
11 And as you know, seniors, though, you know, I have
12 equipped most of my senior centers with technology
13 and infrastructure and hardware, computers.
14 They're still intimidated by it.

15 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Yeah.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: And so they
17 get frustrated by it. And so again the best lines
18 of communication is when I come in and sit down
19 during lunch and talk to them. That's the best
20 way to get information out. And last but not
21 least I know that we are moving towards 211, is it
22 also going to be available on 211? Which is a
23 form of, an option for information with respect to
24 social services and human services in the City of
25 New York.

COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Well we would

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3 certainly push for that--
4 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES:
5 [Interposing] Okay.
6 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --211's not up
7 and designed yet that I know. I mean it's in the
8 process--
9 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES:
10 [Interposing] Yes.
11 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --but this
12 would make sense. I think anyone who has an
13 interest in what's happening in the City should
14 say--and by the way here's what you've got, and,
15 you know, there's this other service out there
16 that you maybe want to sign up for so you have,
17 you can get information. So I think that that
18 makes a lot of sense--
19 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES:
20 [Interposing] Thank you--
21 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --certainly.
22 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: --and I will
23 get online, I, you know, I do have--
24 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
25 It can be through the phone, it can be through
text, it could be through your computer, it could

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3 be through your Blackberry. You have choices.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: I have
5 choices. A lot of my constituents do not--

6 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
7 No they can do it through the phone.

8 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Right.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: So--

10 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
11 Telephone.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: --I
13 recognize that there are a large number of my
14 constituents who take advantage of my Face Book,
15 take advantage of my--I'm on You Tube, Face Book,
16 Twitter, you name it. I've got a blog, Tish James
17 blog, whatever, whatever, whatever--

18 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
19 I know I read it every day.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Thank you
21 very much--

22 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
23 [Chuckling]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: --so we have
25 that as well. But at the same time I also have a
large constituency saying it's important that I

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2 have one foot here and one foot there--

3 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]

4 Absolutely.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: --and bridge

6 the gap--

7 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]

8 Yeah.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: --thank you.

10 I appreciate that.

11 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: No with the

12 seniors, which is of great interest to us, we are

13 using those entities that reach out to seniors--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES:

15 [Interposing] Yeah.

16 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --you know,

17 Meals on Wheels, visiting nurse services, a whole

18 bunch of people who touch seniors, not in the

19 centers but even in their homes, many of whom are

20 homebound. So we are pushing a lot of information

21 about Notify now out to them through the

22 providers. We have a relationship with these

23 people and talk to them on a regular basis--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES:

25 [Interposing] Yes.

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3 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --and we
4 provide them up front information. Put this out
5 there, not only to the individual but to the
6 families you have contact with as well. So people
7 know.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: And if you
9 can also include information in the newsletter
10 that goes out to the thousands and thousands of
11 New York City Housing Authority residents that
12 would be appreciated as well. Thank you--

13 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
14 We're also going to send you our information so
15 you can put it in your newsletter--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES:
17 [Interposing] Please.

18 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --and everyone
19 will do that. We'll ask you to do that--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES:
21 [Interposing] Thank you--

22 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
23 We talked about NYCHA earlier--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES:
25 [Interposing] Okay.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: --thank you.

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3 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Council Member
5 Eugene, thank you very much for joining us. Two
6 other quick questions, one is, again this is
7 something you touched on, but how, I mean we all
8 have complete confidence in the four people with
9 us here today and your agencies, but who is in a
10 codified fashion making the decisions about what
11 goes out? I know it's a stressful decision but
12 how is it made, who makes it, etcetera? Between
13 the alerts and the notifications--

14 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
15 The decision is made by the Incident Commander in
16 the field. So it's either Fire, PD, EMS or any of
17 the other agencies now, DOH, DEP, who's got on the
18 SIMS, the Incident Command, be it unified or
19 single. And I don't want to go into SIMS, it's
20 too complicated--

21 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
22 Hum, I understand.

