Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)

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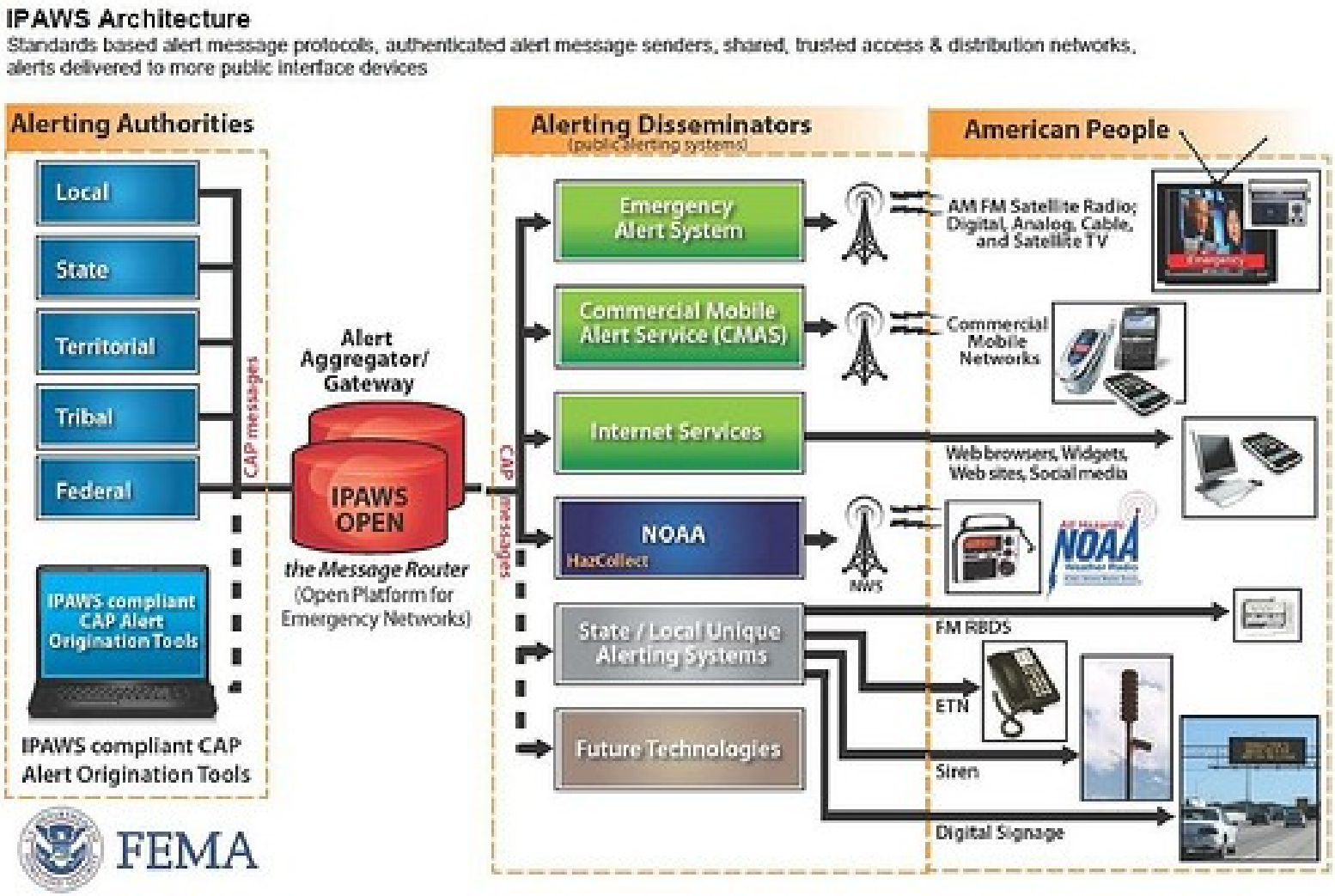
San Diego County OES

What is a Wireless Emergency Alert?

- Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) are emergency messages sent by authorized government alerting authorities through your mobile carrier.
- Most newer phones receive them.
- No subscriber list needed. If in range, you get the broadcast.

WEA is part of IPAWS



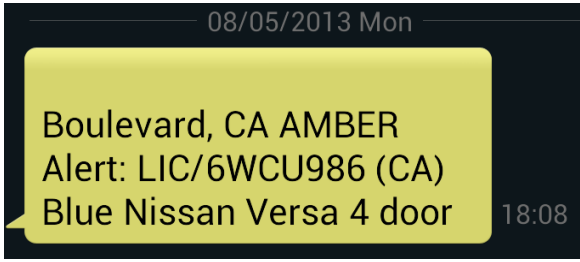
What types of messages?

