

SMART911 AVAILABLE IN METHUEN

METHUEN - When it comes to responding to an emergency call, every second counts. That is why Mayor Stephen N. Zanni has worked with public safety officials, City Councilors & School Committee members, and disability advocates, to implement a system that dramatically increases the efficiency of Methuen's Fire, Police, and EMT services when responding to an emergency.

"Having the right information can mean the difference between life and death," said Mayor Zanni. "I was approached last year by parents and advocates who identified ways we could better respond in emergencies, and my administration immediately went to work."

"It is important that our first responders are able to locate you quickly and having more information in advance can help make sure that happens," said Police Chief Joe Solomon.

Zanni worked with City Councilor Lynn Vidler, School Committee member Jana DiNatale, the Commission on Disabilities, and both the Police and Fire Departments to identify an emerging initiative called Smart911.

Smart911 is a service that allows individuals and families to create confidential online profiles in which they can submit vital information. Smart911 allows residents and travelers to create a [Safety Profile](http://www.smart911.com) at www.smart911.com for their whole household that includes any information they might want 9-1-1 and first responders to have in the event of an emergency, such as disabilities, allergies, or pre-existing medical conditions. When a citizen dials 9-1-1, their Safety Profile is automatically displayed to the 9-1-1 call taker, allowing Methuen to send the appropriate responders to the right location with the best possible information.

Smart911 is a national service that protects over 45 million people across 44 states and 3,100 communities and has been credited with positively impacting emergency outcomes.

"The concept for Smart911 really took root for me after I attended a seminar on Emergency Preparedness that was sponsored by Methuen's Disability Commission," said Councilor Vidler. "Having information and being prepared for an emergency before it happens can have an incredible impact on the person needing care and how and where emergency personnel respond."

Vidler, a Licensed Social Worker, knew of countless instances where additional information could make the difference.

"Imagine if, when responding to a 9-1-1 call, our police knew they may encounter a senior citizen suffering from dementia; or if our firefighters knew that a burning home housed a person in a wheelchair," explained Vidler. "Smart911 will now allow our residents to proactively provide this basic information so that our public safety has it in the event of an emergency."

DiNatale, who is wrapping up her first term on the Methuen School Committee, echoed Vidler's sentiments.

"God forbid there is an emergency when a parent isn't home," said DiNatale. "A child may not know of every medication they're prescribed, or there may not be a ready number on site for officials to contact

parents or guardians. This system really goes a long way to providing the best possible service to residents.”

With Smart911, citizens can link both home and work addresses to mobile phones, which can be passed on to responders in the field for more a detailed, rapid response. Additional information including pets in the home, vehicle details in the event of an accident, and even emergency contacts can all be included in a Safety Profile. All information is optional and the citizen has the ability to choose what details they would like to include.

“The profiles and the information they contain are secure, and the program includes safeguards that prevent public safety officials from accessing them outside of an emergency,” said Chief Solomon. “I am excited that MPD, along with our Fire and EMTs, is taking this innovative step.”

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