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EXECUTIVE CHAMBER

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NEW ONLINE ALERT SYSTEM AND AID PARTNERSHIP TO ENHANCE STATE EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Governor Eliot Spitzer today announced two important initiatives designed to enhance the state's ability to alert the public in emergency situations and respond after disasters.

The first initiative will provide web-based emergency alerts to the public. The new system -- dubbed NY-ALERT -- will provide National Weather Service bulletins about severe weather, advisories on road closures, and other emergency response information from federal, state and local authorities.

The second initiative -- called NY-DELIVERS -- will forge public-private partnerships to support the state's emergency response missions. The initiative is modeled on best practices identified after Hurricane Katrina.

"These two initiatives help enhance the state's response to natural and man-made disasters by improving emergency notifications to the public and by forming stronger networks to deliver critical commodities such as food and water following an emergency," Governor Spitzer said.

The Governor's announcement follows a national emergency response conference on Long Island this week and coincides with the beginning of hurricane season.

Development of the two initiatives was led by Deputy Secretary for Public Safety Michael Balboni, who said: "Two of the critical lessons from Hurricane Katrina are that effective communication is imperative, and there is no such thing as too much cooperation between the public and private sector to provide aid and assistance."

Additional details of the two initiatives are as follows:

NY-ALERT will allow state and local governments to provide notifications to select groups through a secure web portal. This feature will utilize email, facsimile transmissions, text message and dial-out voice messaging.

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The website – www.nyalert.gov – will allow members of the public to subscribe to receive emergency alerts via similar means of communication. For example, a subscriber will be able to receive text messages on their personal cell phone to alert them of imminent severe weather.

NY-DELIVERS will be led by a working group composed of state agencies and private sector representatives, which will be responsible for shaping the program. The State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) and state agency staff will implement the program. As part of the initiative, a Business Operations Center (BOC) would be established and housed in the State's Emergency Operations Center. This parallel structure will ensure government operations are working hand-in-hand with private sector stakeholders for a cohesive response and recovery effort during emergency situations.

The two initiatives are expected to be operational within 60 days.

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