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NEWS RELEASE

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTS THE CITY OF BERNIE IN ACQUIRING EMERGENCY GENERATORS

On Friday, September 19, 2008, Missouri Rural Development State Director Morris Westfall and staff met with representatives from the City of Bernie to view the emergency generators obtained by the City for use in the Community Center and Police Station. USDA Rural Development assisted the City in purchasing the generators with a Community Facilities grant in the amount of \$14,340.

U.S. Senator Christopher “Kit” Bond stated, “Preparation is important to maintaining stability during a disaster situation. I commend the Bernie community and USDA Rural Development staff for working to prepare this community with new generators that will provide much needed power in case of an emergency situation.”

The City of Bernie sought the assistance to Rural Development to obtain the generators as part of the Emergency Preparedness Plan implemented by the City. They chose to use one generator at the Community Center in Bernie as it was chosen as an emergency site in case of a natural disaster. This will give the citizens of Bernie and surrounding areas a centrally located facility with electricity, heat and air conditioning in the event of an emergency. The other generator will be used at the Bernie Police Station, allowing the police and medical personnel the ability to communicate with and respond to the residents in case of an emergency during a power outage.

“Missouri has seen the tremendous toll natural disasters take on local communities,” said U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill. “I am pleased that the city of Bernie has received funding to purchase two generators for the community center, which also acts as an emergency center, and police station to help provide heat, water, and electricity to residents after severe weather.”

“The City of Bernie, with the help of USDA Rural Development, can fill a pressing need for the emergency response capability of the community with this grant. A community emergency shelter must be able to guarantee electricity, communications, heating or cooling systems, and running water for displaced residents following a disaster. The generators procured by this grant will be a major part of this mission, and I am grateful for the congressional delegation's support of programs that enable rural communities in Southern Missouri to make improvements like this one,” said U.S. Representative Jo Ann Emerson.

Mayor James H. Tillmon, City of Bernie, said, “I would like to say that the grant through Rural Development made it possible for the City of Bernie to purchase 2 new emergency generators. The



Pictured left to right: Tom Todd, State Representative; Justin Allen, Chief of Police; Gloria Dean, City Clerk; Charlie Dean, City Maintenance; Cathy Walters, Rural Development Specialist; Jody Lemmon, County Assessor; Tammy Barnes; James Tilmon, Mayor; Butch Barnes, Alderman; Morris Westfall, Rural Development State Director; Kay Asbell, County Recorder; Carla Moore, County Collector

generators will be a great asset to the safety of the citizens of Bernie. Without the grant funds, the City would not have been able to purchase the emergency generators. The Police Department must have electricity to operate and dispatch for fire, police and to contact EMS for ambulance emergencies and the Community Center is where the Bernie Emergency Management is housed. Without the generators, dispatch would be delayed and maybe impossible, and the Community Center would not be able to house our residents in the event of a major power outage.”

“Rural Development’s commitment to the future of rural communities would not be complete without assistance that helps communities protect their citizens. We are proud to be able to assist the City of Bernie in purchasing the generators that will fulfill an essential need in the event of an emergency,” said Westfall.

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.

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