V. St. Clair County Capacity to Address Hazards

The purpose of conducting a capability assessment is to determine the ability of the local community to implement a comprehensive mitigation strategy and to identify potential opportunities for establishing or enhancing specific mitigation policies, programs, or projects. Each community has a unique set of capabilities, including authorities, policies, programs, staff, funding and other resources available to accomplish mitigation and reduce long-term vulnerability. Education and awareness within the community is vital. The overall goal of the Hazard Mitigation Plan is risk reduction and community safety.

Core Capabilities

This All-Hazard Mitigation Plan for St. Clair County, Michigan was prepared with input from county residents, responsible local officials and with the support of the Michigan State Police-Emergency Management Homeland Security Division (MSP/EMHSD) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This hazard mitigation plan is intended to guide the county toward greater disaster resistance in harmony with the character and needs of the community. For this Hazard Mitigation Plan update, the core capabilities and ability to address hazards and vulnerabilities has been examined and revised in accordance to Presidential Policy Directive 8: National Preparedness (PPD-8). This Presidential Policy Directive describes the Nation’s approach to preparing for the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk to the security of the United States. National preparedness is the shared responsibility of our whole community. Every member contributes, including individuals, communities, the private and nonprofit sectors, faith-based organizations, and Federal, State, and Local governments. We describe our security and resilience posture through the core capabilities that are necessary to deal with great risks, and we will use an integrated, layered, and all-of-Nation approach as our foundation.

Individual and community preparedness is fundamental to our success. By providing the necessary knowledge and skills, we seek to enable the whole community to contribute to and benefit from disaster preparedness. This includes children, individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, diverse communities, and people with limited English proficiency. Their needs and contributions must be integrated into our efforts. Each community contributes to hazard mitigation and strengthens our preparedness by preparing for the risks that are most relevant and urgent for them individually.

The national risk analysis that helped identify the Core Capabilities was based upon major incidents, including terrorism, natural disasters, and other emergencies for which the United States should prepare. Therefore, the Core Capabilities at the national level, and within St. Clair County, are “all hazards” and not designed for any one scenario.

St. Clair County has developed a risk assessment program that details which threats and hazards pose the greatest risk to the region’s people and critical infrastructure. The region has further defined which capabilities are most needed for preventing, protecting against, mitigating, responding to and recovering from those identified threats and hazards. In addition, certain county plans detail local, state and federal roles and responsibilities following an incident caused by a high risk hazard, (e.g., catastrophic earthquake or chlorine tank explosion). Those Operational Area roles and responsibilities in each plan were evaluated to inform St. Clair County capability outcome statements, measures and metrics for the Core Capabilities.

In accordance to Federal standards, St. Clair County has developed the hazard mitigation plan and identified core capability targets. St. Clair County plans to review and update local plans in accordance with timelines established. Strategies have been developed to educate citizens on threats and hazards in the community. In addition, there are proposals to increase resiliency, and action plans that protect the lives, health, safety, and property of the citizens of St. Clair County from the impacts of hazards and threats.
### Table 5.1: Core Capabilities by Mission Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevention</th>
<th>Protection</th>
<th>Mitigation</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Recovery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Public Information and Warning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Operational Coordination</strong></td>
<td><strong>Economic Recovery</strong></td>
<td><strong>Health and Social Services</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Forensics and Attribution
- Intelligence and Information Sharing
- Interdiction and Disruption
- Screening, Search, and Detection
- Access Control and Identity Verification
- Cybersecurity
- Intelligence and Information Sharing
- Interdiction and Disruption
- Physical Protective Measures
- Risk Management for Protection Programs and Activities
- Screening, Search, and Detection
- Supply Chain Integrity and Security
- Community Resilience
- Long-term Vulnerability Reduction
- Risk and Disaster Resilience Assessment
- Threats and Hazard Identification
- Critical Transportation
- Environmental Response/Health and Safety
- Fatality Management Services
- Infrastructure Systems
- Mass Care Services
- Mass Search and Rescue Operations
- On-scene Security and Protection
- Operational Communications
- Public and Private Services and Resources
- Public Health and Medical Services
- Situational Assessment
- Economic Recovery
- Housing
- Infrastructure Systems
- Natural and Cultural Resources
**County Government**

St. Clair County is governed by the Commission/Appointed Administrator form of government. This form is characterized by an official who has a significant degree of authority over most aspects of county administration. The county administrator is appointed by the Board of Commissioners (BOC), which is the legislative and policy – making body of the county. The BOC consists of seven members elected at – large for two – year terms. The BOC and Administrator provide community leadership, develop policies to guide the county in delivering services and achieving community goals, and encourage citizen awareness and involvement.

