



Action Requested/Required:

- Vote/Action Requested
- Discussion or Presentation Only
- Public Hearing
- Report Date: _____
- Hearing Date: _____
- Voting Date: _____

Department: Administration **Presenter(s) & Title:** Billy Peppers
City Manager

Agenda Item Title:

Discussion of a Memorandum of Understanding with Cherokee County to Utilize an Integrated Public Awareness Warning System (IPAWS) Platform for Emergency Communication

Summary:

The Cherokee Emergency Management Agency (EMA) has received approval to produce wireless emergency alerts through an Integrated Public Awareness Warning System through the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The state level office (GEMA), requires that for a county to produce such alerts into another jurisdiction, such as the City of Canton, a Memorandum of Understanding must be in place. Cherokee EMA provided a draft MOU to the City of Canton to consider.

Budget Implications:

Budgeted? Yes No N/A
Total Cost of Project: _____ Check if Estimated
Fund Source: General Fund Water & Sewer Sales Tax Other: _____

Staff Recommendations:

Discussion only. Staff will seek action on May 21, 2026.

Reviews:

Has this been reviewed by Management and Legal Counsel, if required? Yes No

Attachments:

Draft MOU for the Use of IPAWS; MOU Attachments.

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN
CHEROKEE COUNTY, GEORGIA BY AND THROUGH CHEROKEE COUNTY
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND THE CITY OF CANTON, GEORGIA
FOR ALERT, WARNING AND NOTIFICATIONS SENT THROUGH FEMA’S
INTEGRATED PUBLIC ALERT AND WARNING SYSTEM**

STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF CHEROKEE

“ FEMA IPAWS ALERTING ”

This MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (hereinafter “Agreement”) is made and entered into this ____ day of _____, 2026, by and between CHEROKEE COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, an agency of CHEROKEE COUNTY, GEORGIA, a political subdivision of the State of Georgia, acting by and through its governing authority, the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners, (the "County"), and the CITY OF CANTON, GEORGIA a political subdivision of the State of Georgia, acting by and through its governing authority, the Mayor and City Council for the City of Canton, Georgia (the "City"), collectively referred to as the Parties.

WITNESSETH

WHEREAS, Cherokee County Emergency Management Agency (“Cherokee County EMA”) and the City of Canton, Georgia (collectively, the “Parties”) are authorized Alerting Authorities (AA) responsible for providing emergency management services, including public alerting, warning, and notification, within their respective jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, Cherokee County EMA has obtained the capability to issue Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs) through the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) utilizing its mass notification platform, as further described in the IPAWS Annex attached hereto as Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA/HS) requires a fully executed memorandum of understanding between alerting authorities to authorize cross-jurisdictional alerting, including participation by Cherokee County EMA as the holder of the IPAWS authorization; and

WHEREAS, the Parties recognize the need to enhance the timeliness and effectiveness of emergency notifications and desire to establish a cooperative framework whereby Cherokee County EMA may serve as a backup Alerting Authority to issue alerts, warnings, and notifications on behalf of the City of Canton upon request;

WHEREAS, the Parties are authorized to enter into this Memorandum of Understanding pursuant to the Constitution and laws of the State of Georgia, as well as applicable federal regulations and guidance governing participation in IPAWS;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the foregoing recitals and the mutual covenants and promises hereafter set forth, the Parties do hereby agree as follows:

1. PURPOSE:

The above-mentioned Alerting Authorities (AA) recognize the need for interagency cooperation to enhance public alerting capabilities. This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) allows AAs to establish a backup AA to issue alert, warnings, and notifications (AWN) on their behalf, to their respective communities in the unlikely event the original AA is not able to perform that function.

2. PARTIES TO THE MOU:

Cherokee County EMA

Jurisdiction: Cherokee County, Georgia
POC: Daniel Westbrook
150 Chattin Drive
Canton, GA 30115
jdwestbrook@cherokeecountyga.gov
Office phone: 678-493-4033
After hours phone: 404-376-4573
Approval to use the following:

- Wireless Emergency Alerts

City of Canton, Georgia

Jurisdiction: Canton, Georgia
POC: Billy Peppers, City Manager
110 Academy Street
Canton, Georgia 30114
billy.peppers@cantonga.gov
Office Phone: 770-704-1500
After hours phone: 770-910-2694
Approval to use the following:

- Wireless Emergency Alerts

3. POLICY:

(a) All parties agree that in the event of an emergency incident requiring the activation of AWN, the AA requesting alerting on behalf shall provide the following information:

- The message content to be used in the WEA, EAS, and/or NWEM
 - The message content should address the following:
 - Identify the Sender
 - Identify the hazard
 - Affected area
 - Action to take
 - A URL to obtain more information
- The Activation Area
- The Duration of the Alert
- A Point of Contact to Maintain Communication During the Incident
- Complete list of IPAWS event codes outlining the authorized alert types and messaging is attached hereto and incorporated as Exhibit A.

(b) For purposes of situational awareness, involved jurisdictions will inform each other as soon as possible of the need for alerting assistance.

(c) The State Alerting Official must approve any MOU between alerting authorities establishing cross jurisdictional support prior to the MOU becoming valid.

- (d) This MOU will be reviewed by all parties every two years.
- (e) If changes are requested to the MOU, the requesting jurisdiction will submit the respective changes to all other parties. Each party will review and provide acceptance, modification or rejection to the requesting jurisdiction for consideration. Should all parties agree to the change(s), a new version of the MOU will be prepared for signature by all parties.
- (f) If a jurisdiction elects to revoke the MOU, the respective jurisdiction will notify all other parties of the MOU in writing with a 30-day notice.
- (g) The State Alerting Official (Signatory) needs to be notified of the ratification or any changes to the MOU including changes of participants. A completed copy of the MOU will be forwarded to the State Alerting Official, the FEMA IPAWS Program Management Office, and uploaded to the IPAWS Users Portal. The State Alerting Official has the right to immediately suspend or terminate any MOU between Alerting Authorities within their jurisdiction.

