



For Immediate Release

March 24, 2010

State Fire Marshal Free Smoke Alarm Program Gets Major Boost from Federal Grant

Jackson – The war on fire deaths in Mississippi has received major support from the Federal Government with the announcement that the State Fire Marshal's Free Smoke Alarm Installation Program is the recipient of a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grant totaling nearly \$1 million.

The State Fire Marshal's Office will use the \$999,248 awarded to them through the DHS Assistance to Firefighters Grant-Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Program to purchase up to an additional 58,000 smoke alarms for distribution throughout the state. Installation and delivery of a special sealed smoke alarm with a 10-year battery will be coordinated through county fire coordinators. During the visit to install alarms firefighters will provide fire prevention and home escape planning education and leave educational brochures for the residents to review after the firefighters have left. Low income families, senior citizens, families with children under 14 and persons with disabilities are being targeted to receive smoke alarms.

"Having working smoke alarms in your home can cut your risk of dying in a fire by almost half. Of the 29 fire deaths the State Fire Marshal's Office has investigated this year our investigators have found working smoke alarms in only one fire. Smoke alarms were found but not working in three other fires. Every home should have a working smoke alarm and with this grant we hope to save many lives," Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney said.

"I would like to express our thanks for the support and assistance we have received from Senators Cochran and Wicker for this program."

This is the second grant awarded to the State Fire Marshal's Office for the purchase of smoke alarms. Thirty-two thousand smoke alarms were purchased with a 2007 grant.

The Bobby and Jannie Smith family of the Oloh community credits the smoke alarm they received through the program with saving their home and their lives.

"We would like to say that we are so thankful of the Free Smoke Detector Program that the Fire

Marshal has been able to get grant funding for. This program saved our home and possibly my husband's life when a fire broke out in our kitchen. Thanks to the free smoke detectors that were installed in our home from a previous grant like this one, his life and our home was saved," Jannie Smith said.

Communities wishing to participate in the program should contact their local fire department or county fire coordinator.

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COCHRAN & WICKER PRAISE FIRE PREVENTION & SAFETY GRANT FOR MISSISSIPPI STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

Senators Also Report FEMA Fire Grants for Hazlehurst, Philadelphia, Rienzi & Union

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Thad Cochran and Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) today praised the award of almost \$1.18 million in Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant funding to improve fire prevention and public safety in Mississippi—the bulk of which will go toward decreasing the number of Mississippians who perish in home fires.

FEMA has approved a \$999,248 [Fire Protection and Safety](#) (FPS) grant to Mississippi's State Fire Marshal's Office, an agency within the Mississippi Department of Insurance.

FPS-supported projects are intended to enhance the safety of the public, as well as firefighters, from fire and related hazards. The grant to Mississippi will be used to support the Fire Marshal's [Fire Safety Education](#) program, which was created by the state legislature in 2004 to reduce fire deaths in the State.

"Tragic fire deaths in Mississippi could be prevented by taking steps to protect homes and to learn fire safety tips. These federal resources will be used to support the state's ongoing initiatives to prevent fire-related deaths and injuries," said **Cochran**, who serves on the Senate appropriations subcommittee that funds FEMA. "I commend the State Insurance Commissioner and the Fire Marshal for making this public safety initiative a priority in our state."

"This federal funding represents an important investment that will protect property and lives by strengthening fire prevention efforts in Mississippi. I appreciate FEMA's recognition of the valuable work being done by Mississippi's State Fire Marshal's office," **Wicker** said.

The Mississippi Senators also reported that four new [Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program](#) (AFG) grants, totaling \$180,336, have also been approved for volunteer fire departments in Hazlehurst, Philadelphia, Rienzi and Union.

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To date this year, 63 AFG grants worth more than \$5.0 million have been awarded to Mississippi municipal and volunteer fire departments for operations and safety or vehicle acquisition. These competitive grants are funded through the FY2009 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill. The following are the latest FY2009 AFG awards approved for Mississippi:

Operations and Safety

- Allen Volunteer Fire Department, Hazlehurst – \$66,215
- North Bend Fire Protection District, Philadelphia – \$63,538
- Pisgah Community Volunteer Fire Department, Rienzi – \$38,556
- Linwood Volunteer Fire Department, Union – \$12,027

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