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NEWS RELEASE

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT PRESENTS \$51,568 MOCK CHECK TO MISSISSIPPI COUNTY

Missouri Rural Development State Director, Morris Westfall, presented Mississippi County with a \$51,568 mock check on Friday, March 14, 2008. The funds will be used to purchase two fully-equipped Sport Utility Vehicles (SUVs) for use by the Mississippi County Sheriff's Department.

U.S. Senator Christopher "Kit" Bond stated, "In rural communities like Mississippi County, our law enforcement officials depend on their patrol vehicles to keep our families safe. The federal dollars announced today will improve response time in emergencies and give our sheriffs the vehicles they need to continue to protect this community. The local leadership and USDA Rural Development staff are to be commended for their commitment to these projects."



Pictured Left to Right: Martin Lucas, Homer Oliver, Bill Feezor, Phyllis Minner, John Hadenfeldt, Leigh Ann Colson, Jim Blumenberg, Marc Tragesser, Keith Moore, Charlie Markham, Janita McCameron, Morris Westfall, Pam Anglin, Ben Dyer, Cathy Walters, Mike Borders, Danny Harris and Ken Story.

"Law enforcement officers work hard everyday to protect Missouri families and keep our communities safe," said U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill. "It is our responsibility to ensure that they have the tools to do their jobs right. I'm pleased these federal dollars will help the Mississippi County Sheriff's Department to better serve their community."

Mississippi County sought assistance from USDA Rural Development to acquire reliable vehicles for use by the Sheriff's Department to patrol the county. Three of the seven vehicles currently in place have well over 150,000 miles each and all are in need of repairs that exceed the value of the vehicles. With nearly half of the counties residents served solely by the Sheriff's Department, the need for reliable vehicles is mandatory. Taking into account that 40% of the counties roads are gravel or dirt, the deputies feel that SUVs will allow a better response time to the residents in cases of emergency.



"We put a lot of wear and tear on all of our vehicles in rural Missouri, and the cars and trucks used by our law enforcement are no exception. These funds will be a great boon to the Mississippi County Sheriff's Department as they tend to some vehicles which are in dire

need of replacement. I appreciate USDA Rural Development's work in identifying and funding this opportunity for Mississippi County, and I thank the community for being so active," said U.S. Representative Jo Ann Emerson.

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

Mississippi County Sheriff Keith Moore stated, "Helping people is our business, we have to have the ability and means to get to the people. The new vehicles will certainly make serving and protecting the residents of Mississippi County more assessable and will hasten our response. In our line of work, seconds can be the difference between life and death."

"The intent of the CF program is to assist rural communities with financial packages to enhance the quality of life for rural Missourians," said Westfall. "Missouri Rural Development was very fortunate last year to have the opportunity to provide over \$11,200,000 in CF loans and grants. We are proud to be able to assist the Sheriff's Department of Mississippi County with reliable vehicles for the protection and safety of the residents."

"Without the expertise and commitment from Rural Development, this department would not have been so fortunate to have received this grant. Small counties such as ours are reliant on these funds, and we feel honored and blessed to be a recipient of this USDA grant," added Sheriff Moore.

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.

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