23 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --but we have
24 that worked out pretty well. So we know who that
25 is. And that is being made with Incident
Commanders in the field, sometimes through the

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operations section of the agency, sometimes directly. We can go out directly because we have people there. So if we have to, we talk directly to the Incident Commander. Many times in a really stressful environment we're going to use that operations center because we can talk there and the Incident Commander cannot. So the decision is made by the Incident Commander with their operations section and OEM. We're going to decide when that message goes out but we're going to be guided almost wholly with what the Incident Commander is telling us. The form of the message and what we put out and how we craft it is something we've been working on for two years now. And we have that pretty well set. And the size of the message, we're constrained. So all of that is work, and that's the way it is. The Incident Commander ultimately is the entity that says this is a--this is this kind of situation; it's a bad situation out here. That is going to come to us. OEM is then going to say a message should go out. Ultimately I can decide to send a message out as can the Incident Commander. That's a notification, telling you something is happening.

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3 If there's an alert, where we're going to tell
4 people to do something, that has to come from the
5 Incident Commander. That's the boots on the
6 ground who knows precisely what we want to tell
7 people to do. Come out; exit your building to the
8 right. Come out and exit your building to the
9 left. We're very rarely ever going to do that.
10 But if we have to do it, we have the capacity to
11 do it--

12 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]

13 Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --and if we're
15 going to do it, it's going to be guided by the
16 Incident Commander in the field through the
17 operations section. But if it's going to be
18 whether we tell people--I'm sorry, just one last
19 thing, if we're going to tell people an incident
20 is occurring that is something that the Incident
21 Commander can do through the operations center or
22 OEM can do.

23 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: One more
24 question, go ahead.

25 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: My only
question, too, to follow up on that is how fluid

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2 is the message? Let's say there is a chemical
3 attack in Lower Manhattan, god forbid. Do you,
4 you then can tell people not to travel below 42nd
5 Street? Or what--how--you would then have a
6 different message for people who are already in
7 Lower Manhattan. So how fluid is the message and
8 how can you vary a message based on the incident?

9 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Well you know
10 that we can do it by zip codes, right?

11 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Right, you have
12 the zip code, right.

13 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: So we could
14 hit the zip codes and say a slightly different
15 message to those people if we had to.

16 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Right.

17 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: We certainly
18 would be putting out even in the public message to
19 avoid that area because it's dangerous or
20 something of that sort. So those are things we
21 could do. Everything we do has to be very, very
22 careful with--

23 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [Interposing]
24 Right.

25 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --you don't

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3 want to create public panic. We want to create
4 public action that is helpful to helpful, not
5 harmful. But we have the capacity, I've just told
6 you, we'll have more capacity, as we get into our
7 new system, more granular, the more granular it
8 could be, the more we can take a circle, bigger or
9 smaller, and say okay for this group, let's give a
10 little bit more direct stuff. And we could do
11 alerts. It's not something we're going to do very
12 often. It's very, very dangerous thing to do, to
13 tell people what to do which may be
14 counterintuitive. But we will do it if we have to
15 and we think it's going to save lives. And we'll
16 only do it if the Incident Commander signs off,
17 literally signs off on the message before we hit
18 the button. They sign off on that message. That
19 we'll only do.

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Now you've
21 expanded Notify New York City but when you pick
22 the original pilot neighborhoods there were
23 specific reasons why each of those neighborhoods
24 were picked, Lower Manhattan, Rockaway's, City
25 Island, whatever.

COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Parts of

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3 Staten Island, southeast.

4 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Staten Island--

5 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]

6 Lots of - - .

7 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --so are you

8 now aware of particular nuances that every

9 District faces? Is that something that you

10 consider when people register or is that something

11 that your people are sensitized to?

12 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: We know the

15 City. And we map, GIS we call it, Geographic

16 Information System. We know sensitive locations

17 everywhere around the City. Every time an

18 incident happens we can pull that up. We know the

19 areas that are prone to flooding. We know the

20 areas where there are hospitals and nursing homes.

21 We know when there are sensitive locations where

22 something may be happening and there's a

23 "sensitive location" and something could be deemed

24 to be touching that. So we are acutely aware of

25 what is going on in this City. We are mapping

more and more of the City, below grade and above.

