

# News Release

**November 9, 2005**



## **Governor Barbour, Mississippi Homeland Security and Global Security Systems Partner to Create State-Wide Alert Program**

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Jackson, MS**

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Jackson, Mississippi – Governor Haley Barbour and the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security announced Wednesday, November 9th, that a program designed to implement a state-wide alert system has been undertaken. The Mississippi Office of Homeland Security in partnership with the University of Mississippi, has awarded Global Security Systems Network (GSS) a contract that will create an alert system that broadcasts a digital text message through FM frequencies to emergency responders during times of crisis.

This alert system project, funded through a Homeland Security grant, will be managed by the University of Mississippi. Mississippi is the first state in the country to develop a secure state-wide alert system for emergency responders, which has the ability to function even when normal means of communication have been rendered useless. Governor Barbour said “When the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001 took place, there was no way to let the responders know that the buildings were going to come down. Radios were clogged with traffic, cell phones didn’t

work, it was immediately apparent that a new means of emergency communications needed to be developed.”

The system developed by GSS would allow a text message to be sent via FM radio signal to a designated group of individuals or to a specific location with whatever alert is appropriate. The targeting of a specific location is made available via an embedded GPS capability.

Mississippi Homeland Security Director Edwin L. Worthington said “It is critical that Mississippi develop this project since many areas have limited alert coverage and because of our vulnerabilities to natural disasters. Our ability to communicate throughout the state during active emergencies is critical. This became clearly apparent during Hurricane Katrina when cell phones and radio communications were disrupted.”

GSS is a Mississippi based company, and has developed a chip the can be inserted into pagers, cell phones, PDA’s and other like devices, to alert responders and provide vital information as the situation develops.

“GSS has recognized that there are two parts to the communications issues that emerged from the Hurricane Katrina disaster. One was clearly the communications between first responders, FEMA and ordinary citizens once engaged either on site or coordinating targeted activities utilizing different communication systems and the limitations of those systems. The second was the alert system itself and its limitations and vulnerabilities. GSS’s expertise and experience with a proven system of single point to multipoint messaging, previously applied to a wireless information and paging system prior to the mass distribution of cell phones, directed its efforts to addressing the needs of a digital Emergency Alert Network” says Robert L. Adams, President of Global Security Systems.

In addition, Worthington stated, “eventually the technology would allow for home smoke detectors, microwave ovens, refrigerators and other home appliances with a digital capability, to be equipped with the same chip for alerting whole communities of a pending event.”

Commissioner of Public Safety George Phillips was quoted as saying “It is truly amazing what technology can do to aid in saving lives. It is wonderful to have Mississippi on the cutting edge in disaster response.”

Mississippi Public Broadcasting (MPB) has agreed to partner with the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security and allow the use of their tower network as the backbone to the state-wide alert system. This partnership is poised to facilitate a thorough coverage of the state during times of crisis.

It is anticipated that the installation and operation of this capability will be in place by June, 2006.