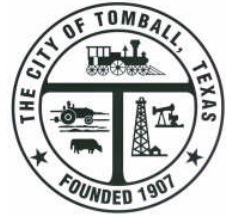


# PRESS RELEASE

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TOMBALL POLICE DEPARTMENT



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## For Immediate Release

**Date:** August 19, 2009  
**Contact:** Sergeant Rebecca Carlisle  
**Phone:** (281) 290-1312

### Tomball Police Department Uses Facebook and Nixle to Keep Public Informed

*The Tomball Police Department is entering the social media age to alert residents and drivers about traffic problems, public safety issues and efforts to reach the community through social networking internet sites.*

*The department is now able to issue alerts through Nixle, a community information service that is free for law enforcement, government agencies and the public. The availability to use Nixle was first introduced to the Tomball Police Department through their involvement with National Night Out.*

*This tool will be used primarily for traffic congestion, motor-vehicle accidents, Amber Alerts, Silver Alerts and community news. This service is of no cost to public service agencies.*

*Residents and those driving to and from Tomball can sign up at [www.nixle.com](http://www.nixle.com) for e-mail alerts, text messages or both. While Nixle is free, standard text messaging rates may apply through cell phone carriers.*

*Nixle is similar to Twitter in that it can instantaneously send out a message to anyone who signs up – or “follows” – the sender, but there is one major difference. Nixle uses a secure, authenticated server, according to the website. There are no ads, pop-ups or cookies.*

*Recently, the Tomball Police Department created a Facebook page for community networking and recruiting. A new Facebook page allows citizens to become “fans” of the police department. They can leave comments, and learn about what is going on in the department and the community. Invitations for department educational events and demonstrations as well as notifications of problem areas can be mass distributed via Facebook. Since the public is connecting on Facebook, it only makes sense for the police department to do the same.*

*The City of Tomball has other programs which are Facebook friendly with Walk Tomball and City of Tomball.*

*Nixle went online and nationwide in March, with 1,500-plus agencies are using it. While Tomball Police Department will use the service chiefly for traffic alerts, they also may use it in a limited way to seek the public's help in catching crime suspects.*

*Cities using or testing the Nixle system include Los Angeles, Baltimore, Virginia Beach, Chicago and Minneapolis, according to a press release. Sheriffs' offices using Nixle include Oakland County (suburban Detroit), Napa County, Oklahoma County (Oklahoma City) and Santa Fe County.*

*More than 30,000 residents of those cities have signed up to receive Nixle alerts, the press release stated.*

*A Nixle user can get as many or as few alerts as you request, it is up to the user what they sign up for. They can also request the times they get info. You don't have to sign up – you can go to [www.nixle.com](http://www.nixle.com) and check the notifications.*

*The Tomball Police Department is hoping that, in addition to Tomball residents, those who live throughout Montgomery and Harris County and come to Tomball to shop or do business also will take advantage of the notification system.*