In addition to the Commission/Appointed Administrator structure, the county government is organized into the following departments (www.stclaircounty.org): Administration, Airport, Animal Shelter, Buildings and Grounds, County Clerk, Courts, Drain Commissioner, Emergency Management, Environmental Services, Equalization, Friend of the Court, Health, Human Resources, Humane Law Enforcement, Information Technology, Juvenile Center, Library, Marine Patrol, Metropolitan Planning, MSU Extension, Parks and Recreation, Prosecuting Attorney, Public Guardian, Register of Deeds, Road Commission, Sheriff, Staff Resource Pool, Treasurer, and Veterans’ Affairs. Many of these departments play a pivotal role in planning for safety and preparing for emergencies. In regards to planning for and responding to hazard events, the key rudiments of the county’s organization are:

- **Administration:** This department is responsible for preparation of budgets, reports, resolutions and communications for the Board of Commissioners, as well as serving as a liaison between County Departments and the Board of Commissioners. The Administrator/Controller’s Office has the task of developing systems and programs that will enable the County to provide more effective and efficient services to our citizens.

- **Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management:** HSEM’s primary responsibility is to provide for the safety of county residents and visitors within St. Clair County, along with our neighboring communities. This is accomplished through a multi – hazard planning process that involves mitigation, preparation, response and recovery, combined with a strong working relationship with all levels of government and the private sector. HSEM committed to provide a quality service to those people with a continuous goal of improving those services.

- **Sheriff’s Department:** In addition to maintaining the Jail and the care of the inmates, the Sheriff also provides police services to those unincorporated areas of the County, provides contractual police services to five townships, operates a Drug Task Force enforcement division, operates a Marine Patrol, and handles over 40,000 calls for police service each year.

- **Health Department:** The St. Clair County Health Department picks up “indications” about disease and health risks in the general population, and gives advice, education, and warnings to the community on how to prevent indicated diseases and health risks.

- **Road Commission:** The Road Commission strives to effectively and efficiently meet the transportation needs of the people to move families and goods through the county.

- **Metropolitan Planning Commission:** The MPC is composed of 11 members appointed by the Board of Commissioners and is staffed by professional planners and geographic information systems analysts. The MPC works to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors through comprehensive community wide planning programs that establish policies and plans to guide economic, physical, and social development. It also coordinates with local unit of government to ensure smart land use, transportation, environmental, economic, and safety planning. Among other things, the MPC:
  - Provides planning and zoning assistance to local communities through review and recommendations on local land use plans and zoning ordinances;
  - Conducts research on planning and zoning matters on behalf of local communities, provide sample ordinances, and collects and disseminates data; and
  - Provides data and conducts limited research for citizens and the public at large. The Commission can also provide aerial photography, wetland maps, topographical maps and soils surveys.
Section Five: St. Clair County Capacity to Address Hazards

Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management

The Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management are authorized through federal, state, and local legislation to provide an emergency plan for the county and communities. This plan is a multi-hazard plan that addresses natural, technological and terrorism incidents. Emergency planning involves people from a variety of agencies and at every level of government. County officials and local leaders are required to act in the most practical and efficient manner when called upon during an emergency incident. Coordinated events during past emergency situations have reduced the loss of life, property damage and the disruption of our daily lives. Testing the plan through simulated exercises occurs on a regular basis. The lessons learned through these exercises allow us to continue to improve our preparedness and response capabilities. In addition, several committees meet on a regular basis to review changes in technology and situations that occur throughout the country and world. After the events of September 11th, the office is now the coordination point for Homeland Security within the county. A task force has been established to support the functions of the office. Terrorism is the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, to further political or social objectives.

FBI Definition: Knowing about terrorism is the best defense against it. A terrorist attack in the St. Clair County remains a possibility. The ability to identify and adapt to emerging threats is a critical component of the U.S. Homeland Security Strategy. Prepare to deal with a terrorist incident by adapting many of the same techniques used to prepare for other crises.

