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PPW APPLAUDS ADOPTION OF CAP AS FIRST STANDARD MESSAGE FORMAT FOR PUBLIC WARNINGS

McLEAN, Va., April 15– More consistent and better coordinated public warnings will save lives, protect property and reduce fear, according to the Partnership for Public Warning (PPW), a not-for-profit consortium of public warning experts from industry and government.

An important step towards better public warning has just been taken with the adoption of a digital Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) – a standard message format for public warnings – by the OASIS Emergency Management Technical Committee.

“Our nation’s public warning capability relies upon a patchwork of warning systems that use different terminology, inconsistent advisory scales and a multiplicity of technologies. The result is that we are not reaching enough of the people at risk in a timely and effective manner,” said Craig Fugate, chair of the Partnership for Public Warning (PPW) and director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management. “We need to establish interoperability among the different warning systems. The Common Alerting Protocol is a major step in the right direction.”

The Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) is a simple but general format for exchanging all-hazard emergency alerts and public warnings over all kinds of communication and information networks. Using an open, non-proprietary digital message format for all types of alerts and notifications, CAP allows a consistent warning message to be transmitted simultaneously over many different warning systems.

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CAP will increase the effectiveness of public warnings by enhancing interoperability among different systems while simplifying the warning process. CAP also reduces costs and operational complexity by eliminating the need for multiple custom software interfaces to the many warning sources and dissemination systems involved in all-hazard warning.

The Partnership for Public Warning has provided the leadership behind the development of the Common Alerting Protocol and sponsored its consideration by the OASIS organization.

“Adoption of CAP as a standard is the culmination of several years of work by many people,” said CAP Working Group chairman Art Botterell. “There is more to be done. In the days ahead, the Partnership for Public Warning will be promoting the use of CAP by the emergency management community. In addition, we also plan to begin addressing some of the other standard needs – such as terminology – facing the public warning community.”

The PPW (www.ppw.us) is a not-for-profit consortium of industry, government and other organizations committed to saving lives and property by improving the nation’s public warning capability. PPW’s mission is to develop consensus on processes, standards and systems in order to ensure that people at risk from terrorism, accidents and natural disasters receive the right information at the right time so that they can take timely and appropriate action to save lives, reduce loss and speed recovery. It is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, formed with the assistance of The MITRE Corporation (www.mitre.org), a not-for-profit company chartered to work in the public interest to address issues of critical national importance.

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