

## **Storm shelter funding available for rural homeowners**

JACKSON, Tenn.—USDA Rural Development Area Director Harriet Cannon today announced the availability of one-percent loans to help eligible homeowners in rural areas build or install storm shelters in southwest Tennessee.

"Severe weather can strike unexpectedly, often with serious consequences," said Cannon. "Rural Development can help people in tornado-prone areas prepare a secure place to keep their families safe when disaster strikes."

Eligibility for this program is based on family income and varies by county. For example, a two person household in Hardin County with an adjusted household income up to \$17,750 may qualify for a low-interest loan. The home must be owned and occupied by the person applying, and the property must be located in an area with a population of less than 20,000. The maximum loan is \$20,000 and monthly payments may be spread over 20 years.

According to Cannon the program allows building a storm shelter on the homeowner's property, installation of a prefabricated storm shelter on the property or reinforcing an interior room of the home to serve as a storm shelter. Rural Development staff in Jackson and Covington are available to help those interested in storm shelters determine eligibility and complete the application process.

Loans may also be made through this program to assist eligible homeowners in making needed health or safety-related repairs and to improve accessibility for those with physical handicaps. A limited number of grants may also be available each year for elderly homeowners.

Rural Development also offers a Guaranteed Home Loan program to help private lenders increase the number of affordable home loans they make in rural areas.

USDA Rural Development is committed to the future of rural communities in Tennessee by investing financial and technical resources through housing, community and business development programs. In Fiscal Year 2007 Rural Development assisted more than 600,000 Tennessee families and businesses with more than \$308 million in financial assistance through loans, loan guarantees and grants.

For more information on loans for storm shelters, homeownership or business development programs available in southwest Tennessee, contact either the Rural Development Area Office in Jackson at 731-668-2091 ext 2 and 800-342-3149 ext. 1495; or in Covington at 901 475-3350 ext 4 and 800-342-3149 ext. 1496; or visit us online at [www.rurdev.usda.gov/tn](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/tn).

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