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Delaware County Launches Special Needs Registry

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(Delaware, OH) – Delaware County is now home to a unique database that emergency officials agree will save lives. The Delaware County Special Needs Registry (DCSNR) is an innovative service allowing residents to inform police, paramedics and firefighters about persons in their homes with special medical conditions or needs. Dispatchers will give the information to first responders whenever an emergency is reported at the address of a special-needs registrant.

This database will benefit citizens during personal emergencies, such as medical emergencies or fires. It will also help in the case of a large-scale disaster, like a flood or widespread power outage.

“In an emergency, every second counts,” said Captain Bill Piwtorak of the Liberty Township Fire Department. “It is the goal of the DCSNR to identify and register special needs individuals before an emergency and ultimately increase everyone’s level of preparedness. This will give first responders advance knowledge of any special protocol that should be followed.”

The DCSNR is a voluntary registry; participants can register online at www.delcospecialneeds.com by filling out an application. A registrant’s personal information is kept confidential and used only by first responders when planning for or responding to an emergency situation.

The DCSNR is an expansion of the Liberty Township Special Needs Emergency Registry that was started in 2005. This registry is also derived from other registries throughout the United States, but this is the first of its kind because it incorporates emergency dispatch centers and provides contact with emergency personnel prior to an emergency to assist with any tailored response needed.

The DCSNR is designed to protect a wide variety of special needs individuals, including those requiring special medical assistance or life-sustaining equipment, such as a ventilator. It would also serve anyone requiring assistance with mobility; individuals who could not evacuate themselves from their home without assistance in an emergency; individuals who have cognitive or mental health impairments; people with vision, hearing or speech impairment; and individuals with language barriers.

“The registry has changed our lives!” said Beth Haner, a Liberty Township resident and mother of a special needs child. “It provides us with peace of mind knowing our first responders already understand our son’s medical information and have been trained on his rare type of epilepsy. I no longer feel that I have to stay close to home or school to oversee potential emergency calls.”

This registry is a service of Delaware County EMA, EMS, Information Technology, 911 dispatchers, fire departments, law enforcement agencies and the Board of Developmental Disabilities.

All Delaware County residents with special needs are urged to register at www.delcospecialneeds.com (or have a family member register for them) and make this Web site a part of their personal preparedness plan.

For more information, log on to www.delcospecialneeds.com or www.facebook.com/DelCoSpecialNeedsRegistry.