

Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security News Release
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Idaho State Alert and Warning System becoming more accessible to Idahoans

In an effort to increase the State of Idaho's ability to notify its citizens in a time of emergency, The Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security (BHS) has entered into an agreement with MyState USA of Boise to develop and test the Idaho State Alert and Warning System (ISAWS).

ISAWS is available now to Idahoans with special needs throughout the state. It also is undergoing a pilot program for residents of Bonner County. That pilot program is scheduled to last until May 2010.

When fully implemented, ISAWS will enable Idahoans to receive emergency messages via cell phones, PDAs, email, home telephones and pagers. Citizens will be able to receive voice messages, text messages or both. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) now serving as Idaho's warning system also will be integrated into the ISAWS system. In addition, Amber Alerts can be relayed via this system to citizens if they choose to receive those alerts.

Idahoans with special needs - such as the deaf and hard of hearing, the blind and visually impaired, wheelchair bound and bedridden citizens, citizens who are dependent on oxygen, citizens who require the assistance of service animals and any other citizen with a special requirement - may immediately enroll in the ISAWS notification system at <https://mystateusa.com/alertSignup.aspx?region=670>.

Bonner County is the pilot county for the new program. Its residents without special needs, including those who want to receive the information in Spanish, may register for the pilot program at the above Web site. "We have been extremely impressed with the new system and its capabilities so far," said Bob Howard, Bonner County's emergency management director.

Based on the Bonner County test, MyState USA and the Idaho BHS will open enrollment to the remainder of the state. "We have a duty to provide accurate information to Idahoans during an emergency as quickly as possible," said Col. Bill Shawver, Idaho BHS director. "ISAWS will help us accomplish that mission."

<http://www.bhs.idaho.gov/> <http://mystateusa.com/>

Note to reporters: The Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security is the State of Idaho's emergency management agency. Please note that Idaho BHS is an Idaho-specific agency, and it is not the same thing as the federal Department of Homeland Security. Within the State of Idaho organizational chart, Idaho BHS is aligned under the State of Idaho Military Division.

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