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NEWS RELEASE

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS GRANT FUNDS TO RIPLEY COUNTY FOR WARNING SIRENS

On Monday, April 20, 2009, Rural Development Area Director Greg Batson joined elected officials and local Rural Development staff in presenting Ripley County with a mock check in the amount of \$53,400. The check represents the funding awarded to the County to purchase and install four storm warning sirens throughout Ripley County.

U.S. Senator Kit Bond stated, “Unfortunately, Missourians know all too well the damage and destruction tornados can cause. These new warning sirens will better protect the people of Ripley County from dangerous storms. Thank you to the local officials who worked to secure the funding for this life-saving project.”

“Disaster preparedness affects every rural community, and in Southern Missouri we have had our fair share already in 2009. I very much appreciate the investment of Ripley County and USDA Rural Development in warning sirens to increase public safety. These measures save lives under the most extreme conditions,” said U.S. Representative Jo Ann Emerson.

Ripley County encompasses 630 square miles and lies in an area susceptible to tornadoes and severe thunderstorms. The City of Doniphan is the only area in the County previously equipped with any type of warning system. The new sirens will be placed in various communities throughout the county. Nearly 2,500 residents will benefit from the advance warning provided by the sirens in the event of severe weather or other public threats.

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

“The intent of the CF program is to assist rural communities with financial packages to enhance the quality of life for rural Missourians. This kind of assistance mirrors USDA Rural Development's mission and commitment to the future of rural communities,” said Batson. “We are proud to be able to assist Ripley County in providing a reliable warning system for their residents.”



Pictured left to right: William Kennon, Presiding Commissioner; Kristi Nitsch, District Director, Congresswoman Jo Ann Emerson's Office; Greg Batson, Rural Development Area Director; Christi Ferrell, District Director, Senator McCaskill's Office; Felicity Brady, Executive Director, Ozark Foothills Regional Planning Commission; David Johnson, Commissioner; Becky York, County Clerk; Tresa Webb, Rural Development Area Specialist; Jerry Haley, Commissioner; Phyllis Minner, Rural Development Area Specialist.

Further information regarding any of the USDA Rural Development programs is available by contacting the Kennett Rural Development Office at tresia.webb@mo.usda.gov or by calling 573-888-2536, ext. 4. Rural Development's web site is: www.rurdev.usda.gov/mo.

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