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3 We see above grade. Now we have all the subway
4 stations mapped. We know what's below grade. We
5 know the big stations in Manhattan go down four or
6 five levels. We know where they are and they're
7 available to PD and Fire and the first responding
8 agencies and our own agency, if we have to craft
9 something. That information is available when we
10 have to talk to the public as well.

11 But this is not something that we
12 do lightly, as you understand that, I said that.
13 So I'm going to say it again. We're careful when
14 we use it. But we have the capacity to do exactly
15 what you said.

16 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay.

17 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: The language
18 issue, is that down the line, to be able to send
19 messages in different languages?

20 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Yeah no, we're
21 working on that, Henry can answer that.

22 MR. JACKSON: Yeah we're--

23 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
24 I don't recall - - .

25 MR. JACKSON: --looking at
different ways of doing that, different

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2 technologies that could translate quickly 'cause
3 again that's the problem, we have to get the
4 information quickly. So that's something we're
5 working on and we will be working on--

6 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
7 Without the languages we are--

8 MR. JACKSON: --after the RFP.

9 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --looking at
10 right now.

11 MR. JACKSON: It's a top, I think
12 six in the executive--

13 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
14 Can we talk into the microphone?

15 MR. JACKSON: Yeah, yeah.

16 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: What did you
17 just say?

18 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: We can do
19 that.

20 MR. JACKSON: I said, whatever it
21 says in the Local Laws, was those top six
22 languages, I can't remember what they are--

23 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
24 Right. No I understand that but what's the timing
25 on having that available or is it now? Maybe I

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2 SERVICES and TECHNOLOGY IN GOVERNMENT

3 don't know--

4 MR. JACKSON: [Interposing] It is
5 not now. We're looking at it because it is
6 complicated--it is a complicated process to get a
7 translation especially in the number of languages
8 and the technology, we're not quite sure is quite
9 there. So we're looking at it. So we're looking
10 to get it into the next phase of it but again it
11 depends on what capabilities--

12 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
13 Is that something that you can work with the
14 Department of Defense on because they have a lot
15 of languages successes?

16 MR. JACKSON: No. We haven't
17 worked with them.

18 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay. I would
19 suggest that--

20 MR. JACKSON: [Interposing] Okay.

21 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: --just as an
22 idea. I keep suggesting DOD, DOD.

23 MR. JACKSON: Okay.

24 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: The other
25 question, finally, is the 311 operator, when he or
she takes a call just generally for all these

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2 different things, we always hear about alternative
3 side of the street parking. I don't have a car so
4 I don't really care about it--

5 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
6 People care--

7 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: --but a lot of
8 people do.

9 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Right.

10 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: And so could
11 that also be a place for Notify NYC or is there
12 already too much information when you call 311?
13 You do get a lot of stuff--

14 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
15 If I could--yeah.

16 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: --that I don't
17 want to hear about.

18 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: If I could
19 answer that, the Department of Education, you
20 know, you want to add something to the curriculum,
21 it's very hard to do as you well know. I think it
22 certainly is an area. How we could do it, good
23 question. Whether we could throw it on the front
24 plate when it opens up and tells you about
25 alternate side street parking and other things.

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3 There, obviously 'cause there's so much and every
4 agency has something.

5 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Um-hum.

6 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: It might be a
7 really good point. We'll certainly look a little
8 closer at that.

9 MR. JACKSON: Yeah and they're
10 working with us now. They get every one of our
11 notifications and in fact they have a Twitter page
12 where they're re-Tweeting what we send out--

13 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
14 Yes for the registration we're talking about--

15 MR. JACKSON: [Interposing] Oh for
16 registration--

17 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
18 No I'm thinking about, just again, trying to get
19 more people on the system--

20 MR. JACKSON: [Interposing] Yeah
21 and they--

22 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: --using the
23 311 operator.

24 MR. JACKSON: [Interposing] Right.
25 And they serve in the support capacity so if
you're having a trouble online with it they have a

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2 whole script to help you get through that process-

3 -

4 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]

5 Yeah.

6 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]

7 Right. If someone wants to know about how to

8 register they'll do that.