4. PROCEDURES:

The jurisdiction providing alerting on behalf will use the following procedures:

1. Receive alerting request from the impacted jurisdiction(s)
2. Compose an IPAWS message that with message content coming from the impacted jurisdiction(s)
3. Send the IPAWS message
4. Verify message sent; notify the proper POC(s) from the impacted jurisdiction(s)
5. Coordinate further alerts with impacted jurisdiction(s), if necessary

The impacted jurisdiction(s) will use the following procedures:

1. Request assistance from adjoining jurisdiction detailed in this MOU
2. Provide message content to be used in the Awn
3. Monitor alert receipt from adjoining jurisdiction
4. Coordinate with jurisdiction providing alerting on behalf for any ongoing alerts, updates, and/or cancellations

5. INDEMNIFICATION:

Each of the Parties agree that, insofar as it is authorized to do so by applicable law, it will protect, save and hold harmless the other Party from all claims, costs, damages, or expenses arising out of the negligence of its agents, employees, servants, or representatives, in connection with acts performed in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

6. AUTHORITY:

Each individual executing this Agreement agrees and represents that he/she is authorized to execute this Agreement on behalf of the respective party.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties have caused their duly authorized officers to hereunto set their hands and affix their respective seals as of the day and year first above written.

ALERTING AUTHORITIES SIGNATURES:

_____ GEOFFREY E. MORTON County Manager Cherokee County, Georgia	DATE	_____ BILLY PEPPERS City Manager City of Canton, Georgia	DATE
---	------	---	------

_____ DANIEL WESTBROOK Director, Cherokee County Emergency Management Agency	DATE
---	------

STATE ALERTING OFFICIAL SIGNATURE:

NAME & DATE
TITLE
Organization



Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) Annex

**Support Annex: 4-17
CHEROKEE COUNTY, GEORGIA
Emergency Management Program**

Approval and Implementation

Support Annex 4-17 IPAWS Annex	
Revised Effective Date 1/20/2026	EMAP Standard 4.8.1, 4.8.2, 4.8.3, 4.8.4, 4.8.5
	Revised by: Daniel Westbrook

J. Daniel Westbrook
EMA Director
Cherokee County Emergency Management Agency

This document is for official use and should be handled as sensitive information that is not to be disclosed. This document should be safeguarded, handled, transmitted, and stored in accordance with appropriate Cherokee County, Georgia directives. Reproduction of this document without the prior approval of the Cherokee County, Georgia, Emergency Management Agency Director, is prohibited.

Point of Contact:

Cherokee County Emergency Management Agency
150 Chattin Drive
Canton, GA 30115
678-493-4001

Record of Changes

Revision Date	Summary of Major Changes	Revised Sections	Revised By

Record of Distribution

Office/Department	Representative	Date Distributed	Distribution Method
GEMA/HS	Savannah Roberts	1/20/2026	Email
Cherokee EMA	Daniel Westbrook	1/20/2026	Email
Cherokee EMA	Rebecah Logan	1/20/2026	Email
Cherokee EMA	Courtney Bourgouin	1/20/2026	Email
Public Services Agency	Chief Dana Martin	1/20/2026	Email
Communications Dept.	Erika Neldner	1/20/2026	Email

Contents

Approval and Implementation ii

Record of Changes iii

Record of Distribution iv

I. Purpose..... 1

II. Authority..... 1

III. Concept of Operations..... 2

IV. Authorized Use of IPAWS..... 4

V. Public Outreach 7

VI. Annex Maintenance 9

VII. IPAWS Annex Appendixes 9

APPENDIX A: ACRONYMS 10

APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY 13

**APPENDIX C: CHEROKEE COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
 AUTHORIZED USERS** 16

APPENDIX D: IPAWS ARCHITECTURE..... 18

APPENDIX E: IPAWS AND PREPAREDNESS 19

I. Purpose

The Cherokee County, Georgia IPAWS Annex provides policy and procedures agreed upon by Cherokee County Georgia Emergency Management and will permit authorized users to issue emergency information, instructions, and warnings to the general public of Cherokee County, Georgia by activating the alert and warning systems within Cherokee County.

II. Authority

- Cherokee County Local Emergency Operations Plan (2025)
- Cherokee County Ordinance Regarding Emergency Management.
- Authoritative information for this plan is garnered from the following policies and legislation:
 - Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) in Georgia, Georgia Emergency Management Agency and Office of Homeland Security, dated July 12, 2012.
 - Georgia Emergency Management Act of 1981, Ga. Code §38-3-1 et seq., Georgia Code Title 38 - Military, Emergency Management, And Veterans Affairs, Chapter 3 - Emergency Management. Articles 1 through 3 of this chapter may be cited as the 'Georgia Emergency Management Act of 1981.'
 - State of Georgia Emergency Alert System (EAS) Plan, dated February 21, 2013.
 - Georgia Emergency Operations Plan (2013)
 - Presidential Memorandum, "Emergency Alert System Statement of Requirements", September 15, 1995;
 - Executive Order 13407, Public Alert and Warning System, June 26, 2006
 - Warning, Alert, and Response Network (WARN) Act, October 13, 2006
 - National Security Presidential Directive- 51(NSPD-51)/Homeland Security Presidential Directive-20 (HSPD-20), "National Continuity Policy", May 9, 2007
 - National Incident Management System, December 2008
 - Presidential Policy Directive/PPD-21 "Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience", February 12, 2013
 - Executive Order "Improving Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity", February 12, 2013
 - National Preparedness Report, March 2013
 - National Response Framework, Second Edition, May 2013

III. Concept of Operations

A. Integrating Public Alert and Warning Systems

Cherokee County has adopted and implemented the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) which facilitates rapid and reliable delivery of alert and warning information over multiple communication pathways before, during, and after an emergency in the preservation of life and property. Cherokee County incorporates IPAWS into the county’s existing structure through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), which governs the relationship between the county and state-level Collaborative Operating Groups (COGs) and FEMA. IPAWS provides Cherokee County with the capability to integrate alert and warning systems with the national alert and warning infrastructure. Consequently, IPAWS increases the capability and options available to state and local officials by which life-saving information can be distributed during a crisis.