- Extreme weather (from NOAA/NWS)
  - Imminent Threat Alerts such as: Flash flooding, dust storm, tornado, and tsunami warnings.
- AMBER Alerts (from *NCMEC/State)
- Emergency messages (from local/state/fed/tribal govt.)
- Presidential Alerts during a national emergency

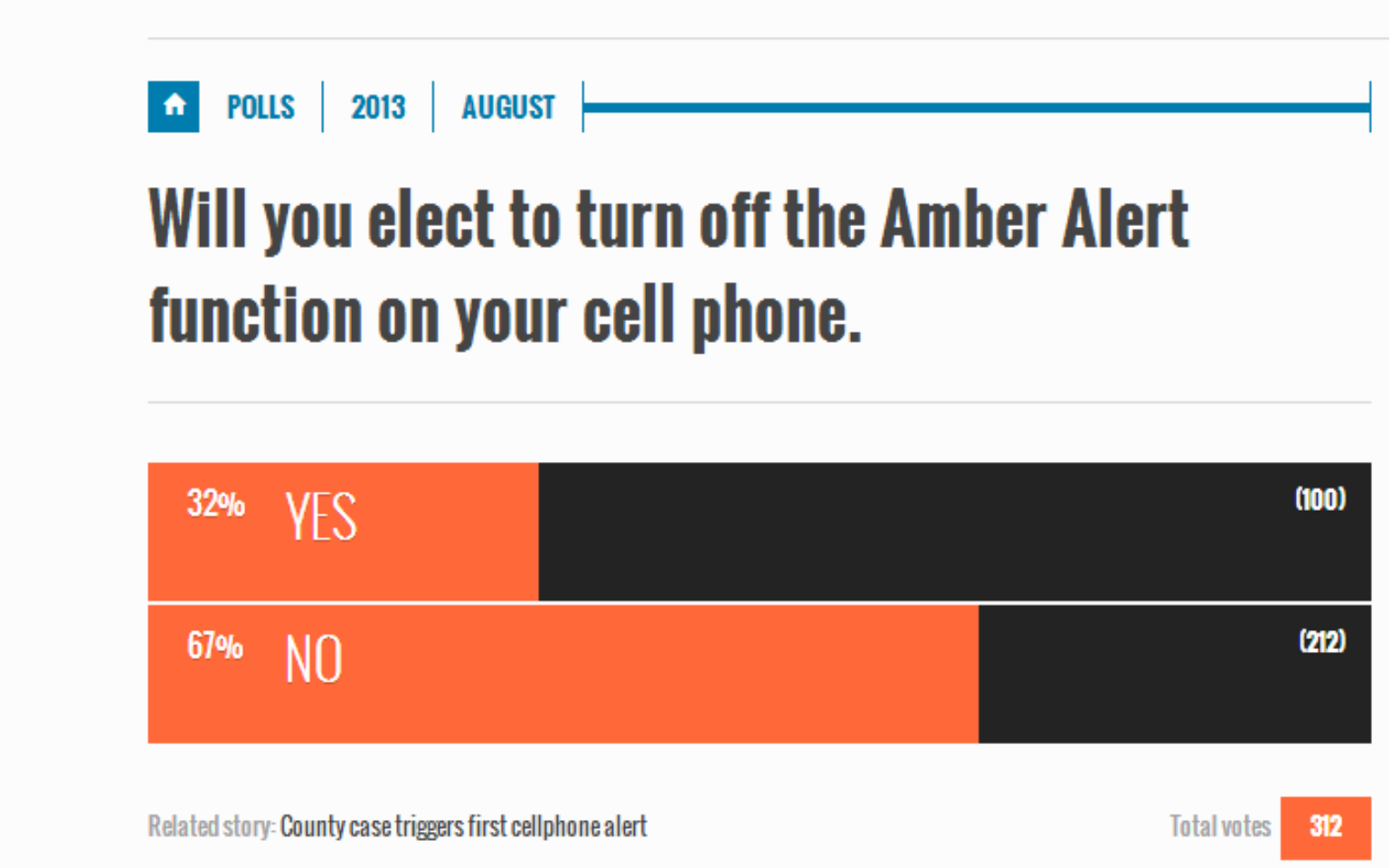
*NCMEC: National Center Missing and Exploited Children

What happened last Monday?

- 8/5/13 – SD Sheriff's Dept. had an incident that met Amber Alert criteria, informed NCMEC.
- Around 6PM NCMEC initiates WEA across San Diego and Imperial County .
- Around 11PM NCMEC sends second WEA across the State of California.



What the reaction has been.