- Be alert and aware of the surrounding area. The very nature of terrorism suggests that there may be little or no warning.
- Take precautions when traveling. Be aware of conspicuous or unusual behavior. Do not accept packages from strangers. Do not leave luggage unattended.
- Learn where emergency exits are located. Think ahead about how to evacuate a building, subway, or congested public area in a hurry. Learn where staircases are located.
- Notice your immediate surroundings. Be aware of heavy or breakable objects that could move, fall, or break in an explosion.
**St. Clair County Vital Infrastructure Team (VIT)**

Vital Infrastructure plays an important role in our way of life in St. Clair County. That’s why it is important to expand and reinforce critical infrastructure security and resilience. The St. Clair County Vital Infrastructure Team (VIT) coordinates critical infrastructure protection with public and private sector partners by collecting infrastructure data, assessing vulnerabilities, and developing all-hazards incident response and recovery plans. The St. Clair County Vital Infrastructure Team in conjunction with the St. Clair County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management conducts screenings to assess the security, operations and structure of facilities. The team examines both the interior and exterior surroundings and conditions of a facility. Team members then confer with staff on security measures, access controls, and current policies.

The purpose of site visits is to develop an awareness of the site’s physical security, operations, systems connectivity, and interdependency to critical infrastructure and key resources within the county. This is an all-hazards approach the team utilizes to identify risk, threat, vulnerability and consequence. In addition, the SCCVIT will create a site-specific report based on the teams’ observations, expert inputs, and background data. The team will have a non-disclosure agreement available which stipulates that all information collected will be kept confidential and is signed by all parties involved with the assessment. SCCVIT members are comprised of active or retired law enforcement, fire department and St. Clair County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management personnel.

The team utilizes a DHS developed computer software program identified as IRVS (Integrated Rapid Visual Screening). IRVS is a comprehensive screening system designed to help the team evaluate risk and resiliency for buildings from multiple potential threats including blast, chemical, biological, and radiological release, plus natural hazards such as floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, and earthquakes. Police, Fire, and Emergency Management personnel, as well as facility owners and managers, can easily use the IRVS and a building-design background is not required. IRVS allows users to quickly identify, inventory, and rank the building and infrastructure for both risk and resiliency, using a secure data collection process. This is accomplished by providing data about the site, answering a series of questions in the IRVS software, and letting the program calculate the results.

- Performing an IRVS is a three step process
- The site visit should take about 3-5 hours
- Personnel familiar with the building, security protocols, policies and procedures should be available to accompany the team members
Section Five: St. Clair County Capacity to Address Hazards

St. Clair County Emergency Notification Systems

St. Clair County has substantial existing systems that can be used to support the emergency warning process. Existing fiber optic networks between municipal organizations, radio networks, multimedia streaming capabilities, and telephone-based systems are examples of these systems.

Typical situations that would result in the need to issue an emergency warning to citizens and organizations within the county include homeland security related incidents, weather related warnings, environmental incidents, chemical spills into the St. Clair River, and situation-based lower priority incidents such as road closures.

There are a number of diverse segments of the community that need to receive emergency notifications. Most target segments have unique characteristics that may require a specific notification technique or multiple notification techniques. Target communities for emergency notification include:

- **Schools:** Schools are a highly structured environment with a management group that is capable of receiving warnings and related instructions and acting in a swift, coordinated manner.
- **Hospitals and assisted living centers:** Hospitals and assisted living centers also have a highly structured environment capable of swift coordination. However, these types of facilities often have sensitive populations that are not easily moved in a rapid manner due to physical impairment or sickness.
- **Campground and recreation areas:** Most recreational areas depend on public broadcast systems to receive notification of an emergency situation.
- **Island areas:** St. Clair County has numerous islands in the delta area of the St. Clair River, such as Harsens Island and Dickinson Island. For these locations, an emergency notification should be customized to each individual user. Island residents should provide a preference for a contact methodology.
- **Mobile Travelers:** Motorists on the highways can be notified through road related communications, such as electronic signs placed along the roadway that provides emergency information and subsequent directions for travelers. Mobile travelers can also be reached via the radios inside their vehicles.
- **Business and retail outlets:** Business organizations can quickly move staff to safety once an emergency notification has been received.
- **Governmental Agencies:** Government agencies require prompt notification of emergency situations, followed by the recommended steps to be taken to assist the public to safety. Support systems and other social agencies require the same attention.
- **General Public:** The population-at-large presents a significant notification challenge for emergency management. People must be made aware of an emergency in a manner that immediately grabs their attention. For this reason, multiple notification technologies may be needed in order to successfully inform the public.