9 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: No I

10 understand--

11 MR. JACKSON: [Interposing] Yeah.

12 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]

13 It's a--

14 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: --I was just

15 trying to think about the front end--

16 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]

17 You're right. I understand your point--

18 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]

19 The front end. And then the only final question I

20 have is with, again, back to the MTA, because a

21 lot of people do have that. When people sign up,

22 maybe you explained this, for--there is an MTA

23 service, can they not also sign up simultaneously-

24 -

25 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]

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2 Yes--

3 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: --sign up for
4 your service or do they have to sign up twice?

5 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: I--

6 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
7 I know it's a state agency. I know it's not a
8 City agency.

9 MR. JACKSON: Sure. They would
10 have to sign up twice. The MTA has amazing
11 granularity by line on what you can get. And if
12 you sign up for everything, it never stops coming.
13 So--

14 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
15 [Laughing]

16 MR. JACKSON: --we're really doing,
17 you know, the large transportation incidents. But
18 they do give you a lot more granularity--

19 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
20 Okay.

21 MR. JACKSON: -and we, as the
22 Commissioner mentioned we work with them all the
23 time.

24 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I know you do.
25 I was just trying to think of an easier--

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3 MR. JACKSON: [Interposing] Yeah.

4 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: --way. I'm
5 always thinking about the customer.

6 MR. JACKSON: Sure.

7 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: It would be
8 nice to be able to take that over but remember, as
9 you know, people are very funny about just all of
10 a sudden getting messages--

11 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing]
12 I know.

13 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: --from
14 somewhere else. And so they are very particular.
15 And I appreciate that. They're very particular.
16 They don't want to be hounded by messages that
17 then become, you know, routine to them and they
18 don't pay attention to them. So those are tough
19 questions, they're good questions.

20 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: All right.
21 Thank you very much. I appreciate--

22 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]
23 Sure.

24 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: --we certainly
25 appreciate all of your testimony--

COMMISSIONER BRUNO: [Interposing]

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3 Okay.

4 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: --it was
5 incredibly helpful and I hope that you're able to
6 work with some of the incumbents on getting
7 information from them for their cell phone so.

8 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: Well I have to
9 say I actually enjoyed appearing here. It was
10 very good. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: All right.

12 COMMISSIONER BRUNO: You taught me
13 a couple of things.

14 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very
15 much. You're always helpful. Marc Ameruso,
16 Community Board 1, Manhattan, is our final
17 panelist. Marc.

18 [Pause]

19 MR. MARC AMERUSO: Good morning.
20 And I want to thank you for holding this important
21 public hearing on Notify NYC. My name is Marc
22 Ameruso; I'm Assistant Secretary of Community
23 Board 1 representing Community Board 1. CB1 was
24 very grateful that Lower Manhattan was one of the
25 first areas to have the pilot program for Notify
New York. And as many of you know in recent years

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3 CB1's experienced several emergencies that
4 dramatize the need for such a system, specifically
5 9/11. However there have been some other
6 incidents that have occurred, also the fire at 130
7 Liberty Street, also known as the Deutsche Bank
8 Building, that was in 2007. And residents were
9 concerned with that incident 'cause it was know as
10 a contaminated building and people were concerned
11 about inhaling smoke, reminiscent of the 9/11
12 toxic effects which is just, I guess, beginning to
13 be known at that time. And there was also, you
14 know, no notification to people and residents and
15 workers did not know what to do at that point.

16 In the aftermath of these
17 incidents, CB1 urged the City to develop this
18 notification for the City and we're very pleased
19 that it was launched and like I said CB1 was one
20 of the pilot communities. We've had a number of
21 users and constituents who have signed up for it
22 and we hope that the City will make modifications
23 to the program as incidents occur and as they
24 learn from those things.

25 At our Community Board meeting on
February 24th, 2009, CB1 unanimously passed a

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3 resolution which is attached with my submission
4 expressing concerns when no notice was given in
5 two recent high profile incidents. The first one
6 was the plane that landed in the Hudson River
7 which thank god everyone was safe. But there were
8 concerns, particularly in Battery Park City
9 whether there was a danger of breathing in the
10 fumes that were noticeably prevalent throughout
11 Battery Park City.

