

NEWS RELEASE: July 17, 2008

Media availability for new emergency communications vehicle

The Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management will utilize the new Missouri Homeland Security Region D Communication Support Unit for the first time at the USA Women's Softball "Bound 4 Beijing" tour stop in Springfield.

Emergency Management Director Ryan Nicholls will host a media availability for the Communication Support Unit Friday, July 18, from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the Thompson Field at Meador Softball Complex, 2500 S. Fremont Ave., Springfield. Members of the media are invited to tour the unit and speak with Nicholls and other emergency management staff.

The Communication Support Unit is a full-service mobile emergency communications office, housed in a custom Chevy vehicle. Installed equipment includes interoperable radio systems, VOIP and satellite phone service, high-speed satellite Internet access, a weather monitoring station, satellite television, video conferencing and an exterior video camera mounted on a 60-foot telescoping mast.

"It will allow us to support a coordinated response among multiple agencies at the site of any disaster, completely independent of any outside infrastructure," said Nicholls. "We are now able to deliver real-time disaster information, via phone, radio, Internet and live video feed, to local, state and federal emergency response agencies."

The unit was purchased through Missouri Region D Homeland Security Oversight Committee (RHSOC) with a \$365,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

"Greene County stepped up to operate the vehicle for Region D," said Nicholls. "We'll get to use it for local events, but we also share it with the entire region, when needed."

The unit will be used at the USA Women's Softball event to coordinate safety and security efforts Friday.

For more information, call Ryan Nicholls, Director of the Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management, at 869-6040, or Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Greene County Public Information Officer, at 829-6019 or 379-5713.

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