



# NEWS RELEASE

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## USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROVIDES \$15,000 COMMUNITY FACILITY GRANT FOR EARLY WARNING STORM SYSTEMS

Tim Rickabaugh, Area Director of Springfield USDA Rural Development, presented a mock check for \$15,000 to the City of Willow Springs on May 21, 2007. The funding was received from the Community Facility program at Rural Development. These funds were used to buy and install two early warning storm sirens for the city and will benefit the residents and businesses of Willow Springs. One siren was added at Hickory Hills in the western part of the city and the other toward the south near the nursing home. It brings the total sirens in Willow Springs to five, helping to provide coverage of more citizens.



"The new sirens that have been purchased with this funding will improve the emergency warning system for the residents of Willow Springs," said Senator Kit Bond. "Where the federal government can help make people safer, we should and that is what has happened here today. I commend the local leadership and the USDA Rural Development staff for their dedication and hard work to make this project a reality."

Front Row: Bill Lovelace, Howell County Commissioner; Tim Rickabaugh, Rural Development Area Director; Linda Elijah, City Council; Susan Rackley, City Council; Johnny White, Mayor; Jack Means City Council; David Rauch, Representing Senator McCaskill; Danonne Citro, Rural Development Specialist; Row 2: Pat Dunivin, Emergency Preparedness Director; Shawn Watson, Utility Administrator; Darren Lingle, Representing Representative Jo Ann Emerson; Bill Easley, City Council; Tony Sigman, City Administrator; Austin Owens, Representing Senator Bond; Daniel Campbell, Rural Development Manager; Back Row: Mark Dethrow, Rural Development Specialist

"New early warning sirens for Willow Springs will be a tremendous public safety asset to the community. Deadly tornadoes can strike with very little warning, so every second of notice saves lives. When the power goes out during a violent storm, early warning sirens are critical to the residents of rural communities. I am very excited that USDA Rural Development has identified this opportunity to invest in Willow Springs, and I appreciate the support of the entire Missouri congressional delegation for this worthy effort," said U.S. Representative Jo Ann Emerson.

Pat Dunivin, Emergency Preparedness Director for Willow Springs said, "The event in Greensburg, KS brings credence to the idea of warning systems. Whether it is Outdoor Warning Systems or NOAA Weather Radios they are invaluable tools. Early warning gave the majority of the population of that rural community time enough to seek shelter. The Community Facility Grant by Rural Development has enabled the City of Willow Springs to add two additional sirens giving it improved coverage. All sirens can be engaged by the Police Officer on duty remotely whenever they sight a problem or when 9-1-1 notifies them of an impending storm."

“This kind of assistance mirrors USDA Rural Development’s mission and President Bush’s initiative of being committed to the future of rural communities,” said Greg Branum, Missouri State Director for USDA Rural Development. “Special thanks are extended to U. S. Senator “Kit” Bond, U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill, and U. S. Representative Jo Ann Emerson for making available the federal funds for these kinds of rural projects to make rural areas safer places to live.

USDA Rural Development’s mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. As a venture capital entity, Rural Development provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in home ownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. Further information on rural programs is available by visiting USDA’s website at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mo> or can contact Daniel Campbell, Rural Development Manager, at the West Plains Office, 3210 Hoover Dr, West Plains, MO 65775 or by calling (417) 256-7117 ext 4

**“Committed to the future of rural communities.”**

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