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DSTEP adding to emergency preparedness plans

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The **Downtown St. Louis Emergency Preparedness Organization** completed the first two initiatives in its plan to prepare downtown for an emergency, it said Monday.

Co-chairmen of the organization, former U.S. Sen. John Danforth and Bryan Cave Partner Walter Metcalfe Jr., said at a press conference Monday that the organization, formed after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, completed a Web site that provides information about emergency preparedness and set up a dedicated radio communication network that connects participating downtown buildings with city emergency officials. In case of an emergency, the network would provide real-time notification of emergencies and provide safety instructions.

New initiatives that the organization will focus on include a reverse 911 notification, which would allow first-responders to communicate with the public via cell phones, pagers and other devices. In addition, the organization is teaming with the St. Louis Fire Department Lifesaving Foundation to encourage more Automated External Defibrillator devices and provide CPR training. Also, in the event of an emergency, the Web site will be updated to provide evacuation information as well as act as a lost and found for human beings, Metcalfe said.

So far, about 55 downtown buildings and businesses are part of the organization, but "the door is still open," Danforth said.

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