Cherokee County authorities have chosen to use IPAWS and integrate local alerting and emergency response systems that use Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) standards with the IPAWS infrastructure. Beginning in 2011, the initial IPAWS capabilities were deployed providing public safety authorities at all levels of government with integrated access to send alerts through EAS, Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards, internet applications, sirens, road signs, and other unique local technologies, as well as being able to seamlessly incorporate emerging and future alerting channels and communications technologies.

Cherokee County may provide public safety officials with resources to assist them as they adopt CAP, incorporate IPAWS, and ensure their communities understand how to access, use, and respond to public alert and warning information. New alert and warning technologies, particularly alerts to personal cellphones, will only be effective if the public understands the avenues over which alerts are delivered and trusts the emergency messages being sent. Local public safety officials strive to ensure emergency communication plans and tools incorporate the latest technologies, can be leveraged to strengthen communication infrastructure, enhance information sharing and situational awareness, and provide the public with critical information.

B. Roles and Responsibilities

1. Cherokee County

All disasters and emergencies are locally oriented. While first responders are gearing up to respond to the initial aftereffects of an incident, it is an inherent responsibility of local officials to keep the public informed of what actions the public needs to take to protect themselves. These could include evacuation orders, location of points of distribution (for food, water, medicine, etc.), move to higher ground, shelter in place guidance, take cover, etc. Communicating these instructions to the public is the primary purpose of IPAWS. Because local officials have a better understanding of the situation, the immediate actions that are being taken, and potential adverse impacts of the incident, it is incumbent upon these officials to rapidly and effectively communicate to the public what is going on and what needs to be done.

In order to successfully implement IPAWS, Cherokee County, Georgia will maintain a structure to provide rapid alert and warning. This local structure will include:

- Designating in writing, in accordance with jurisdictional procedures, no fewer than three individuals who will be the jurisdiction’s alerting authorities for issuing

emergency broadcasts with IPAWS following their successful completion of IS-247.A “Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)” course.

- Incorporating IPAWS into existing and future response plans and procedures as well as training and exercise events.
- Collaborative Operating Group (COG) COGs will maintain a list of all individuals who have successfully completed the IS-247.A course and other required courses as directed by federal and state guidance. A list is included in Appendix C of this annex and will be updated on an annual basis by Cherokee County, Georgia Emergency Management.

Immediately after alert dissemination, a copy of the alert must be transmitted to the State Warning Point by emailing commo@gema.ga.gov, and the State Warning Officer at IPAWS@gema.ga.gov.

2. State of Georgia

Recognizing that all disasters are local, the primary responsibility of the state will be to facilitate the implementation of IPAWS into the emergency notification network. In the case of a catastrophic local, state, or regionally defined event, the state will provide a resilient and comprehensive alert and notification capability.

- GEMA will be designated the COG point of contact as per the signed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with FEMA.
- GEMA will form a working group comprised of applicable statewide stakeholders to bring together the necessary technical and operational expertise from the private sector, non-profits, local jurisdictions, state agencies, and the federal government with the goal of defining policy and procedures leading to the implementation of IPAWS across the state.
- GEMA will sign all COGs for all local and State Agency Alerting Authorities.
- GEMA will conduct coordinated periodic tests of the system to ensure functionality of equipment and the network.
- GEMA will provide a backup capability for local jurisdictions’ alerting authorities to issue emergency broadcasts and/or wireless on behalf of the local jurisdiction, as deemed appropriate

3. Federal

FEMA is the lead federal agency for IPAWS coordination and implementation. FEMA ensures that the system is maintained and is operational to achieve the following:

- Build and maintain an effective, reliable, integrated, flexible, and comprehensive alert and warning system.
- Enable federal, state, territorial, tribal, and local alert and warning emergency communication officials to access multiple broadcast and other communications pathways for the purpose of creating and activating alert and warning messages related to hazards impacting public safety and well-being.

- Reach the American people before, during, and after a disaster through as many means as possible.
- Diversify and modernize the EAS.
- Create an interoperability framework by establishing or adopting standards such as CAP.
- Enable alert and warning to those with disabilities and others with access and functional needs and to those without an understanding of the English language.
- Partner with NOAA for seamless integration of message transmission through national networks.
- Receive and authenticate alert messages, then simultaneously deliver to all IPAWS-compliant public alerting systems.
- Continue to engage the media, internet service providers, unique and local alerting system providers as well as future alert technology developers on the implementation of IPAWS.
- Ensure the required Emergency Management Institute (EMI) courses are available and updated periodically.

IV. Authorized Use of IPAWS

IPAWS may be used to alert the public to events that pose a significant threat to life and/or property. IPAWS is a public emergency warning system, NOT a public notification system. Presidential Messages are issued by the President of the United States. AMBER Alerts are issued by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) in consultation with state AMBER coordinators. Critical weather warnings (e.g. tornados, flash floods, hurricanes, blizzards or ice storms, and dust storms) are issued by NWS.

Alerts issued by an authorized public safety agency using IPAWS may be disseminated to broadcast media (EAS), weather radios (non-weather emergency messages, or NWEM), cellphones and other mobile devices via Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), internet services, road signs, sirens, etc. Some alerts may be selected to broadcast to one alerting technology, while other alerts may be selected to go to numerous alerting technologies.