DMS display listing the number of traffic fatalities at 440 as of Wednesday, July 24, 2013

The population, at-large, presents a significant notification challenge for emergency management. People must be made aware of an emergency in a manner that immediately grabs their attention. For this reason, multiple notification technologies may be needed in order to successfully inform the public.
Motorists on the highways can be notified through road related communications, such as electronic signs placed along the roadway that provides emergency information and subsequent directions for travelers. Mobile travelers can also be reached via the radios inside their vehicles.

Inventory of Existing Notification Technologies

The county continues to develop a multifaceted platform for emergency notification that reaches people and organizations in a manner that best meets their needs. No one notification approach can be optimized to reach all citizens. Table 5.2 provides an overview of existing notification resources within the county.

Table 5.2: Existing Notification Technologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Resource</th>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Video</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Informational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amateur Radio</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alert FM</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPAW’s</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Public Address Equipment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Fiber Optic Network</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siren System</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streaming Video</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VHF Radios Fire Department</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wireless Data Network</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warning Information Notification System (WINS)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: St. Clair County

Emergency Management

- **Warning Information Notification System (WINS):** The St. Clair County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, in conjunction with County / Local agencies and selected private entities, has launched a new Mass Notification service that allows citizens to receive alerts. Citizens opt-in to enter their contact information and subscribe to notifications that are important to them based on their location. The information provided is protected and will not be used for any other purpose.

- **Amateur Radio:** Founded in 1952, the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) is a public service that provides a reserve communications group within government agencies in times of extraordinary need. During periods of activation, RACES personnel are called upon to perform many tasks for the government agencies they serve. Although the exact nature of each activation will be different, the common thread is communications.

- **Alert FM:** Emergency officials will have the ability to communicate directly with their entire community in the event of a public emergency. Messages can be to targeted geographic areas, like zip codes, counties, or the entire state, or to organizational groups, like citizens, first responders, or specific
government personnel. The entire community can be alerted with a single message via multiple contact paths in seconds.

- **IPAW’s**: During an emergency, alert and warning officials need to provide the public with life – saving information quickly. The integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) is a modernization and integration of the nation’s alert and warning infrastructure and will save time when time matters most, protecting life and property. The IPAW’s program has developed strategies to mitigate the identified risks and will continually work to monitor and communicate changes in the risk status to efficiently address any issues.

- **Mobile Public Address System**: Police and fire vehicles have the capability of making announcements while driving through the streets. This notification method can take a lot of time to be effective.

- **Municipal Fiber Optic Network**: The county, local governments and school districts have fiber optic networks that are all linked with county facilities. The networks are linked to allow for notification programming to be distributed if it is based upon the Internet Protocol (IP).

- **Siren System**: The County has a county-wide siren system to provide emergency warnings. Most of the warning sirens do not support voice announcements, which mean that sirens cannot provide the nature of the emergency or describe steps for residents to take in the event of a hazard event. In an effort to maximize efficiency of our outdoor Siren Warning System, several improvements have been implemented since the 2003 Mitigation Plan.
  - **Narrow banding**: Every siren in the county has been narrow banded and the vast majority of sirens are now two-way monitored.
  - **Public Education**: Sirens are now utilized for all hazard outdoor warning. A public education program has been initiated for when the “siren sounds go inside” and turn on local media.

- **Social Media**: Social media is a new technology that not only allows for another channel of broadcasting messages to the public, but also allows for two way communication between emergency managers and community members. Increasingly the public is turning to social media technologies to obtain up to date information during emergencies and to share data about the disaster in the form of geo data, text, pictures, video, or a combination of these media. Social media also can allow for many opportunities to engage in an effective conversation, and receive up to date information on what is happening within the community. Many people use social media to check up on family and friends, but over the years Facebook and Twitter have been used increasingly by emergency managers and first responders to disseminate information quickly. Within St. Clair County Social Media, (Facebook and Twitter) is now being put to use to receive up to date information during a disaster or event.

