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CITY OF CENTER RECIEVES \$12,375 OF GRANT ASSISTANCE FROM USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Gregory C. Branum, Missouri State Director for USDA Rural Development, announced the awarding of \$12,375 to the City of Center and presented a Mock Check to Dennis McMillen, Mayor in a ceremony July 3, 2007 at the City Park.

The \$12,375 USDA Rural Development grant, along with \$4,125 contribution by the City of Center, will be used to purchase a storm warning siren for the City. The siren will provide adequate warning coverage to this rural community with a population of 644 residents.

U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill stated, "The horrific storms that swept through Missouri last spring are a reminder of just how fragile life can be. An early warning siren system will enable the residents of Center to make sure that their families are safe and secure before it's too late. This project will ultimately save lives, and I am pleased that the federal government will provide the appropriate funding."

"The tornadoes that ripped through northeast Missouri in the spring of last year reminded us of the devastation Mother Nature can bring," U.S. Representative Hulshof said. "Proper notification of pending storms helps save lives and property. I'm pleased that federal Rural Development funds are being made available for this important warning system."

Mayor McMillen of Center said, "We are very excited to receive this grant from USDA Rural Development. The early warning system that we will be implementing with the grant funds will allow us to utilize an important safety tool in informing the citizens of Center of severe weather."

"This kind of assistance mirrors USDA Rural Development's mission and President Bush's initiative of being committed to the future of rural communities," said Branum. "Appreciation is extended to our federal elected officials for supporting USDA Rural Development. They have been strong proponents for the necessary funding for essential services for rural Missourians."



Pictured left to right: Front Row: Cheryl R. Elliott, Rural Development Manager; Kenny Hulshof, U.S. Representative; Tracey Carman, Center City Clerk; Dennis McMillen, Mayor of Center; Gregory C. Branum, Rural Development State Director.

Back Row: Janine A. Stephenson, Rural Development Specialist; John Lake, City Alderman; Jim Gaw, City Alderman; Rachel Bringer, 6th District Representative; Lona Weiss, representative for Senator Claire McCaskill; Wes Shoemeyer, Mo State Senator; Steve Whitaker, Ralls Co. Commissioner; George Lane, Presiding Ralls Co. Commissioner.

The funds are part of the Community Facilities Program, which provides grants and loans to assist in the development of essential community facilities in rural areas and towns up to 20,000 in population.

Anyone seeking more information about this or any other USDA Rural Development programs my visit the homepage at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mo/> or by contacting Cheryl Elliott, Rural Development Manager, 17623 Hwy 19, New London, MO 63459, or by email to cheryl.elliott@mo.usda.gov or by calling (573) 985-7211 extension 4.

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