



# COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

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**Fact Sheet-03-52**

## **REVERSE 911** **Community Alert System for Douglas County**

When natural or human-caused disasters occur, it is important to notify the public and provide safety recommendations. A new system recently has been incorporated into Douglas County’s emergency management program. The system is called REVERSE 911 and works through our telephones. It uses computer technology to quickly contact many residents and businesses in a specific area to communicate information. When you have an emergency, 911 is the number to call. But, when disasters occur that are unknown to you, REVERSE 911 calls you.

closures or alternate routes. The system will also be used for the Guardian Program, to periodically check on senior citizens or individuals who live alone.

### **Who manages REVERSE 911?**

The Douglas County 911 Emergency Services Department manages the REVERSE 911 system by updating the phone number database, prerecording emergency messages, and upgrading the system’s software.

### **How does REVERSE 911 work?**

In the event of an emergency, the REVERSE 911 operator identifies the neighborhood(s) or affected region within the county. A message is recorded that concisely describes the disaster and recommends actions residents should take. The message is then sent out to listed telephone numbers within that geographic area. If phone lines are busy, the system will attempt to redial those numbers a predetermined number of times (three times for example) to make contact. If an answering machine picks up the call, the emergency message will be left on the machine. Caller identity machines will read “DOUGLAS COUNTY.” The time required to reach all affected residents is dictated by the length of the message (usually 30 seconds), the number of phone numbers called, and the number of redials programmed. It is possible for our REVERSE 911 system to reach 3,000 phone numbers with a 30-second message in a one-hour period.



### **How much does REVERSE 911 cost?**

The REVERSE 911 system was purchased for \$35,000 from Sigma Communications, Inc. of Indianapolis, Indiana. A local citizens’ group, called the Buckbrush Flood Safety Coalition, working in conjunction with University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, applied for and received FEMA funds through a Project Impact grant. The Douglas County 911 Emergency Services Department has assumed responsibility for operation and maintenance and will use county departmental funds for these purposes. There is no cost to county residents.

### **Contact the 911 Emergency Services Department, 782-9990, if:**

- You have an unlisted number and want to be contacted by REVERSE 911 in the event of an emergency.
- You recently changed your phone number and want to make sure that the REVERSE 911 system has your new number.
- You have hearing-impaired needs and want your line to be identified as TTY (Teletype Writer).

### **What is REVERSE 911 used for?**

The system is useful for many purposes, but Douglas County is reserving it exclusively for disasters and emergency services. The system will be used for natural disasters, such as flooding, wildfires, and earthquakes, as well as human disasters, such as hazardous spills and explosions. Other uses may include missing persons, escaped convicts, and road

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