

Dane County Exec Parisi: Dane County seeks multi-million dollar upgrade to emergency siren system network

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Dane County is seeking to upgrade its countywide network of over 140 outdoor warning sirens in the coming year, County Executive Joe Parisi announced today. Parisi included \$3 million in his 2023 county budget for the work to replace the hardware, software, and equipment that triggers when and how the sirens are sounded.

“As our county grows, it’s important we utilize the most current technology available when it comes to keeping our communities safe,” Parisi said. “We were among the first counties to work with the National Weather Service on automating how warnings are issued and focusing those warnings on areas most at risk. This \$3 million will help keep us on the cutting edge and, in turn, help families know when it’s time to seek shelter,” Parisi added.

The project will upgrade central control software to help Dane County take advantage of current and emerging methods to warn people of severe weather. This software is integrated with the National Weather Service so when a tornado warning is issued by forecasters, Dane County’s sirens are automatically sounded. The county’s current system is coming up on being a decade old. This project will bring the entire network that supports siren activation up to date with the latest technologies.

There are 141 outdoor warning sirens across Dane County. 79 of them are owned by the county while the other 62 are local government owned. All of the sirens are

monitored and controlled by a central system operated by Dane County. This system integrates all of the sirens so they can be tested, monitored, and activated together.

Dane County Emergency Management staff oversee the system and its maintenance and test the sirens on the first Wednesday of every month in severe weather season.

The 2023 Dane County budget was introduced by the County Executive earlier this month and is currently being reviewed by the County Board, with final action expected in early November.