

NEWS RELEASE: June 2, 2011

**Greene County responds to Joplin tornado with 110 employees, 2,531 man-hours**

Greene County employees spent a total 2,531 hours assisting the City of Joplin and Jasper and Newton counties during the first week of tornado response.

May 22 through May 28, 110 Greene County employees assisted with the emergency response, representing the Sheriff's Office, Office of Emergency Management, Highway Department, Building and Development Services and Public Information. Several employees continue to provide support in Joplin this week.

“When Joplin asked for help, Greene County employees didn't hesitate — they just said ‘yes’ and headed down I-44,” said Greene County Presiding Commissioner Jim Viebrock. “Greene County is proud to provide trained responders to help our neighbors with rescue and recovery. It's the right thing to do, and we'll continue to support Joplin any way we can in the weeks and months to come.”

Greene County Sheriff's deputies were among the first to arrive on the scene the night of the tornado, assisting with initial search and rescue and patrol assignments. The Sheriff's Office also helped establish and manage a mobile morgue. As the week progressed, a total of 59 sheriff's employees put in 1,114 man-hours in Joplin, providing safety, security and patrol support.

Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management employees also arrived the night of the storm, providing back-up emergency communications after Joplin's phone lines and cell towers were heavily damaged. As communication infrastructure was restored, Emergency Management transitioned into supporting incident command in Joplin's Emergency Operations Center. Nine employees worked 505 man-hours in the first week.

Greene County Highway Department dispatched 39 employees for debris clearance in Joplin, as well as four backhoes, 18 dump trucks, 4 pickups, a fuel truck, a service truck and chainsaws. Highway crews cleared debris from drainage channels as well as cleaned up Joplin's Cunningham Park, located right across the street from St. John's Regional Medical Center, putting in a total of 800 man-hours.

Two building inspectors from Greene County Building and Development Services have worked a total 71 hours, inspecting damaged buildings and determining whether they are safe to enter.

One employee from the Greene County Public Information Office worked 41 hours supporting the City of Joplin Public Information Office.

In addition to employees, 24 volunteers with Greene County CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) spent two days supporting K-9 search and rescue teams, donating a total 456 man-hours.

Updated totals of Greene County employee man-hours will be provided as they are available. For more information, call Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Greene County Public Information Officer, at 417-829-6019 or 417-224-5510.

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