The primary capability of a WEA (cellphone message) is to quickly announce that an event is occurring or is imminent in the geographic area in which the recipient is located. WEA messages are limited to 90 characters.

EAS (broadcasters) and NWEM (weather radio) alerts can provide more information. For example, the “Headline” element of a NWEM message may be 160 characters and the “Description + Instruction” elements have no character limit.

A. Types of IPAWS Messages

The types of alert messages for which Cherokee County Emergency Management and authorized system users will use IPAWS include:

1. **Warning messages:** Warning messages are issued for those events that alone pose a significant threat to public safety and/or property, probability of occurrence and location is high, and the onset time is relatively short.
2. **Emergency messages:** Emergency messages are issued for those events that by themselves would not kill, injure, or damage property, but indirectly may cause other things to happen that result in a hazard.

B. Event Codes

Authorized Cherokee County, Georgia Emergency Management Agency and Cherokee County, Georgia E-911 Center personnel can send the following event codes through IPAWS:

- **CEM: Civil Emergency Message** - An emergency message regarding an in-progress or imminent significant threat(s) to public safety and/or property. The CEM is a higher priority message than the Local Area Emergency (LAE), but the hazard is less specific than the Civil Danger Warning (CDW). For example, the CEM could be used to describe a change in the Homeland Security Alert System level in response to a terrorist threat.
- **EQW: Earthquake Warning** - A warning of current or imminent earthquake activity. Authorized officials may recommend or order protective actions according to state law or local ordinance. EQW can be used to inform the public of affected areas and measures to take for safety. If road damages have occurred, detour information can be provided for individuals that require or plan to travel into or away from the affected area.
- **EVI: Evacuate Immediate** - A warning where immediate evacuation is recommended or ordered according to state law or local, tribal, or territorial ordinance.
- **FRW: Fire Warning** - A warning that indicates a spreading wildfire or structure fire threatens a populated area. Evacuation of areas in the fire's path may be recommended by authorized officials according to state law or local ordinance.
- **HMW Hazardous Materials Warning** - A warning indicating the release of a nonradioactive hazardous material (such as a flammable gas, toxic chemical, or biological agent) that require the public to evacuate from the affected area (for an explosion, fire, or oil spill hazard) or shelter in place (for a toxic fume hazard).
- **LAE: Local Area Emergency** - An emergency message that defines an event that by itself does not pose a significant threat to public safety or property. However, the event could escalate, contribute to other more serious events, or disrupt critical public safety services. Instructions, other than public protective actions, may be provided by authorized officials. LAE can be used during a disruption in water, electric or natural gas service, road closures due to excessive snowfall, or a potential terrorist threat where the public is asked to remain alert.
- **LEW: Law Enforcement Warning** - A warning of a bomb explosion, riot, or other criminal event (e.g., a jailbreak). An authorized law enforcement agency may blockade roads, waterways, or facilities, evacuate, or deny access to affected areas, or arrest violators or suspicious persons. LEW can be used if a bomb threat is received during an event and local authorities are investigating the matter and law enforcement evacuates an area and establishes road blockages until "all clear" is received.

- **MEP: Missing and Endangered Person** - Used to facilitate more efficient and widespread dissemination of alerts and coordinated responses to incidents involving all missing and endangered persons across a single or multiple jurisdictional area, not currently covered by AMBER Alerts. MEP alerts aid in finding missing and endangered people by notifying the public so they can assist in the search. For Cherokee County, the following requirements will be instituted for this event code:
 - Any individual that is 13 years old or younger will have an IPAWS message sent upon request by Cherokee County Law Enforcement or Fire Department officials. This alert will be sent regardless of time of day.
 - For all individuals 14 years or older, Cherokee County Law Enforcement and Fire Department officials must classify the individual as being endangered (due to the circumstance, age, or a cognitive issue) to necessitate an IPAWS alert. An alert will be sent outside of quiet hours upon request.
 - Quiet hours will be designated from 11:00 PM to 7:00 AM. If the situation is deemed critical, an alert will be sent regardless of time of day after diligent consideration.
 - For all situations, Cherokee County Emergency Management will have the ultimate authority and make the final decision on any IPAWS alerts that are requested.
- **RHW: Radiological Hazard Warning** - A warning of the loss, discovery, or release of a radiological material.
- **RWT: Required Weekly Test** - A test message that consists, at a minimum, of the header and end-of message tones.
- **SPW: Shelter in Place Warning** - A warning of an event where the public is recommended to shelter in place (go inside, close doors and windows, turn off air conditioning or heating systems, and turn on the radio or TV for more information).
- **TOE: 911 Telephone Outage Emergency** - An emergency message that defines a local or state 911 telephone network outage by geographic area or telephone exchange. Authorized officials can use TOE to provide alternate phone numbers to reach 911 or dispatch personnel when 911 lines are down. Use TOE instead of LAE to notify the public 911 telephone outage and provide further information.

C. Training Requirements

Prior to accessing the IPAWS system to post alerts, any Cherokee County, Georgia Emergency Management and E-911 staff who have the authority to send messages via IPAWS must complete the following training:

- IS-247 course for COG point of contact (POC) and any user with alert originator responsibilities for IPAWS public alerts.
<https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-247.b&lang=en>
- IS-251 course for COG point of contact (POC) and any user with administrative responsibilities for IPAWS public alerts
<https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-251.a&lang=en>

Initially during the IPAWS application process the Cherokee County, Georgia COG POC submitted a copy of all IPAWS related training certificates to IPAWS@gema.ga.gov. This process will be completed annually as well.

D. Software for Sending Alert

Cherokee County, Georgia Emergency Management will use the existing Rave system to send IPAWS alerts and messages.

E. System Security

To ensure the joint security of the systems and the message data they store, process, and transmit, all parties participating in IPAWS agree to the terms and conditions as stated in their MOAs and the IPAWS Rules of Behavior, which can be requested at IPAWS@fema.dhs.gov.

