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BNet Announces the Addition of the City of Cambridge to the Corporate Emergency Access System (CEAS)

Cambridge The Fifth Northeast City To Join The Growing, Innovative Pre-Crisis Credentialing System for Businesses and Municipalities

Dr. Robert H. Leviton, President of the Business Network of Emergency Resources, Inc (BNet), has announced the addition of the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts as the newest municipality to join the growing list of governments utilizing the Corporate Emergency Access System (CEAS) to assist business recovery following a serious emergency or disaster. Cambridge joins New York City, Boston, Stamford and Buffalo in the CEAS program.

CEAS is a credentialing program that operates in conjunction with local government; the program gives companies the ability to access their workplace quickly following an emergency event that results in travel or access restrictions. By allowing businesses to initiate a reentry and recovery process as quickly as possible, companies can maintain core IT systems, meet regulatory requirements and secure critical data and records in the aftermath of an emergency; all with the aim of continuing the functions of business throughout or soon after a disaster.

"It is in the interests of Cambridge to assimilate programs such as CEAS into our overall plan for dealing with emergencies and disasters, if they occur, in our city," said Cambridge Mayor Michael A. Sullivan. "Keeping the residents of Cambridge safe is our top priority and to do this we need to ensure we keep as many services operational as possible. Supporting infrastructure and business is a key element of this."

The CEAS program exists by written agreements with local, county or state governments that recognize the importance of business continuity and agree to utilize the program in the event of an emergency that causes a business interruption. The cost of the program is borne entirely by the participating private sector companies without cost to the governments initiating the program.

"Municipalities are finally making the connection," said Dr. Leviton, "between the survival of businesses at the local level, the welfare of the local economy and the potential downstream impact on national critical infrastructure following a major emergency or disaster."

The program is operated with the assistance of BNet, a not-for-profit organization that develops public-private initiatives between businesses and local and state governments throughout the United States. Other regions, including Westchester County, New York, are currently developing CEAS programs.

Any city, county or state can adopt CEAS through a written agreement with BNet. Once adopted by a municipality, any business can elect to participate in the program, paid for by participating businesses through a per card fee. Companies may designate a limited number of critical employees or contractors to receive a CEAS card prior to any emergency or disaster. This approach of 'pre-credentialing' was a key recommendation of a study carried out in 1997 by the Joint Loss Reductions Partnership (JLRP). This alleviates the need for public officials to develop impromptu credentialing processes at their own expense following a disaster.

"Protecting people is the central reason we plan for emergencies and is inextricably linked to safeguarding and restoring critical infrastructure and businesses," said Peter Picarillo, Executive Director of BNet and Former Director of Public-Private Initiatives of the New York City Office of Emergency Management. "Since it is a pre-event program, CEAS goes a long way towards alleviating the burden on local government and eases business' access to their sites during times when they need it the most".

The cities involved have already given such a positive response, not only to the concept of CEAS but to

the practicalities of such a system, that BNet has been encouraged to plan further products and services. BNet is now working towards holding symposiums and conferences designed to educate employers and governments on how best to plan for reentry and recovery after a disaster.

“Response to a disaster is clearly more than just getting people out; it is also about getting people back in,” says Picarillo. “By facilitating a system of priority access for critical private sector employees we, at BNet, can speed the recovery of our essential infrastructure and vital businesses, to bring our cities back to prosperity more quickly.”

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About Business Network of Emergency Resources, Inc (BNet)

BNet, headquartered in New York City, is a not for profit corporation dedicated to establishing emergency and crisis management solutions in partnerships between the public and private sector. Created by BNet, the Corporate Emergency Access System (CEAS) uses a 'critical employee access card' system to mitigate the economic loss incurred through any business emergency and accelerate recovery time for both business and government. For more information see www.ceas.com

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