### Table 5.3 Social Media & Community Disaster Resilience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disaster Risk Reduction</th>
<th>Emergency Management</th>
<th>Community Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goals</strong></td>
<td><strong>Minimization of residual risk</strong></td>
<td><strong>Safe Communities through shared responsibility</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informing others of disaster risks</td>
<td>Providing emergency intelligence through crowdsourcing</td>
<td>Increasing and improving social networks, leadership and support system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing and planning ways to minimize risk</td>
<td>Helping people prepare for disasters</td>
<td>Providing support to people during and after a disaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating and managing tasks</td>
<td>Communicating warnings to others</td>
<td>Conducting post – event learning to improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting post – event learning to improve</td>
<td>Coordinating community response and recovery</td>
<td>Conducting post – event learning to improve</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• **Streaming Video:** The county Information Technology department has the ability to stream live video messages over an IP-based network. This versatile notification technology allows training and emergency information to be distributed via web pages and or as streaming, on-demand or scheduled video on television.

• **EBW:** Ebw.tv was founded to serve live and on-demand content to an ever changing selection of devices, computers and smart TV's. Local content is paramount. Ebw.tv’s mission is to bring high quality newsworthy stories into the Blue Water areas. Many content contributors are local residents and businesses that understand how unique and special our area is to us. Regional content is key. Michigan has so much to offer its visitors and residents. Ebw.tv is committed to building synergy within Michigan thru the positive influence of media. Ebw.tv content delivery is state of the art and ready to live stream to the world.

• **St. Clair County RESA:** The St. Clair County Regional Educational Service Agency is one of 57 intermediate school districts in Michigan. It provides unique, cost-efficient support services to the county’s seven K–12 public school districts. The mission of RESA is to help each student in St. Clair County reach his or her potential. We achieve this mission by operating programs, such as Woodland Developmental Center and St. Clair TEC, and by assisting local districts in their efforts.

• **VHF Radio:** The VHF Radio system is the most common, radio-based communication system used by fire services within the county. It is based on the VHF radios utilized as part of the County Fire Broadcast System and simply allows for voice communications between fire service agencies.

• **Website:** The County has an extensive web site that can provide residents with information and notifications. It is also looking into different approaches to obtain contact information to be used in a database that would allow citizens to be contacted in a hazard event.

• **Wireless Data Networks:** The County has an 802.11 – based wireless network in some areas of the county.

**Support Systems Used in the County**

In addition to the notification technologies discussed above, the county has a variety of other notification systems, such as:

• **Skywarn:** The National Weather Service (NWS) utilizes trained personnel in the field to provide timely and accurate reports of storm activity from various locations that can supplement the NWS radar network. In the county’s SKYWARN program, there are over 50 trained weather spotters available to report weather conditions to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). These individuals come from many walks of life, some utilizing amateur radios while other will utilize cell phones as their reporting methods. Many of the spotters are equipped with pagers to insure prompt notification of weather warnings. In addition to the SKYWARN spotter system, many of the local fire departments place apparatus in key locations to assist in providing weather information.

With the SKYWARN concept, our residents have the potential to receive earlier notification of life threatening weather situations. Obviously any delay in reporting and notification poses the threat of injury and even death. The NWS has provided both basic and advanced training to many members of the program. Additional internal training along with some specialized FEMA training is available to the members who meet on a monthly basis.
**StormReady:** St. Clair County is certified by the National Weather Service as a StormReady Community. StormReady is a program aimed at arming America’s Communities with the communication and safety skills necessary to save lives and property. StormReady prepares communities with an action plan that responds to the threat of all types of severe weather.

The Local National Weather Service forecast office worked with OEM to complete the application and review process. To be officially StormReady, St. Clair County had to:

- Establish a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center;
- Have more than one way to receive severe weather forecast and warnings to alert the public;
- Create a system that monitors local weather conditions;
- Promote the importance of public readiness through community seminars; and
- Develop a formal hazardous weather plan, which includes training severe weather spotters and holding emergency exercises.

On September 25, 2002, the National Weather Service certified St. Clair County as a StormReady Community and issued road signs for posting in the county. St. Clair County was one of the first counties in the state of Michigan to become certified as a StormReady community. The certification is good for three years. St. Clair County has continued to re-certify as a StormReady community through the years. The county was just re-certified on September 29th, 2014. This certification is good for three years.