F. System Tests

At the local, county, and state level, monthly tests or exercises of IPAWS will be conducted to ensure the ability to send emergency notification information across the entire network. Testing should be coordinated prior to execution to ensure appropriate rules and regulations are followed. Any impediments will be immediately identified and a resolution at the lowest jurisdictional level possible will be ascertained. It is pertinent to define which test codes will/should work for each dissemination channel depending on their existing EAS Plan.

The required Monthly Proficiency Demonstration will be conducted by the Cherokee County Emergency Management Agency at noon on the first Wednesday of each month in conjunction with the outdoor warning siren test. This is a WEA message that is sent in the ‘practice mode’ of the Rave alerting software (so the message is sent to IPAWS but is not disseminated to the public). It should NOT be sent in the live or active mode. FEMA requires you select an event code that your COG is approved to send; do not send a Required Monthly Test (RMT).

It is anticipated that the FEMA IPAWS Program Management Office (PMO) will conduct tabletop, scenario-based, and full-scale exercises of the public alert and warning systems. Where applicable, all jurisdictions will be encouraged to participate in these exercises. GEMA conducts a required monthly test to ensure that the EAS is active throughout Georgia.

V. Public Outreach

A. IPAWS Message Criteria

When circumstances arise and the need for a public warning becomes necessary, the decision to send a message will ultimately be a matter of local judgment. To assist in the decision-making process the following criteria should be applied:

- Does the hazardous situation require the public to take immediate action?
- Does the hazardous situation pose a serious threat to life or property?
- Is there a high degree of probability the hazardous situation will occur?
- Do other means of disseminating the message ensure rapid delivery of urgent information?

B. Writing Effective Alert and Warning Messages

How an alert/warning message is written is as important as what is written. Poorly written warnings can undermine both understanding and credibility. "Style" refers to how you write. Considerations when writing accessible and usable alert and warning messages should include:

- **Specifics:** If the message is not specific enough about the "Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?" the public will spend more time seeking specific information to confirm the risk. If necessary, be specific about what is or is not known about the hazard.
- **Consistency:** An alert/warning should be internally consistent; that is, one part of the message should not contradict another part. It should be consistent with messages that are distributed via other channels. To the extent possible, alerts/warnings should be consistent from event to event, to the degree that the hazard is similar.
- **Certainty:** Avoid conveying a sense of uncertainty, either in content or tone. Confine the message to what is known, or if necessary, describe what is unknown in certain terms. Do not guess or speculate.
- **Clarity:** Use common words that can easily be understood. Do not use technical terminology or jargon. If protective instructions are precautionary, state so clearly. Make it clear if protective instructions pertain to particular at-risk populations (e.g., elderly). If the probability of occurrence of the hazard event is less than 100 percent, try to convey in simple terms what the likelihood of occurrence is.
- **Accuracy:** Do not overstate or understate the facts. Do not omit important information. Convey respect for the intelligence and judgment of the public.

To this end, only those individuals who have successfully completed the IS-247.B course and have been officially designated by Cherokee County, Georgia Emergency Management as an alerting authority will be provided access to the system.

C. Local Media

Local media has a desire to keep its audience informed of ongoing events. Besides their broadcasts, many have developed instant messaging systems to keep the public informed of important events through a variety of social media networks. Coordination with local media outlets is essential for the successful implementation of the Cherokee County, Georgia IPAWS Plan. By making use of the media's desire to inform its audience, public safety officials in Cherokee County, Georgia have and will continue to establish relationships with the media for the passage of critical, time-sensitive, information to the public.

The challenge is that many media outlets are market-driven and are not constrained by political boundaries. In many cases, a television or radio broadcast station that covers multiple counties or state-defined regions may be physically located in a neighboring region.

Through multiple mediums, such as newspaper articles, public service announcements, town hall meetings, or other avenues that the jurisdiction has found effective, the general public will be encouraged to continue to listen to and follow officials' guidance about what to do when a disaster occurs.

Periodically (especially after an incident occurs) the public should be canvassed as to the clarity and effectiveness of the messages that were broadcast. The responses should be reviewed to determine if any changes to the message content need to take place. The results should also be passed to the applicable state agency in order to share them for the benefit of other jurisdictions.

VI. Annex Maintenance

The IPAWS Annex will be reviewed and updated annually and as required following IPAWS activations when events or exercises identify a needed change.

VII. IPAWS Annex Appendixes

APPENDIX A: ACRONYMS

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
AWN	Alert, Warning and Notification
AA	Alerting Authority
AAR	After Action Report
ADR	Administrative Message
AO	Alert Originator
AOSP	Alert Origination Software Provider
AVA	Avalanche Watch
AVW	Avalanche Warning
BLU	Blue Alert
CAE	Child Abduction Emergency
CDW	Civil Danger Warning
CEM	Civil Emergency Message
CHP	California Highway Patrol
CMAS	Commercial Mobile Alert System
COG	Collaborative Operating Group
DBGF	Device Based Geo-Fencing
DMO	Practice/Demonstration Warning
EAS	Emergency Alert System
EQW	Earthquake Warning
EVI	Evacuation Immediate
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIPS	Federal Information Processing Standard
FRW	Fire Warning

FSLTT	Federal, State, Local, Tribal, Territorial
-------	--

GEMA	Georgia Emergency Management Agency
GIS	Geographic Information System
HAZ COLLECT	All-Hazards Emergency Message Collection System
HMW	Hazardous Material Warning
IPAWS	Integrated Public Alert and Warning System
IPAWS OPEN	IPAWS-Open Platform for Emergency Networks
LAE	Local Area Emergency
LEW	Law Enforcement Warning
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPD	Monthly Proficiency Demonstration
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NUW	Nuclear Power Plant Warning
NWEM	Non-Weather Emergency Message
NWS	National Weather Service
PAA	Public Alerting Authority
PIO	Public Information Officer
PMO	Program Management Office
RHW	Radiological Hazard Warning
RMT	Required Monthly Test
SAME	Specific Area Message Encoding
SOG	Standard Operating Guidance
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPW	Shelter – in – Place Warning

TOE	Telephone Outage Emergency
TSS	Technical Support Services
TSSF	Technical Support Services Facility
TTS	Text to Speech
VOW	Volcano Warning
WARN	Warning Alert and Response Network
WEA	Wireless Emergency Alert

APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY

Agency Representative – A person assigned by a primary, assisting, or cooperating federal, state, territorial, tribal, or local government agency or private entity that has been delegated authority to make decisions affecting that agency’s or organization’s participation in incident management activities following appropriate consultation with the leadership of that agency.

