

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS THE VILLAGE OF CATRON \$21,178 IN COMMUNITY FACILITIES GRANTS

On Friday, September 19, 2008, Missouri Rural Development State Director Morris Westfall joined elected officials and local Rural Development staff in presenting the Village of Catron with a mock check in the amount of \$21,178. The funds will be used to purchase a storm warning siren and turn out gear for the volunteer fire department.

U.S. Senator Christopher “Kit” Bond stated, “Early warning systems are vital to community safety and emergency preparedness. I commend the Catron community leadership and the USDA Rural Development staff for their dedication and hard work to make this project a reality.”

The Village of Catron is a rural community with 68 residents. The Village recently received a donated fire truck and formed a volunteer fire department. The gear that was donated to the department provides minimum protection to the volunteers, and there is not enough gear to completely outfit even one fire fighter. With \$10,803 in grant assistance from USDA Rural Development, the fire department has been able to purchase full sets of turn out gear to adequately ensure the safety of the volunteers while fighting fires.

“Proper and up-to-date equipment helps save lives and protect first responders who work hard for Missouri families,” said U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill. “Whether the equipment is for volunteer firefighters or early storm warning sirens, I’m pleased this funding will help Catron protect its residents in the event of an emergency.”

The Village was awarded an additional \$10,350 in grant funds to purchase and install a storm warning system that covers the entire community. The Village previously had to rely on word of mouth and telephone communications to receive information on pending storms. Electrical and telephone outages often hindered the Village in receiving early warning information. The new storm warning system will accurately and quickly notify residents throughout the entire community in the case of an emergency situation.

“These two grants for the Village of Catron will address two major emergency preparedness needs. The early warning siren is a key improvement in our disaster preparedness, and the firefighting equipment is essential to raise the level of response capability of our firefighters. I appreciate the attention of USDA Rural Development to this crucial matter for our community, and I am proud to support them as a member of our Missouri congressional delegation,” said U.S. Representative Jo Ann Emerson.



Pictured left to right: Andres Carothers, Fire Dept.1; Jimmy Johnson, Fire Dept.; Dennis Schumate, Fire Dept; Morris Westfall, Rural Development State Director; Clyde Hawes, Presiding Commissioner; Carol Givens, Village of Catron Treasurer; David Carothers, Fire Dept.; Billy Chamberlain, Fire Dept.; Jacob Johnson, Fire Dept.; Cathy Walters, Rural Development Specialist

Rev. Jim E. Johnson, Catron Fire Department Secretary/Treasurer, said, “It is with great pleasure that we say “Thank You” to USDA Rural Development for providing funds that allowed the Catron Volunteer Fire Department to purchase the much needed turn out gear and other fire fighting equipment.”

“We would like to thank USDA Rural Development for giving our small community the opportunity to provide this Early Storm Warning System. This will be of great benefit not only to the residents of the Village of Catron, but also for many of the outlying residents who would have no way of knowing when a life threatening event is on the way. We care about the people who live here and this is just one of the small ways we can show it,” stated James Hester, Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Village of Catron.

“The intent of the CF program is to assist rural communities with financial packages to enhance the quality of life for rural Missourians,” said Westfall. “Missouri Rural Development was very fortunate last year to have the opportunity to provide over \$11,200,000 in CF loans and grants. We are proud to be able to assist the Village of Catron with fire fighting equipment and storm warning system for the protection and safety of the residents.”

Further information regarding any of the USDA Rural Development programs is available by contacting the Charleston Rural Development Office at cathy.walters@mo.usda.gov or by calling 573-649-9947, ext. 4. Rural Development’s web site is: www.rurdev.usda.gov/mo.

“Committed to the future of rural communities.”

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