

NEWS RELEASE: Aug. 2, 2010

Greene County receives clean audit from FEMA

The Greene County Commission has received the results of a federal audit showing the county properly accounted for and spent \$10.16 million in FEMA funds responding to the January 2007 ice storm.

In November, the US Department of Homeland Security - Office of Emergency Management Oversight notified Greene County it would be auditing grants awarded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency for the ice storm response and recovery. From December 2009 to June of this year, FEMA examined the county's accounting records for FEMA claims, including receipts, policies, procedures, staff interviews and individual photos showing exact locations of every downed tree limb cleared from county right-of-way.

"Our mantra during the ice storm was 'document, document, document,'" said Greene County Presiding Commissioner Dave Coonrod. "We had heard about other communities that failed to document their expenses and ended up owing large amounts of money to FEMA, after the fact. We didn't want that to happen to us."

FEMA audited nine projects totaling \$9.7 million, or 96 percent, of Greene County's FEMA award. The audit, completed June 24, determined Greene County, "accounted for and expended FEMA grant funds on a project-by-project basis according to federal regulations and FEMA guidelines," and identified no issues requiring further action, according to a July 7 letter from the US Department of Homeland Security - Office of Emergency Management Oversight.

The Greene County Commission recognizes the Greene County Auditor's Office, the Purchasing Department, Office of Emergency Management, Highway Department and Budget Office for their hard work documenting and processing expenses related to the FEMA disaster declaration between January 12, 2007, and July 14, 2008. The commission especially commends Greene County Assistant Budget Officer Joclynn Brown, FEMA's primary point of contact for the audit.

"Thanks to Joclynn and the rest of the staff, FEMA found our paperwork to be in order and all expenses fully accounted for," said Coonrod. "A clean audit is a welcome final chapter to our 2007 ice storm response and recovery."

Greene County experienced a severe ice storm Jan. 12-14, 2007, leaving power lines, trees and structures coated in 1-2 inches of ice. The storm caused widespread power outages and tree damage, and was followed by two days of single-digit temperatures, sending many residents to public shelters. Following three weeks of emergency response, Greene County contractors spent 10 weeks removing ice storm debris from county rights-of-way, a \$9.7 million expense.

For more information, call the Greene County Commission at 417-868-4112 or Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Greene County Public Information Officer, at 417-224-5510.

(attached: July 7, 2010 letter)

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