

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS THE CITY OF PORTAGEVILLE \$26,250 IN COMMUNITY FACILITIES GRANTS

On January 16, 2008, Missouri Rural Development Acting State Director, Anita J. “Janie” Dunning, joined local Rural Development staff in presenting the City of Portageville with a mock check in the amount of \$26,250. The funds will be used to purchase storm warning sirens and a replacement vehicle for the Police Department.

U.S. Senator Christopher “Kit” Bond stated, “Storm warning systems are vital and contribute greatly to community safety and economic stability. The Portageville City leadership and the USDA Rural Development staff are to be commended for their dedication and hard work to make this project a reality.”

Portageville is a rural community with 3,295 residents. The Police Department currently has nine full time officers that share 3 vehicles. One of the vehicles has recently been parked and can no longer be used due to the high maintenance cost and the unreliability of the vehicle. The City was awarded \$12,650 in grant funds to assist in purchasing a reliable first response vehicle.

“First responders work hard to protect Missouri’s families. I’m pleased this funding will help ensure they have the resources to respond to emergencies in rural areas by providing better first responder vehicles and early warning systems for the city of Portageville,” said Senator Claire McCaskill.

The City was awarded an additional \$13,600 in grant funds to purchase two omni-directional storm warning sirens. Portageville’s current storm warning system consists of 2 sirens placed on either end of town. One siren is over 50 years old and completely non-functional. The other siren is approximately 40 years old and, when it does work, will emit an audible warning that can only be heard for two blocks. The residents of Portageville will now be able to rely on early warning protection from storms and major disasters.

“In the rural Midwest, we face some of the most damaging, destructive, severe weather in the country. When tornadoes or other weather emergencies strike, the warning sirens are a universal signal to seek shelter. Yet many rural communities are without this critical item in their public safety arsenal. Sirens save lives, and I appreciate the consideration of USDA Rural Development in helping the City of Portageville address this crucial need,” said U.S. Representative Jo Ann Emerson.



Pictured left to right: Pam Anglin, Rural Development Area Director; Ervin Gremard, Alderman; April Hammack, Assistant Collector; Karen Hitchcock, Grant Writer; Ronnie Adams, Portageville Police Department Michele Crawford, Collector; Albert "Bud" Sisson, Mayor, City of Portageville; Janie Dunning, Missouri Rural Development Acting State Director; Don Day, Associate Commissioner; Vela Bea Moody, City Clerk; Ben Dyer, Representing Senator Claire McCaskill; Clyde Hawes, Presiding Commissioner; Terry Stevens, New Madrid County Sherriff

The funding for the police car and warning sirens is provided through USDA Rural Development's Community Facilities (CF) Program. In addition to police cars and warning sirens, 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, fire trucks, firefighting equipment, jaws-of-life, rescue vehicle, 911 dispatch center, justice center, abuse center, public safety building, medical clinics and hospitals.

Bud Sisson, Mayor of Portageville, said, "We are certainly grateful for to be receiving these USDA grants. The additional police car and the much needed new storm warning sirens will help us provide a higher level of safety and protection for our citizens. We appreciate all the help we received from our local USDA Rural Development offices."

"This kind of assistance mirrors USDA Rural Development's mission and being committed to the future of rural communities," said Dunning. "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."

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 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.
"USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender."**

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