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Community Telephone Notification System to be Tested

If your telephone rings and the party on the other end is a recorded message from the Village, please don't hang up – that's the word from the Oak Park Department of Public Health, which will be testing a new telephone notification system in December.

The automatic dialer, which uses geographic information system (GIS) technology in selecting telephone numbers within a specified area of the community, could have a wide range of applications, but likely will be used primarily for public safety messages, such as notifying residents of mosquito abatement efforts, missing persons or emergency situations.

"We certainly do not want to unnecessarily intrude on residents at home unless the message is important," explained Health Director Georgette Polyak, PhD., "so we will be very selective and judicious about how and when the telephone notification system is used. But we do need to test the system to make sure it is fully functional before it is needed."

The test message will be a 15-second recording urging residents to read the December issue of the *OP/FYI* newsletter for information on a new residential recycling program. While this type of general information is not the kind of message for which the system is intended in Oak Park, Dr. Polyak said the team working to implement the new system decided the test should provide information of use to those who are called.

Everyone in the Village will not be called, although the system does have that capability. The test will target various sized areas throughout the Village to mimic a range of notification scenarios. Calls will be limited to between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. Residents who receive a test call from the automatic system are asked to listen to the entire message to provide accurate data for the test.

For more information on the emergency notification system, call the Health Department at 358.5488 or email health@oak-park.us.

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