Agency – A division of government with a specific function offering a particular kind of assistance. In the Incident Command System (ICS), agencies are defined either as jurisdictional (having statutory responsibility for incident management) or as assisting or cooperating (providing resources or other assistance).

Alerting Authority – Designated jurisdictional individual who is authorized to write and distribute an alert or warning.

Civil Danger Warning (CDW) – A warning of an event that presents a danger to a significant civilian population. The CDW, which usually warns of a specific hazard and gives specific protective action, has a higher priority than the Local Area Emergency (LAE) (e.g. contaminated water supply, terrorist attack). Public protective actions could include evacuation, shelter in place, or other actions (such as boiling contaminated water or seeking medical treatment).

Civil Emergency Message (CEM) – An emergency message regarding an in-progress or imminent significant threat(s) to public safety and/or property. The CEM is a higher priority message than the Local Area Emergency (LAE), but the hazard is less specific than the Civil Danger Warning (CDW).

Collaborative Operating Group – IPAWS is structured around Collaborative Operating Groups (COG). A COG is a virtual organization of alerting authorities that holds membership in IPAWS- OPEN and manages system access within that organization. When the application process is complete, FEMA will assign each agency a COG Identification number and Digital Certificate.

Disaster – The occurrence or imminent threat of widespread or severe damage, injury, or loss of life or property, or significant adverse impact on the environment, resulting from any natural or technological hazards, or a terrorist act, including but not limited to fire, flood, earthquake, wind, storm, hazardous substance incident, water contamination requiring emergency action to avert danger or damage, epidemic, air contamination, blight, drought, infestation, explosion, civil disturbance, or hostile military or paramilitary action. For the purpose of state or federal disaster declarations, the term disaster generally falls into one of two categories relative to the level of severity and impact on local and state resources. They are: Major - likely to require immediate state assistance supplemented by limited federal resources, if necessary, to supplement intra-state efforts and resources; and Catastrophic - will require immediate and massive state and federal assistance in both the response and recovery aspects. Local government's adaptation of the definition of a disaster denotes an event which threatens or actually does inflict damage to people or

property, and is, or is likely to be, beyond the capability of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of a local jurisdiction, thereby requiring the augmentation of resources through state-directed assistance.

Emergency – A suddenly occurring and often unforeseen situation which is determined by the Governor to require state response or mitigation actions to immediately supplement local government in protecting lives and property, to provide for public health and safety, or to avert or lessen the threat of a disaster. Local government's adaptation of this definition connotes an event that threatens or actually does inflict damage to people or property, exceeds the daily routine type of response, and still can be dealt with using local internal and mutual aid resources.

Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) – In the event of a national emergency, the President will be able to use IPAWS to send a message to the American people quickly and simultaneously through multiple communications pathways. IPAWS is available to United States Federal, State, local, territorial and tribal government officials as a way to alert the public via the Emergency Alert System (EAS), Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), NOAA Weather Radio and other National Weather Service dissemination channels, the internet, existing unique warning systems, and emerging distribution technologies.

Jurisdiction – A range or sphere of authority. Public agencies have jurisdiction at an incident related to their legal responsibilities and authority for incident mitigation. Jurisdictional authority at an incident can be political or geographical (e.g., city, county, state or federal boundary lines) or functional (e.g., police department, health department).

Law Enforcement Warning (LEW) - A warning of a bomb explosion, riot, or other criminal event (e.g. a jailbreak). An authorized law enforcement agency may blockade roads, waterways, or facilities, evacuate or deny access to affected areas, and arrest violators or suspicious persons.

Local Area Emergency (LAE) - An emergency message that defines an event that, by itself, does not pose a significant threat to public safety and/or property. However, the event could escalate, contribute to other more serious events, or disrupt critical public safety services. Instructions, other than public protective actions, may be provided by authorized officials. Examples include a disruption in water, electric or natural gas service, or a potential terrorist threat where the public is asked to remain alert.

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) – An agreement document between two or more agencies establishing reciprocal assistance to be provided upon request (and if available from the supplying agency) and laying out the guidelines under which this assistance will operate.

Missing and Endangered Person (MEP) – An emergency message, based on established criteria, about a missing person believed to be endangered. A local or state law enforcement agency investigating the missing person will describe the missing person, provide a description of the mode of transportation, where they were last seen and ask the public to notify the requesting agency if they have any information on the whereabouts of the person.

Mutual-Aid Agreement – Written agreement between agencies and/or jurisdictions

that they will assist one another upon request, by furnishing personnel, equipment, and/or expertise in a specified area.

National Warning System (NAWAS) – A communication system of the federal government which provides warning to the population of an attack or other national emergency. Reception is at local and state warning points.

National Weather Services (NWS) – Federal government agencies charged with weather- related reporting and projections.

Shelter in place – Take immediate shelter where you are—at home, work, school, or wherever you can take protective cover. It may also mean "seal the room"; in other words, take steps to prevent outside air from coming in.

