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News Release

For Immediate Release

Grants Help Develop Structural Collapse Rescue Teams

The Battlefield Fire Protection District and the Aurora Fire Department were each awarded a grant through the Department of Homeland Security for structural collapse equipment to develop a total of 11 FEMA Type III Structural Collapse teams in Southwest Missouri. The grants provide the necessary equipment for the teams to be able to safely rescue people from collapsed houses and other wood-framed structures during tornadoes and other disasters.

The Springfield Fire Department is the coordinating agency for the formation, equipping and training of the teams.

Each team will have a wide variety of tools necessary to work day or night. Some of those tools include concrete breakers, chainsaws, portable generators, lighting, lifting hoists, and demolition hammers. Fire Departments that are receiving the equipment from these grants include: Aurora, Battlefield, Bolivar, Branson, Carthage, Cassville, Logan-Rogersville, Nevada, Nixa, Ozark, and Polk County.

"This is an important step in providing a protective system for a wide variety of disasters that can occur in Southwest Missouri. We live in an area that is prone to tornadoes, and the threat is real for both small and large communities. This grant provides the region a cost-effective method of providing assistance wherever one occurs," said Battlefield Fire Chief Bryan Newberry.

These 11 teams are part of a tiered structural collapse rescue system being developed within southwest Missouri. The region has three Type I teams with the capability to address all types of collapsed structures, including heavy steel and concrete. They are located at Springfield, Joplin, and Western Taney County. The system is also developing 11 Type IV teams, which can rescue people that are lightly trapped. They are located at Anderson, Ash Grove, Carl Junction, Clever, Forsyth, Lamar, Marshfield, Monett, Mt. Vernon, Shell Knob, Stockton, and Purdy.

Annually, the Department of Homeland Security provides grant funding through the states, to local jurisdictions, to develop both preventative and response capabilities to protect their citizens. Missouri has developed nine Regional Homeland Security Oversight Committees (RHSOCs) as the framework to evaluate and prioritize projects, which range from agricultural security to interoperability of communications. The grants are managed by the Southwest Missouri Council of Governments at Missouri State University.

For media only: The equipment will be on display at 1 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 6, at Springfield Fire Station No. 1 (720 E. Grand St.) and department representatives will be available for interviews as the equipment is loaded for distribution. For more information contact: Springfield Fire Chief David Hall, (417) 864-1507.