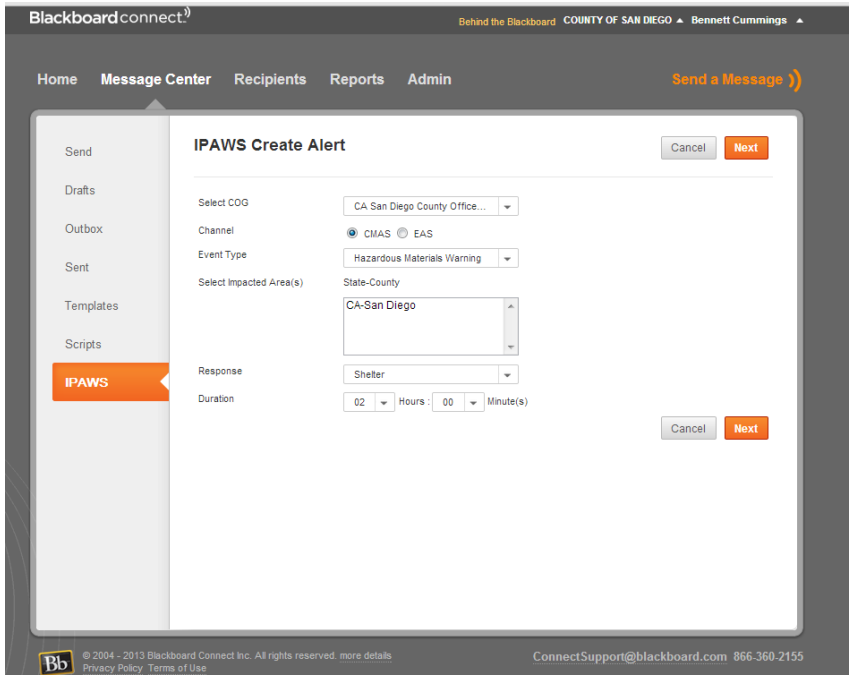
U-T San Diego Poll 8/6/2013

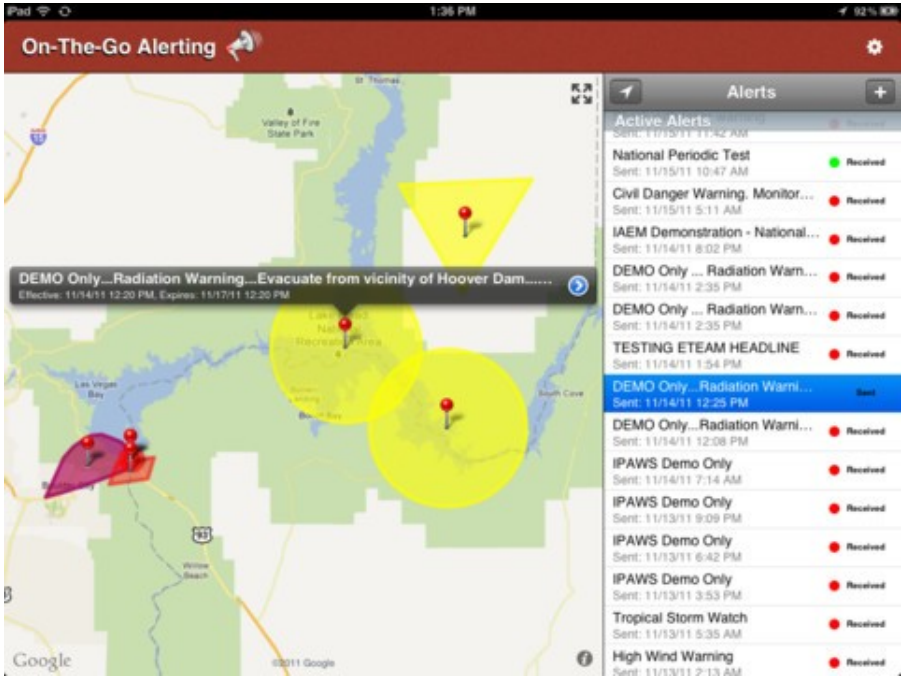
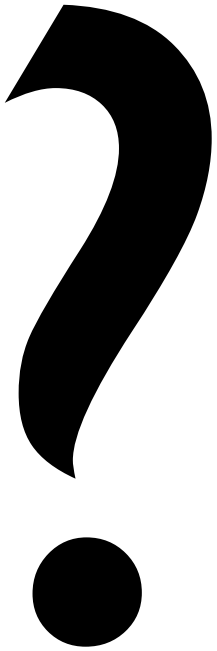
What this means.

- The system works…mostly. Some issues reported.
- Drove residents to news sources/social media.
- Residents are aware they can receive these. Expectation?
- Some have turned notifications off.
- Default for phones is for notifications be on. Each use of WEA will potentially reduce the pool of recipients by opt-outs.
- Since message was County and then State wide, no opportunity to assess sub-county message "spillover".

Current County Status

- OES/SDSO have County/Subcounty WEA capability .
- Usage Policy under development.
- Reviewing lessons learned from recent major uses.
- Raising issues/concerns with FCC/FEMA.





Questions?