State – When capitalized, refers to any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any possession of the United States. See Section 2 (14), Homeland Security Act of 2002, Pub. L. 107- 296, 116 Stat. 2135 (2002).

APPENDIX C: CHEROKEE COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AUTHORIZED USERS

The following Cherokee County Emergency Services staff members have completed the FEMA “Integrated Public Alert and Warning System” (IPAWS) IS-00251.b course:

Name: James Daniel Westbrook Position: Emergency Management Director

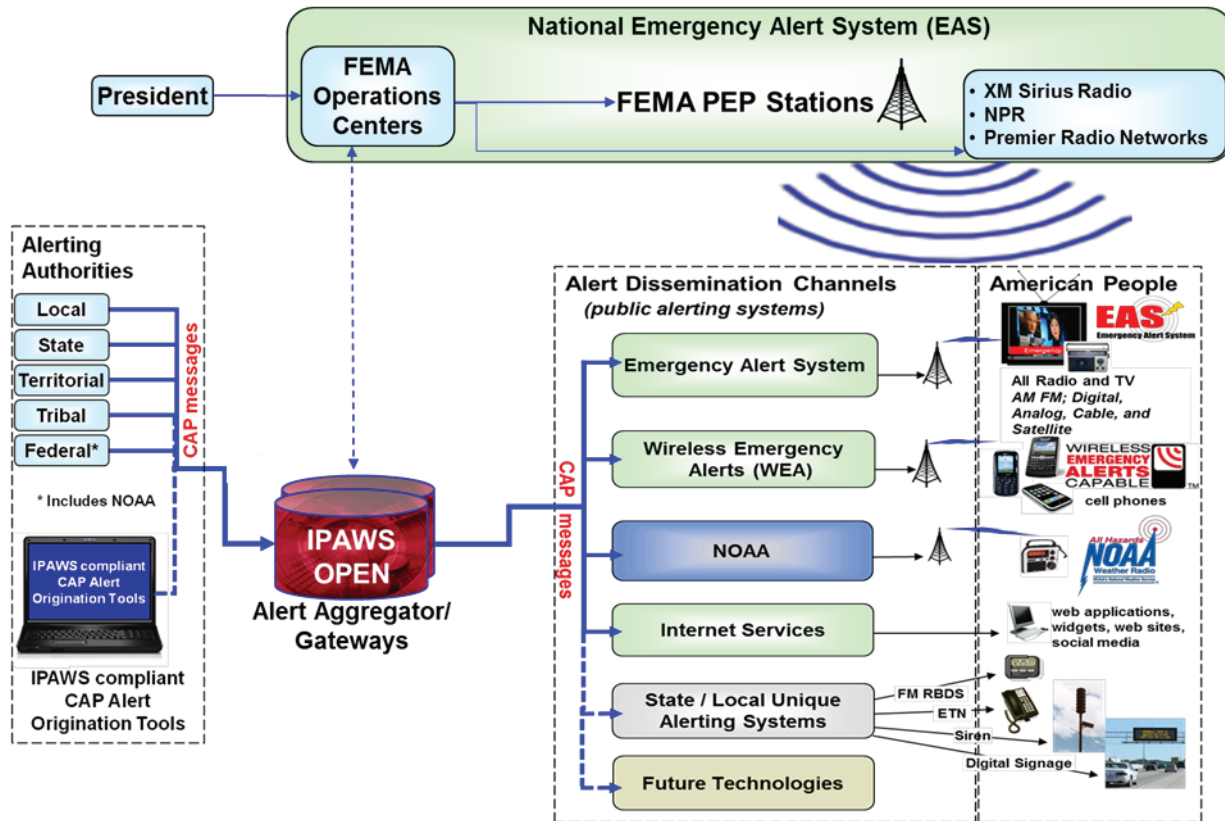
Name: Rebecah Logan Position: Emergency Management Deputy Director

Name: Courtney Bourgoiin Position: Emergency Management Specialist

These individuals are authorized to activate IPAWS, limited to the utilization of the following WEA codes:

- **CEM – Civil Emergency Message.** An emergency message regarding an in-progress or imminent significant threat(s) to public safety and/or property. The CEM is a higher priority message than the Local Area Emergency (LAE).
- **EQW - Earthquake Warning.** An emergency message warning of current or imminent earthquake activity. *(For use in the event of an earthquake measuring a minimum of magnitude 6.0 or higher.)*
- **EVI - Evacuation Immediate.** An emergency message warning that immediate evacuation is recommended.
- **FRW – Fire Warning.** A warning of a spreading wildfire or structural fire that threatens a populated area. *Evacuation of areas in the fire’s path may be recommended by authorized officials.*
- **HMW - Hazardous Materials Warning.** An emergency message warning of the release of a non-radioactive hazardous material that may recommend evacuation or shelter in place.
- **LAE - Local Area Emergency.** An emergency message that warns of a local emergency of such a nature as to threaten public safety and/or property.
- **LEW - Law Enforcement Warning.** An emergency message warning of a criminal incident that may be of an immediate danger to people in the area.
- **MEP – Missing and Endangered Person.** An emergency message warning of a missing and endangered person that does not meet the criteria for a child abduction emergency.
- **RHW – Radiological Hazard Warning.** A warning of the loss, discovery, or release of a radiological hazard.
- **SPW - Shelter in Place.** An emergency message warning of an event where the public is recommended to shelter in place.

APPENDIX D: IPAWS ARCHITECTURE



APPENDIX E: IPAWS AND PREPAREDNESS

Public Alerts and Warnings Support Preparedness Goals

The Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) supports all preparedness mission areas: prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery efforts. IPAWS delivers coordinated, prompt, reliable, and actionable information to the whole community through the use of clear, consistent, accessible, and culturally and linguistically appropriate methods.

IPAWS effectively relays information regarding any threat or hazard, as well as the actions being taken and the assistance being made available, as appropriate.