12 The second incident was the Wall
13 Street Journal Building, which is at the financial
14 center in Battery Park City where hazmat trucks
15 converged on the area when a white powder was
16 apparently received and there was no notification
17 to residents on that. More recently there was a
18 well-publicized incident which Air Force One flew
19 over Lower Manhattan so a picture could be taken
20 of the plane.

21 Many people told us that they would
22 have remained calm if they had been given advance
23 notice on these incidents. And particularly--or
24 just events occurring, some of them are not even
25 incidents. This kind of highlights, I guess,
particularly with the over-fly, the communication

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3 or lack of communication, I guess, between
4 agencies and/or branches of government in that
5 particular case. And like I said while not
6 dangerous, these events caused reasonable people
7 to be concerned about their safety.

8 CB1 believes that, pardon me;
9 additionally we've also had reports that certain
10 alerts are being received by some people but not
11 others within the same area. There are people
12 that testified to that at our Community Board
13 meetings. And I overheard the Commissioner's
14 testimony saying that they do this by zip code.
15 So we're trying to figure out if or I don't know
16 if they can tell us, why that's occurring 'cause
17 it actually shouldn't. So I wonder if they're
18 maintaining different lists or whatnot. So we
19 invite the City to come to our Community Board
20 meetings to explain these guidelines and also how
21 the chain of command works here. I mean who
22 decides finally from beginning to end when an
23 alert is going to be sent out or not sent out. Is
24 it the Incident Commander? Is it the
25 Commissioner? You know, who ultimately makes
these decisions?

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3 In addition we're also concerned
4 with the recent FDNY budget cuts that the
5 communication within buildings might be
6 compromised, you know, there's been documented
7 incidents of that as well. And we also had the
8 idea of using the new bus shelters with the
9 electronic message boards are to also link that up
10 to Notify NYC.

11 And the quote by Edward Skyler,
12 Deputy Mayor, where he said it can be useful
13 sometimes because it can help people make
14 decisions and other times because it can lower
15 their anxieties, that's a quote. And we
16 completely believe that that's true. So once
17 again thank you for the opportunity to comment.
18 You have my comments and a recent resolution from
19 Community Board 1 addressing many of our concerns.
20 And we think maybe improvements and/or
21 modifications that can be done. And we urge the
22 City to come to our Community Board meeting as
23 well. Maybe you can help us in that endeavor so
24 they can explain some of these issues to us. I'd
25 be happy to answer any questions.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I appreciate

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3 your testimony. I think the Community Boards are
4 the logical place for the City to go to do
5 outreach and to make sure that if there are issues
6 and concerns like you have that they are answered.
7 The helicopter incident you point out to and
8 whether there was a glitch in notifying as many
9 people as you would like to have been notified--

10 MR. AMERUSO: [Interposing] Um-hum.

11 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --that concerns
12 me too.

13 MR. AMERUSO: Um-hum.

14 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I think that
15 Commissioner Bruno did indicate that there's a
16 procedure, 24/7 where there are people now at OEM
17 who are sending out those messages--

18 MR. AMERUSO: [Interposing] Um-hum.

19 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --who have
20 guidelines. And I think that that's still
21 probably a work in progress when you talk about
22 citywide--

23 MR. AMERUSO: [Interposing] Um-hum.

24 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --notification

25 MR. AMERUSO: Um-hum.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: But I

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3 appreciate what you said and I think that the
4 Community Board should be in the vanguard of
5 publicizing.

6 MR. AMERUSO: Um-hum.

7 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: This whole
8 thing. When I see 19,000 people citywide
9 registered for it, I think that' we have a lot of
10 work to do and Community Boards are grassroots--

11 MR. AMERUSO: [Interposing] Yep.

12 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --I know that,
13 I was there a long time. So I think you're making
14 a good point.

15 MR. AMERUSO: Yeah we do encourage,
16 at every--pretty much every full Board meeting, we
17 do make notice of it. There are areas,
18 literature, when people walk in about it. The
19 guidelines you mentioned, are they publicly
20 available?

21 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Yes--

22 MR. AMERUSO: [Interposing] For
23 review?

24 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --they're in
25 the Commissioner's testimony today.

MR. AMERUSO: Okay.

