



CLIENT CASE STUDIES | CHICKASAW COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

Chickasaw Emergency Manager Keeps County Residents Informed of Potential Threats with OnSolve® CodeRED®

Customer Profile

Chickasaw County, Mississippi, has a population of 17,000 people with county seats in its cities of Houston and Okolona.

Problem

Chickasaw County officials needed a fast, dependable, and affordable means to alert citizens of pending natural disasters including tornadoes and ice storms.

Solution

Using CodeRED, officials can now reach citizens across the county by phone, text, mobile app, TTD, and more with critical alerts and recovery information.

Chickasaw County, Mississippi can have extreme weather any time of year, and critical communications keep residents safe and aware.

From Tornadoes to Snow to Ice Storms

Residents of Chickasaw County are used to weather emergencies ranging from tornadoes to ice storms, and as long as they know what's coming, they know how to protect themselves.

In the past, many in the area relied on weather radios for advance warning of extreme conditions, which was indeed helpful. However, sometimes one side of the county would be basking in sunshine while the other side was threatened by tornadoes, and the weather report was often not specific enough to let those in the path of danger know they needed to seek safety. Linda Griffin, Director of the Chickasaw County Emergency Management Agency wanted a way to alert those directly in the path of danger; she found her solution in the OnSolve CodeRED critical communications product.

Benefit

Residents are better informed and have actionable guidance without having to wait for radio reports or rely on speculation.

Targeted Communication Saves Lives

When a tornado strikes, it's hard to predict what path it will follow and what damage it may inflict. But if local residents receive a warning, they can head to a designated safe shelter or find a secure location within a nearby building. Those predictive warnings are vital in saving lives, and Griffin counts on CodeRED to do the job.

"Just about every one carries a cell phone these days, so even if they are far from a radio or the local news, they can get an emergency alert," said Griffin. "In the case of some of our older folks, they know me and who I am, so hearing a recorded message in my voice tells them the message is important."

Snowstorms and ice storms may be more predictable than tornadoes, but they can cause just as much damage. As a result, Griffin sends an alert to let everyone know what to expect and precautions to take as storms develop. And although CodeRED was initially installed to alert people of weather emergencies, the county uses it to share a variety of useful information.

Notification Is Not Just for Emergencies

When Chickasaw County's City of Houston suffered an industrial fire in a building housing two million pounds of polyfoam, the flames generated a tremendous amount of heavy black smoke. Citizens were quickly alerted that the fire was under control and were advised to turn their air conditioning off, close all windows, and shelter in place to avoid inhaling the smoke. By sending clear and informative messages, Griffin says she's better able to control rumors and encourage people to take protective actions.

Griffin uses CodeRED alerts for multiple types of communication, including requests for citizens to help locate a missing Alzheimer patient, or disseminate Amber alerts. In some cases she issues an alert just to calm and provide accurate information to residents, as in a case when a nearby county suffered a contaminated water scare that didn't affect Chickasaw County. Ms. Griffin also finds the power of CodeRED invaluable when there's a planned power outage or other inconvenience that may generate questions and concerns if people aren't aware ahead of time.

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— Linda Griffin

Director of the Chickasaw County
Emergency Management Agency

The Solution: CodeRED

CodeRED is versatile so it can be used by multiple county agencies, including the fire department and law enforcement. Griffin likes both the system’s simplicity and the customer service she gets with it. “We have five people that can hit the button to fire off an alert,” said Griffin. “But if we’re all tied up with the emergency at hand, I can designate someone else to take care of it. Even if they’ve never sent an alert before, with a quick call to the folks at CodeRED they can figure it out.” Rather than wait for media to pick up the story, town officials can keep people updated and informed throughout an event.

How emergency managers and others use CodeRED:

- Activate evacuation plans and guide and direct residents to safety in the case of hurricane or other disaster
- Issue automated emergency alerts to apprise residents of water or power status after systems are interrupted
- Provided timely local information from a trusted source to reassure and inform anxious residents

The End Result

Director Griffin appreciates the customer support that comes along with CodeRED, saying, “As far as support from your staff, we couldn’t ask for anything better! All it takes is one phone call for assistance and staff jumps to help. We love the system and are very pleased with the service it provides.”

[Visit OnSolve.com/CodeRED](https://onsolve.com/CodeRED) to learn more.

