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NEWS RELEASE

CITY OF EAST PRAIRIE AWARDED \$29,325 IN GRANT FUNDS FROM USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT

On Tuesday, March 3, 2009, Greg Batson, Dexter Area Director for USDA Rural Development, presented the City of East Prairie with a certificate of appreciation for their partnership in securing federal grant funds for the City's Police Department and City Hall.

U.S. Senator Kit Bond stated, "The new police generator and software is crucial to the safety of East Prairie residents and the police officers who risk their lives to protect them. I commend the East Prairie community and the USDA Rural Development staff for their hard work in making this project a reality."

"During these difficult economic times, we need to ensure that first responders have the resources they need to keep the public from being at risk," U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill said. "I'm glad to see that these federal grant funds will provide the East Prairie police department with the tools they need to keep residents safe."

The City was awarded a Community Facilities (CF) Grant in the amount of \$13,575 to purchase an emergency generator to be used during times of power outages for the communications systems at City Hall and the Police Department. Prior to receiving the generator, the Police Department could not receive emergency phone calls from residents during a power outage, nor could they receive the codes for setting off the emergency sirens located at Wyatt, Anniston and the Mississippi County Ambulance District. East Prairie was also awarded a CF Grant in the amount of \$15,750 to purchase professional software to assist the police department with Federal and State required reporting and in tracking criminal activities in the community. A portion of the grant funds was also used to replace the telephone system in the police department and city hall. The old system was purchased in the 1970's and parts for repair are no longer available.

"The past month has once again provided us with a grim reminder of the importance of generators and communications equipment in our rural region. When weather disasters strike, this equipment is essential to first responders and vital to the safety and well-being of area residents. I am sure these grants will be put to good use in East Prairie, and I thank USDA Rural Development for its consideration of their applications to the community facilities program," said U.S. Representative Jo Ann Emerson.



Pictured Left to Right:

Front Row: Gene Ditto, Mayor, City of East Prairie; Greg Batson, Area Director, Rural Development; Lonnie Thurmond, Administrator, City of East Prairie

Back Row: Robert Jackson, Mississippi County Commissioner; Christy Ferrell, Senator McCaskill's Office; Cathy Walters, Area Specialist, Rural Development; Danny Lafferty, Chief of Police, City of East Prairie

The funding awarded to East Prairie is provided through USDA Rural Development's Community Facilities (CF) Program. In addition to generators, communications equipment and software, 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, fire-fighting equipment, jaws-of-life, rescue vehicle, 911 dispatch center, justice center, abuse center, public safety building, medical clinics and hospitals.

“This is a great partnership effort when everyone works together for a common goal of meeting the needs of a community in providing essential services,” said Batson. “These projects mirror USDA, Rural Development’s mission of being committed to the future of rural communities. Special thanks are extended to our federal elected officials for making available the federal funds for funding these projects.”

USDA Rural Development’s mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development has utilized a variety of programs and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. 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.

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