

## USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE VILLAGE OF OAK RIDGE HOLD GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY FOR CENTRALIZED SEWER SYSTEM

On Thursday, January 17, 2008, USDA Rural Development attended the long-overdue ground breaking ceremony for the Village of Oak Ridge's centralized sewer system. Joining Rural Development and officials from the Village of Oak Ridge for the ceremony were staff and representatives from Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Missouri Department of Economic Development, Southeast Missouri Regional Planning and Economic Development Commission, Toohey Law Firm and Strickland Engineering.

The Village has been working toward obtaining a centralized sewer system for the residents since July, 2001. In December of 2007, the Village of Oak Ridge received notification that all funding was in place for their sewer system. The final piece of the project came together with the Village being awarded a \$630,130 Rural Sewer Grant from Missouri Department of Natural Resources and an additional \$52,000 from USDA Rural Development. The original commitment from Rural Development was \$759,000 that was awarded in September, 2005.



Pictured left to right: Randal Friend, Rural Development Manager; Pam Anglin, Rural Development Area Director; Clark Thomas, Rural Development Program Director; Janie Dunning, Missouri Rural Development Acting State Director; Betty LeSeure, Missouri Department of Economic Development; Dr. Gerald Landewee, Superintendent, Oak Ridge Schools; Francis Toohey, Project Attorney; Don England, Mayor, Village of Oak Ridge; Stanley Clippard, Dutch, Project Contractor; Fran England, Mayor's Wife; Richard Harris, Missouri Department of Natural Resources; Phyllis Minner, Rural Development Area Specialist; Tom Strickland, Strickland Engineering

With all funding in place, the Village was able to award a construction contract to Dutch Enterprises, Inc. of Jackson, MO. It is anticipated construction will take nine months to complete. According to Brian Strickland, Project Engineer with Strickland Engineering, the residents will see their lawns dismantled with the installation of sewer lines and tanks. However, the contract does require the contractor to repair the lawns.

"Helping communities like the Village of Oak Ridge is exactly what Gov. Blunt's Clean Water Initiative is designed to achieve," said Missouri Department of Natural Resources Director Doyle Childers. "We are excited to be part of this ceremony, which represents real progress for the citizens of the Village of Oak Ridge."

The total funding package for the project includes \$811,000 in combined loan and grant funds from USDA Rural Development's Water & Waste Program, \$631,130 Rural Sewer Grant funds from

Missouri Department of Natural Resources and \$488,950 from Missouri Department of Economic Development Community Development Block Grant.

"This is a great partnership effort when everyone works together for a common goal of meeting the needs of an environmentally safe, centralized sewer system," said Anita J. "Janie" Dunning, Missouri Rural Development Acting State Director. "I want to personally thank everyone that has worked together to make this project a reality. I am pleased that the residents of Oak Ridge will finally have the benefit of a dependable sewer system."

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life in rural communities. As a venture capital entity, Rural Development has invested over \$76.8 billion since the beginning of the Bush Administration to provide equity 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 Dexter Rural Development Office at [phyllis.minner@mo.usda.gov](mailto:phyllis.minner@mo.usda.gov) or by calling 573-624-5939, 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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