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3 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: And I would--
4 I've not gone onto 311 to take a look at that
5 particular link--

6 MR. AMERUSO: [Interposing] Um-hum.

7 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --but I would
8 think that they're publicly available. And I
9 don't know if you were her but I expressed the
10 hope that we could even expand it a little bit to
11 include some more notifications. I had mentioned
12 the Level 1 child abuse, the Level 1 sex
13 offenders, rather, is something that I would like
14 to see included which is not now in the guidelines
15 which Commissioner Bruno spoke about.

16 MR. AMERUSO: That's an excellent
17 idea.

18 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: And I also
19 want to thank you 'cause I know your community is
20 particularly sensitive and has--

21 MR. AMERUSO: [Interposing] Um-hum.

22 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: --lots of
23 issues that could set much anxiety. I will
24 mention though, it was interesting because the
25 helicopter, small plane crash, 'cause I'm on
Notify NYC, was immediately broadcast.

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3 MR. AMERUSO: Um-hum.

4 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Probably
5 because the other incident was not and then just
6 the other day there was a helicopter over Central
7 Park for a movie, whatever.

8 MR. AMERUSO: Um-hum.

9 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: But that was
10 also broadcast 'cause people think--

11 MR. AMERUSO: [Interposing]

12 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: --that the
13 same thing that happened in terms of the fly-over
14 for the photo, I think they thought, worried, OEM,
15 worried that people would think the same and be
16 worked about the helicopter.

17 MR. AMERUSO: Um-hum.

18 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: So I think
19 they're trying to improve it but certainly your
20 experiences--

21 MR. AMERUSO: [Interposing] Um-hum.

22 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: --in your area
23 are--

24 MR. AMERUSO: [Interposing] Um-hum.
25 Um-hum.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: --incredibly

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important.

MR. AMERUSO: Um-hum.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: And I would love to have you put as much time in as you are so thank you very much for being here today.

MR. AMERUSO: Just on a personal note, I know occasionally it maybe you get--I get on my email, maybe 10 or 12 reports a day. And sometimes it's just a scaffold in Brooklyn. And it's very innocuous and doesn't seem like something that should be an emergency notification but then again we don't get notified when a plane crashed in the Hudson River. So how those decisions are made is--

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [Interposing] I think you should keep asking because I am--both of us are on and we haven't experience that--

MR. AMERUSO: [Interposing] Um-hum.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: --but maybe you should just check the zip codes, maybe they got them wrong. I don't know.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Did you register using--

MR. AMERUSO: [Interposing] Oh I

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2 SERVICES and TECHNOLOGY IN GOVERNMENT

2 did, yeah I registered--

3 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [Interposing]

4 Did you use five zip codes, is that what you did?

5 MR. AMERUSO: No I used my zip code

6 yeah.

7 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: So you

8 registered for the Notify New York City alert--

9 MR. AMERUSO: [Interposing] Um-hum.

10 Um-hum.

11 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --but you did

12 not indicate the five zip codes you were

13 interested in so--

14 MR. AMERUSO: [Interposing] Yeah I

15 did the five neighborhood zip codes, you know--

16 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [Interposing]

17 You did.

18 MR. AMERUSO: --Chinatown, Lower

19 Manhattan, up in the Village, you know, 13, 14,

20 12, yeah, so, um-hum, 107, um-hum.

21 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Because

22 originally when Notify New York City was in the

23 experimental stage--

24 MR. AMERUSO: [Interposing] Um-hum.

25 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --when the five

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2 Community Boards were selected they did not have
3 the five zip code option.

4 MR. AMERUSO: Um-hum.

5 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: So I know when
6 I registered, I registered for all citywide
7 alerts.

8 MR. AMERUSO: Um-hum.

9 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: But now people,
10 when it went citywide, the zip code option was
11 added which I think is good.'

12 MR. AMERUSO: Yeah. I agree.

13 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: No? Okay.

14 MR. AMERUSO: Thank you Madam
15 Chair.

16 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very
17 much. This hearing is concluded. It's always an
18 honor and a pleasure to work with Council Member
19 Vacca.

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: It's my honor
21 too.

22 [Gavel banging]

23 [END 1002.MP3]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Laura L. Springate certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura L. Springate". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Signature _____Laura L. Springate_____

Date _____October 28, 2009_____