

Information Technology Quarterly

Email Subscription Service Helps Citizens Stay Informed

by Peggy Daniels, eGovernment Services

The eGovernment team recently launched an Email Subscription Service on the County's public web site <http://www.oakgov.com>. This new service allows web site visitors to sign up for automatic notifications via email or wireless text message when new information is posted on the County's web site.

More than 100 subscription items are available, including:

- Critical water notifications
- Beach closings
- County golf course information
- Podcasts
- eNewsletters from the Oakland County Board of Commissioners
- Updates from County government departments, divisions and agencies
- News releases
- County workshops and classes on a variety of topics
- Local election results
- And much more

The Email Subscription Service is highly customizable, and offers a range of communication options. The service allows individual pages of the County's web site to be designated as "watched" pages, meaning that whenever an update is made,

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a notice can be sent to subscribers who have signed up to receive notifications for that page. The service also enables the creation and management of email (mailing) lists to send notifications, announcements and newsletters to subscribers. eNewsletter templates are included, making it easy to create professional, digital subscriber communications. County TeamSite users are encouraged to sign up for training to learn how to implement the Email Subscription Service on their departmental web sites. To inquire about training, please contact egov@oakgov.com.

Email Subscription, including wireless text alerts, is being made available in partnership with GovDelivery, a government communications service provider. As part of its regional Cross-Boundary Services initiative, Oakland County has also arranged a cooperative purchasing agreement that enables local city, village and township governments to implement the service at reduced cost. Local governments can now take advantage of group purchasing discounts to offer email subscription on their own web sites, saving money and improving citizen services at the same time. The cooperative purchasing agreement for email subscription is just the latest effort in the County's ongoing program to assist local communities. Information about Cross-Boundary Services is available online at http://www.oakgov.com/services_index/government/cvt_services.html.

Email addresses provided by citizens are only used to send messages for the chosen subscription and/or alert items. Complete details and subscription signup instructions are available online at <http://www.oakgov.com/subscribe/>.

Email Fraud Warning

As a reminder, please use caution when opening unsolicited email. Many email scams attempt to trick people into sending money, or revealing personal and financial information, such as Social Security, bank account or credit card numbers, which the predators can use to commit identity theft.

The Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) Coordination Center, a federally funded organization dedicated to cyber-security, devised the so-called "KRESV" test to ensure email safety. KRESV stands for Know, Receive, Expect, Sense, and Virus. CERT suggests, "You should apply these five tests to every piece of email with an attachment that you receive or any email from a source you do not know. If any test fails, toss that email. If they all pass, then you still need to exercise care and watch for unexpected results as you read it."

Here are steps you can use to help you decide what to do with unsolicited emails:

1. The Know test: Is the email from someone that you know?

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2. The Received test: Have you received email from this sender before? If you have not, there may be an underlying factor such as “Identity Theft.”



3. The Expect test: Were you expecting email from this sender?
4. The Sense test: Does email from the sender with the contents as described in the Subject line and the name of the attachment(s) make sense? For example, would you expect the sender—let’s say your mother—to send you an email message with the subject line “Here you have, ;o)” that contains a message with an attachment—let’s say AnnaKournikova.jpg.vbs? A message like that probably doesn’t make sense. In fact, it happens to be an instance of the Anna Kournikova worm, and reading it can damage your system.
5. The Virus test: Does this email contain a virus? This question is typically covered

by Oakland County Information Technology’s email system which performs virus scans prior to delivery.

The KRESV tests help you focus on the most important issues when sending and receiving email, however you still need to exercise care.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding unsolicited mail, please contact the IT Service Center at (248) 858-8812.

Internet Fraud Statistics

In 2007, the Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3), a joint venture of the FBI and the National White Collar Crime Center, found:

- Online auction fraud was the most reported type of fraud and accounted for 44.9% of consumers’ complaints.
- Non-delivered merchandise and/or payment made up 19% of complaints.
- Check fraud represented 4.9% of complaints.
- About 70% of the fraud victims were scammed through www (e.g. online auctions).
- About 30% of the victims were scammed by emails.

For further information, please visit the Internet Crime Complaint center at <http://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx>.

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