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Baton Rouge Area More Prepared than Ever For Emergency Notification

Second Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina Serves as Reminder of the Need for Emergency Preparedness and Communications

[Baton Rouge, LA – August 30, 2007]- As hurricane season picks up and the second anniversary of Katrina reminds all Americans of the importance of emergency preparedness, East Baton Rouge Parish has taken steps to ensure that they are more prepared than ever in the event of an emergency situation. After conducting extensive research, Baton Rouge, together with local Homeland Security officials, decided that one of the key procedures necessary to keep cities safe and organized during and after an emergency situation is proper communication. During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, efficient communications between levels of government and to residents was one of the key obstacles hindering evacuation and safety measures and Baton Rouge officials want to prevent this problem from ever occurring in their city.

During emergencies, like hurricanes, overcoming the challenges of interoperability between agencies and keeping all government departments organized and informed is imperative in maintaining safety and security. Because of this, Baton Rouge has taken specific measures to ensure that the lines of communication within federal and local government agencies, local law enforcement, public health departments, schools and aid workers are organized and properly coordinated. East Baton Rouge Parish has selected the **Connect-CTY**[®] service from The NTI Group, Inc. to provide a system that will allow authorized users to notify citizens through voice and text messages and to let residents sign up additional phone lines, emails, text and mobile numbers for emergency contact through the city-parish Web site, BRgov.com.

“Having a technology that can reach our residents through multiple avenues helps to assure that everyone is notified when an emergency occurs and can take appropriate action,” said Baton Rouge Mayor-President Melvin L. “Kip” Holden. “Events like Hurricane Katrina serve as a reminder that all cities, counties and schools must have communications systems in place to ensure public safety.”

Baton Rouge can use this service to target messages to an unlimited number of groups – everything from mobilizing emergency response teams to notifying necessary department heads. For example, in the event of a hurricane, federal and city officials can use the system to coordinate volunteers from the Red Cross and organize aid operations in the most effective manner.

“As the first city in Louisiana to adopt the **Connect-CTY** service, it shows that Baton Rouge is at the forefront of utilizing advanced technology in emergency response.” Holden said.

“Ensuring that our residents receive these important messages is of utmost importance. One of our main concerns was the ability to notify a mobile society. Home telephone numbers are no longer necessarily the best way to reach our residents and we needed a system that could reach residents through various methods of communication,” said Joanne Moreau, Director of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness of Baton Rouge.

East Baton Rouge Parish is also utilizing the service to improve operational efficiency by focusing on workforce development within the community. Residents who have applications for city and parish career opportunities are receiving updates from local governments to help build up their services and organize the application process.

“Hurricane Katrina was a terrible situation that we hope never to live through again. We are proud to be working with Mayor-President Kip Holden and the great city of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish who has shown great leadership in keeping residents safe through effective preparation and communication,” said Robin D. Richards, Chairman and CEO of NTI.

For more information on the **Connect-CTY** system, please go to www.ntigroup.com

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