

# Opinion: Access to information critical in emergency

By Adam McGill

The town of Truckee is working hard at better communicating with all those that visit or call Truckee home. With fire season upon us, it is now more important than ever to be able to communicate directly with the community in real time for important safety information. In an emergency seconds matter.

To that end, the Truckee Police Department has recently begun using an Internet-based software system known as Nixle. Nixle allows users to sign up free of charge online and elect to either receive text messages or emails from TPD. TPD uses this system to inform subscribers about police related activity in Truckee such as road closures and most important will use the system to alert users of an evacuation or other imminent safety information.



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To disseminate information quickly it is imperative to have as many subscribers as possible. Nixle guarantees your privacy and does not share your email address, wireless number, or any other personal information with the police department, nor does Nixle spam you with advertisements or other non-relevant notices. To do so would discourage new users and defeat the purpose of the system. Nixle is simply a public safety tool to

keep the community informed. Please take a moment to explore Nixle and consider signing up.

Although we hope to make Nixle our primary notification tool because of its efficiency and real time benefits, the town of Truckee will continue to use traditional forms of communication as well. In the event of an emergency in Truckee, such as a wildfire, information will be available from a number of sources. The police department will be providing information via Nixle, the town's website, Twitter and Facebook. The town will also be working with KTKL 101.5 to provide status updates and other important information to the community.

The town also has the ability to use an automated telephone call system to provide emergency notification to residents. Sacramento and local based television media often cover emergencies in our area and can be another source of information. During normal business hours information can also be obtained by calling the police department at (530) 550.2323.

The town takes seriously its role in emergency preparedness and works closely with our public safety partners to be ready for a major incident. Are you ready? You – are the real first responders. You are the first on the scene. Please take the time to prepare yourself and your family. Consider practicing with your family. Most important, have a family plan. Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.

For more information on how you can prepare yourself and your family check out this website and for wildfires visit the CalFire website.

*Adam McGill is the Truckee police chief.*