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NATIONAL OFFICIAL VISITS MARION LOUISIANA ON EARTH DAY Over \$2 Million in Funding Presented for Water System Improvements

MARION, April 22, 2009 – Earth Day is celebrated around the world as a day to promote awareness of environmental issues. In Louisiana, USDA officials traveled to Union Parish to recognize Earth Day by announcing over \$2 million in funding for water system improvements for the Town of Marion.

Stacey Brayboy, Director of Economic and Community Development for USDA Rural Development in Washington, DC, was a special guest at Marion's Earth Day celebration. Ms. Brayboy was recently appointed by President Barack Obama.

Over \$2 million in USDA Rural Development loan and grant funding will be used to construct two new water wells (with an emergency power supply) and a new elevated storage tank. The water system improvements will ensure clean, safe drinking water for the Town of Marion and provide increased fire protection.

“Rural Development works with communities across the nation to ensure rural areas have access to clean, safe drinking water,” said Karen Nardini, Acting State Director. “We are proud to be a part of Marion's water system improvements.”

USDA Rural Development provides a full range of rural development credit services in rural Louisiana. Louisiana's Rural Development State Office is located at 3727 Government Street, Alexandria, Louisiana 71302, telephone (318) 473-7921. There are four area offices located throughout the state to serve Louisiana residents. Further information on USDA Rural Development's loan and grant programs may be obtained by visiting Rural Development's web site at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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