



CityWatch Calling System Approved

Glenwood, MN

October 2005

Pope County will be installing a CityWatch Community Messaging System, a computerized calling system to be used in emergency situations. Pope County Sheriff Tom Larson told the commission he had received a grant of \$36,000 for a CityWatch notification system.

CityWatch is a computer aided calling system that can drive computer generated calls to homes. "We can have a database set up so that when we have a storm it calls the people we normally have the dispatcher call," said Larson. Currently, in the event of a storm, for example, the dispatcher's office calls hospitals and nursing homes to notify them. He said there are about 45 calls to make which is a lot when other activity is taking place, as it is in a storm. "If we had had this when we had the train wreck near Lowry it would have been very helpful," said Larson. "We could have notified all the people in Lowry." It could also be used by a hospital to notify staff in the event of an emergency, by the school system to notify families when students were being sent home early or when school is cancelled and similar things.

The system would send out a prerecorded message. Larson said that different databases could be created for various situations which could be used by other government systems. Larson recommended the 12-port system which would allow 24 calls per minute. In the event of a disaster which would require even more people be notified, Larson said that it would be possible to use similar systems in neighboring counties so that even more calls could be made every minute. The key aspect of the system is setting up the different databases for different types of calls.

"There is an application for the county," said Aziz. "We could use it to notify county employees not to come to work in the event of a storm or some other problem." The cost of the system is \$34,000, including a three-year service contract. Taxes bring the cost to just over \$36,000. The commission approved the purchase.