

To: Electoral Area Services Committee
From: Jennifer Kinneman, Manager of Corporate Affairs and
Reg Dyck, Manager of Electoral Area Emergency Services

Date: 2018-06-12

File No: 7130-25

Subject: ePact Emergency Communications Tool

INTENT

This report is intended to advise the Electoral Area Services Committee (EASC) of information pertaining to emergency communications and ePact. Staff is not looking for a recommendation and has forwarded this information should members want more clarification to discuss the item further.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

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BACKGROUND

Over the past year, both EA directors and electoral area residents have requested information about the FVRD's emergency response plan and how they would be notified in the event of an emergency. Currently, the FVRD utilizes traditional channels for emergency communication. During the recent activation of the Emergency Operations Centre and the flooding of the Fraser River, communications were managed through door-to-door delivery of advisories, alerts and orders; media releases; and posts to the FVRD web site and social media. There is potential to amplify these traditional communications methods. Staff have arranged for representatives from ePact to make a presentation to EASC.

DISCUSSION

ePact is a BC-based technology company that was created following the 2011 earthquake and tsunami that occurred in Japan. Recognizing gaps in North America's emergency management systems, ePact was designed to increase safety and help organizations better prepare for emergency events.

A wide range of organizations utilize ePact including municipalities, such as the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District and the District of Squamish. These two jurisdictions have similar challenges to the FVRD: they are geographically broad and environmentally diverse, facing a broad range of natural disasters from flooding to earthquakes to wildfires.

COST

The cost for ePact is based on registrations, with a range of \$1 to \$2 per person/year. The base cost of the service is \$2,500. Based on 2016 census data, the total number of households in all eight electoral areas is between 4,398 and 6,441. This range reflects the total number of dwellings versus the number of dwellings that are occupied by usual residents (i.e. permanent residence). Assuming only one person will register in each household the per-resident cost for ePact would be approximately \$8,796 and \$12,882 annually (if all households registered).

CONCLUSION

The FVRD could consider using ePact or another type of technology-based communications tool to further enhance its emergency management program. The cost for an enhanced emergency communications tool could be cost-shared between participating electoral areas and considered as part of the 2019 budget process.

COMMENTS BY:

Tareq Islam, Director of Engineering & Community Services Reviewed and supported.

Mike Veenbaas, Director of Financial Services Reviewed and supported.

Paul Gipps, Chief Administrative Officer: Reviewed and supported