By Russ Pankonin, The Imperial Republican Co-Publisher

signup for the new CodeRED warning and weather notification system in Chase County is now underway and I urge each of you to take time to enter your address information into the system.

This new notification system will be a real asset to residents of Chase County, especially as we approach the tornado and thunderstorm season.

All county residents with a phone number will be entered into the warning system but to be included into the weather alert system, a resident must sign up for this free service.

You can do so online at the county's website, www.co.chase.ne.us , by following the link on the home page. If you don't have Internet access you can still sign up by calling 308-882-8432 or 308-882-7520. But remember, you have to sign up to be included in the weather warning service.

According to County Emergency Manager Paul Kunnemann, the system can specifically notify residents who are in the path of a bad storm or tornado. Eventually, it will also be able to send e-mails.

As of this week, Kunnemann said nearly 500 phone numbers and addresses have been registered. He encouraged those that haven't signed up yet to do so.

In addition to the county, the city of Imperial, the village of Wauneta, Chase County Schools and Chase County Community Hospital will also be using the system.

These entities will have their own access code to initiate their own emergency messages.

The city and village may use it to specifically notify their residents about any local emergency.

The hospital will be able to use it to notify staff to bring them in quickly in the case of a disaster situation.

The school could use it to notify patrons of weather-related school closings or other possible emergencies.

What's even better about this solution is the cost. Initially, the county was looking at a system that would have cost thousands more than the $714 the county and other entities pay annually to be a part of the CodeRED system. That's the way good government is supposed to work.

In addition, Hayes County will piggy-back on the Chase County system by paying their own $714. In the Wauneta area, many rural residents north of town reside in Hayes County. Hamlet and the area north of Palisade also fall within the bounds of Hayes County.

Kunnemann said Hayes County residents can sign up for the service by using the Chase County website link or by calling one of the two contact numbers above.

Having this kind of notification system available for the residents of the area is a great benefit, indeed. Thanks to all those who made this a reality.