

## USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTS THE CITY OF CHARLESTON IN ACQUIRING A NEW FIRE TRUCK

Morris Westfall, Missouri Rural Development State Director, presented a mock check in the amount of \$38,070 to the City of Charleston on Thursday, September 18, 2008. The funds provided will be used to purchase a new fire truck to assist the City of Charleston's fire department in fighting brush, grass and field fires.

U.S. Senator Christopher "Kit" Bond said, "Good equipment is important to fighting dangerous brush fires and protecting our communities. I commend the Charleston City leadership and the USDA Rural Development staff for their dedication and hard work to make this project a reality."

The City of Charleston's current fire trucks are not effective when fighting the frequent brush and field fires around the City. The regular trucks must be shut down so that the pumper can be powered to wet the flames. In order to move the truck, the pump must be shut off, the hoses rolled back up into the truck and the power restored to the motor. When fighting a brush or grass fire, a shift in the wind can make the fire change directions, potentially causing the fire truck itself to be caught in the blaze. This creates a very dangerous situation for the firemen and a potential for loss of a very expensive fire truck. The new truck has a special tank and equipment that is designed to fight these types of fires. It only requires two firefighters to operate, and the truck can move as the water is being put on the fire.

"It's imperative that we equip our firefighters with the best resources to tackle the difficult challenges they face," U.S. Senator McCaskill said. "No first responder should find themselves in danger because of outdated equipment. I'm so pleased that this federal grant money will help Charleston firefighters better protect themselves and their community."

The funding for the fire truck is provided through USDA Rural Development's Community Facilities (CF) Program. In addition to fire trucks, the CF loan and grant program also provides funding to help rural communities finance essential community facilities, health services, and the purchase of equipment which will provide vital services to rural residents. Some examples include financing an ambulance, warning sirens, police car, jaws-of-life, rescue vehicle, 911 dispatch center, justice center, abuse center, public safety building, medical clinics and hospitals.

"In rural America, we can be particularly hard on the equipment we use to respond to emergencies, primarily because we have a lot of ground to cover. USDA Rural Development understands



Pictured left to right: Jack Feezor, City Council; Cathy Walters, Rural Development Specialist; Anthony Moody, Police & Fire Dept. Captain; Morris Westfall, Rural Development State Director; Jack Whiteside, City Council; Bob Hearnese, Police & Fire Dept. Chief; Jack Moxley, Rural Fire District; Dan Gruen, City Manager

these challenges that confront communities like Charleston. I appreciate their investment in our public safety and their attention to the needs of our first responders,” said U.S. Representative Jo Ann Emerson.

“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 City of Charleston in helping to provide a fire truck for the safety of their 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](mailto:cathy.walters@mo.usda.gov) or by calling 573-649-9947, ext. 4. Rural Development’s web site is: [www.rurdev.usda.gov/mo](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mo).

**"Committed to the future of rural communities."**

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