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# NEWS RELEASE

## USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT CELEBRATES HOMEOWNERSHIP MONTH WITH SELF-HELP HOUSING PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

In celebration of June as Homeownership Month, Anita J. “Janie” Dunning, Missouri State Director for USDA Rural Development, presented nine individuals and families with certificates of appreciation for their participation in the Rural Development Self-Help Housing (SHH) Program on Wednesday, June 9, 2010. Dunning also awarded certificates to Ozark Foothills Development Association (OFDA) and Little Dixie Community Action Agency for their participation and support of the SHH program. Following the presentation of the certificates, Rural Development staff placed sod at two of the homes currently under construction.



Pictured are Rural Development Staff and members of the households who participated in laying the sod.

“I am very proud to congratulate the Butler County families who are building their own homes. The Self-Help Mutual Housing Program at USDA Rural Development is a great way to help families attain their dreams of homeownership if they are willing to put in the work to make that dream a reality. Not only does the program help aspiring families achieve homeownership, it also strengthens our rural communities by instilling pride and rewarding hard work. These families make a substantial investment in the construction of their own homes, and they are a great example to the communities in which they live,” said U.S. Rep. Jo Ann Emerson.

“I can’t think of a better way to “kick off” Homeownership month than to recognize the success of these deserving families,” Dunning said. “They have worked very hard for many months on building their own home through the USDA Self-Help Housing Program.”

The Self-Help Housing Program provides low and very-low income individual and families the opportunity to build their own homes. Technical guidance for the construction is provided through OFDA and, once construction is complete, USDA Rural Development provides a low, fixed rate, 33-year mortgage. The program participants complete approximately 65 percent of the total construction, with professional work such as site preparation and concrete being sub-contracted out. Thirty-five families in the Poplar Bluff area have successfully completed the construction and financing of their homes through the SHH Program. There are currently two homes under construction and four additional sites are currently being prepared for construction to begin.

“Rural Development values its partnership with Ozark Foothills Development Association (OFDA) and Little Dixie Community Action Agency (LDCAA) in assisting families to obtain homeownership through the Self-Help Housing Program. The dedication of each organization’s staff and the commitment of the families are indicative of the spirit of American determination and perseverance.

An intense desire to achieve homeownership combined with OFDA and LDCAA technical knowledge and Rural Development's financing enables these families to become significant contributors to the growth and strength of our rural communities," said Greg Batson, Area Director.

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 Poplar Bluff Rural Development Office at [kimberlin.allison@mo.usda.gov](mailto:kimberlin.allison@mo.usda.gov) or by calling 573-785-9679, ext. 4. Rural Development's web site is: [www.rurdev.usda.gov/mo](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mo).

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