

'GovDelivery' county e-mail notices launched

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MANKATO— GovDelivery, an e-mail subscription system that allows residents to choose their own diet of Blue Earth County news — from recent land forfeitures to stuff the county is selling on eBay — is up and running.

The free service works by allowing users to subscribe to any or all of 37 options, then sends the person an e-mail if there are any changes in that area.

So far, job opportunities are the most popular for the 233 people who have subscribed in the month or so the system has been operating, public information specialist Jessica Beyer said.

The second-most popular item is alerts about emergencies, which helps the county communicate directly with citizens rather than release information to the media first.

Other common subscriptions include the county newsletter, County Board minutes, eBay auctions, forfeited land sales and library events.

Signing up for the e-mails involves typing in an e-mail address, choosing how often you want to be updated and then picking the topics you'd like to keep up on.

People can sign up at the county's front page, www.co.blue-earth.mn.us, and there are links to the system elsewhere on the county and library sites.

Users can also assign a password to their e-mail if they want to be secure against someone tampering with their account.

Blue Earth County is looking to tap the popularity of e-mail as it looks to communicate better and drive residents to its Web site.

“As the Internet becomes increasingly popular, it's not just the younger population that's logging on to the Internet. It's baby boomers as well,” Beyer said.

Twenty-six other counties use GovDelivery, including Ramsey and Stearns counties, along with myriad federal and state agencies.

The cost to the county is a flat fee of \$3,900 and a monthly charge of \$390. The costs were based on the county's population, but GovDelivery won't become more expensive if the population increases.