Prevention

- Communicates timely and well-coordinated information to the public through standardized procedures
- Informs the American public of pending threats, as appropriate, and provides critical instruction on the precautions necessary to protect themselves, their families, and their property
- Tailors alerts to best meet the specific needs of the audience
- Shares prompt and actionable messages with the public and other stakeholders, as appropriate, to aid in the prevention of imminent or follow-on terrorist attacks

Protection

- Protects and enhances the overall physical and logistical health of communications
- Improves the sector's national security and emergency preparedness posture with state, local, territorial, tribal, federal, international, and private sector entities to reduce risk

Mitigation

- Warns people of the risks in their community and the actions they can take to mitigate those threats
- Alerts children, individuals with disabilities or access and functional needs, diverse communities, and people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
- Supports and increases the number of communities that develop and share risk reduction products
- Provides the tools necessary to make decisions quickly
- Shares information obtained through coordinating activities to inform response and recovery decision making by effectively communicating threat and hazard risk analysis

Response

- Informs all affected segments of the community by all means necessary, including accessible tools, of critical lifesaving and life-sustaining information to expedite the delivery of emergency services and aid the public in taking protective actions
- Delivers credible messages to inform ongoing emergency services and the public about protective measures and other life-sustaining actions and facilitate the transition to recovery

Recovery

- Informs all affected segments of the community by all means necessary, including accessible tools
- Utilizes existing resources to promote effective recovery and support states, territories, tribes, federal, and other jurisdictions affected by a disaster
- Promotes effective recovery, particularly for those incidents that are large-scale or catastrophic
- Provides a flexible structure that enables disaster recovery managers to operate in a unified and collaborative manner
- Manages expectations throughout the recovery process and ensures the public has a clear understanding of available assistance and their roles and responsibilities
- Supports the development of state, local, tribal, territorial, and federal government communications plans

Exhibit B

IPAWS Event Codes

- **CEM: Civil Emergency Message** - An emergency message regarding an in-progress or imminent significant threat(s) to public safety and/or property. The CEM is a higher priority message than the Local Area Emergency (LAE), but the hazard is less specific than the Civil Danger Warning (CDW). For example, the CEM could be used to describe a change in the Homeland Security Alert System level in response to a terrorist threat.
- **EQW: Earthquake Warning** - A warning of current or imminent earthquake activity. Authorized officials may recommend or order protective actions according to state law or local ordinance. EQW can be used to inform the public of affected areas and measures to take for safety. If road damages have occurred, detour information can be provided for individuals that require or plan to travel into or away from the affected area.
- **EVI: Evacuate Immediate** - A warning where immediate evacuation is recommended or ordered according to state law or local, tribal, or territorial ordinance.
- **FRW: Fire Warning** - A warning that indicates a spreading wildfire or structure fire threatens a populated area. Evacuation of areas in the fire's path may be recommended by authorized officials according to state law or local ordinance.
- **HMW Hazardous Materials Warning** - A warning indicating the release of a nonradioactive hazardous material (such as a flammable gas, toxic chemical, or biological agent) that require the public to evacuate from the affected area (for an explosion, fire, or oil spill hazard) or shelter in place (for a toxic fume hazard).
- **LAE: Local Area Emergency** - An emergency message that defines an event that by itself does not pose a significant threat to public safety or property. However, the event could escalate, contribute to other more serious events, or disrupt critical public safety services. Instructions, other than public protective actions, may be provided by authorized officials. LAE can be used during a disruption in water, electric or natural gas service, road closures due to excessive snowfall, or a potential terrorist threat where the public is asked to remain alert.
- **LEW: Law Enforcement Warning** - A warning of a bomb explosion, riot, or other criminal event (e.g., a jailbreak). An authorized law enforcement agency may blockade roads, waterways, or facilities, evacuate, or deny access to affected areas, or arrest violators or suspicious persons. LEW can be used if a bomb threat is received during an event and local authorities are investigating the matter and law enforcement evacuates an area and establishes road blockages until "all clear" is received.
- **MEP: Missing and Endangered Person** - Used to facilitate more efficient and widespread dissemination of alerts and coordinated responses to incidents involving all missing and endangered persons across a single or multiple jurisdictional area, not currently covered by AMBER Alerts. MEP alerts aid in finding missing and endangered people by notifying the

public so they can assist in the search. For Cherokee County, the following requirements will be instituted for this event code:

- Any individual that is 13 years old or younger will have an IPAWS message sent upon request by Cherokee County Law Enforcement or Fire Department officials. This alert will be sent regardless of time of day.
 - For all individuals 14 years or older, Cherokee County Law Enforcement and Fire Department officials must classify the individual as being endangered (due to the circumstance, age, or a cognitive issue) to necessitate an IPAWS alert. An alert will be sent outside of quiet hours upon request.
 - Quiet hours will be designated from 11:00 PM to 7:00 AM. If the situation is deemed critical, an alert will be sent regardless of time of day after diligent consideration.
 - For all situations, Cherokee County Emergency Management will have the ultimate authority and make the final decision on any IPAWS alerts that are requested.
- **RHW: Radiological Hazard Warning** - A warning of the loss, discovery, or release of a radiological material.
 - **RWT: Required Weekly Test** - A test message that consists, at a minimum, of the header and end-of message tones.
 - **SPW: Shelter in Place Warning** - A warning of an event where the public is recommended to shelter in place (go inside, close doors and windows, turn off air conditioning or heating systems, and turn on the radio or TV for more information).
 - **TOE: 911 Telephone Outage Emergency** - An emergency message that defines a local or state 911 telephone network outage by geographic area or telephone exchange. Authorized officials can use TOE to provide alternate phone numbers to reach 911 or dispatch personnel when 911 lines are down. Use TOE instead of LAE to notify the public 911 telephone outage and provide further information.