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# NEWS RELEASE

## USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT CELEBRATES HOMEOWNERSHIP MONTH WITH SELF-HELP HOUSING PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

In celebration of June as Homeownership Month, Greg Batson, Dexter Area Director for USDA Rural Development, presented six individuals and families with certificates of appreciation for their participation in the Rural Development Self-Help Housing (SHH) Program on Tuesday, June 2, 2009. Mr. Batson also awarded a certificate to Ozark Foothills Development Association (OFDA) for their participation and support of the SHH program. Following the presentation of the certificates, Rural Development staff placed sod at two of the homes currently under construction.



The Self-Help Housing Program provides low and very-low income individuals and families the opportunity to build their own homes. Technical guidance for the construction is provided through OFDA and, once construction is complete, USDA Rural Development provides a low, fixed rate, 33-year mortgage. The program participants complete approximately 65 percent of the total construction, with professional work such as site preparation and concrete being sub-contracted out. Twenty-three families in the Poplar Bluff area have successfully completed the construction and financing of their homes through the SHH Program. There are currently six homes under construction and 12 additional sites are in line for future construction.

“I am very proud to congratulate six Butler County families who are building their own homes. The Self-Help Mutual Housing Program at USDA Rural Development is a great way to help families attain their dreams of homeownership if they are willing to put in the work to make that dream a reality. Not only does the program help aspiring families achieve homeownership, it also strengthens our rural communities by instilling pride and rewarding hard work. These families make a substantial investment in the construction of their own homes, and they are a great example to the communities in which they live,” said U.S. Rep. Jo Ann Emerson.

“Rural Development is privileged and honored to be a partner with Ozark Foothills Development Association (OFDA) in assisting families to obtain homeownership through the Self-Help Housing Program. The dedication of the OFDA staff and the commitment of the families is indicative of the spirit of American determination and perseverance. If not for the "sweat equity" contributed by the participating families and OFDA staff oversight, homeownership would

be out of reach. The combination of an intense desire to achieve homeownership with OFDA's technical knowledge and Rural Development's financing enables these families to become significant contributors to the growth and strength of our rural communities,” said Batson.

USDA Rural Development’s mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development has utilized a variety of programs 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 Poplar Bluff Rural Development Office at [kimberlin.allison@mo.usda.gov](mailto:kimberlin.allison@mo.usda.gov) or by calling 573-785-9679, ext. 4. Rural Development’s web site is: [www.rurdev.usda.gov/mo](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mo).

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