**Emergency Communications Systems**

In any emergency situation, it is vital that first responders and other emergency personnel have the ability to easily communicate with one another. In most hazard events, responders from a variety of agencies are called into action to assess the situation and begin a unified response. Emergencies breed coordination. With the current communications system in the county, police officers, firefighters, and emergency responders have to use several radios as they enter different municipalities and often are unable to directly communicate with each other. Some areas of the county even have “dead spots” which prevent various departments from communicating with each other. These types of system incompatibilities make coordination—an essential function in emergency management—difficult to sustain.

The county is cognizant of the inadequacies that exist within its emergency communications system. A centralized radio communication system would allow first responders county-wide to communicate with each other. In order to achieve this desired level of efficiency, the county will need to invest in 800-megahertz communications towers that will allow them to connect to the state of Michigan’s emergency communications system. Having a central dispatch unit utilizing the 800-megahertz technology on a single radio network will bridge communication gaps and allow for direct communication among first responders, regardless of municipal boundaries. A central dispatch unit will also lead to more efficient and better trained dispatchers handling fire and EMS calls.
The Warning-Information-Notification-System (WINS)
The St. Clair County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management is pleased to announce a system that allows an integrated solution for internal and external notifications. The Warning Information Notification System (WINS) is a county wide alliance of public and private organizations that have a shared need to send information to private groups within their organization or, to the public at large. Several organizations within the boundaries of St. Clair County have a shared need to rapidly get information to employees, groups, and the general public.

The system is capable of sending alerts in numerous ways that include; Home Phones, Cell Phones, Text Messages, E-Mails, and TTY devices. Additionally, the software can leave a message, it can require an acknowledgement/confirmation, or it can require an option be chosen from the menu.

The public side of the program allows users to choose what types of notifications are important to them and how they wish to receive them. Although emergency alerts are mandatory, there are unlimited possibilities for organizations to set up various types of public notifications.

Local governments can choose “opt-in” groups such as Mayor Announcements, Council Announcements, Board Announcements, Community Policing, Fire Safety, Public Works, Recreation, Well-Being checks etc.

Schools can choose “opt-in” groups such as school closing/early dismissal, health alerts, parent teacher notices, and much more.

The private side of the program allows users to send out any business communication to a select closed group of individuals. The uses of the private side are only bounded by “reasonable use” and the needs of the organization. These needs will be different for every organization but can include such things as; recall, policy change acknowledgements, meeting announcements, building closure, automated voting, etc.

The St. Clair County Office of Homeland Security has created this public/private partnership in acknowledgement of the community’s shared need to have a stable, cost effective way to communicate with public and private groups. This collaboration will allow each organization to ensure their information is available to a wide group as there will be “one stop shopping” which requires a user to sign up once and choose what organizations are important to them based on where they live, work, play, or go to school.

Public Safety Software
In 2004, the county purchased VisionCAD computer-aided dispatch; VisionRMS law enforcement records management system; and VisionMOBILE mobile data system from VisionAIR’s Public Safety Suite. In addition the county purchased VisionINFORM, a browser-based portal, part of the VisionCONNECT integration platform. The sheriff’s office full-time 911 dispatchers use VisionCAD to dispatch for seven police departments along with the sheriff’s office, seventeen fire departments, and four ambulance services in St. Clair County.

VisionCAD displays vital dispatching data at a glance simultaneously showing current call detail and the status of all police, fire, and EMS units. The software helps to assign a priority to each emergency call so dispatchers always see the most urgent calls first.

VisionRMS enables the St. Clair County Sheriff’s Office to efficiently manage essential records and to report incidents and arrests directly to the FBI or state crime information centers.

VisionMOBILE keeps the sheriff’s office personnel in the field connected with access to VisionCAD dispatch information via laptop computers. Over a wireless network, through a powerful message switch, deputies can obtain call information; update incident records and unit status; and run searches against VisionRMS and state and federal data stores.
Communication Towers in St. Clair County

Legend
- Sirens: Buffer at 1 Mile Radius
- OEM_Districts
- NAME
  - District 1
  - District 2
  - District 3
  - District 4
  - Port Huron
- Interstate
- Major Roads
- Active Rail
- All Governmental Units
- Township Highlight
- County Boundaries
- International Boundary
- Water
- Canada
- St. Clair County
- United States

April 2009