

For Immediate Release
May 8, 2003

Contact: John Sewell
601-359-2916
Amy Carruth
601-352-9100

Governor Musgrove Announces Regional Response Team Grant

(Jackson, MS) – Governor Ronnie Musgrove announced a \$252,800 grant has been awarded to the Golden Triangle (Lowndes County) Regional Response Team for the purchase of specialized first responder equipment. The team participants and areas of coverage include Lowndes, Oktibbeha, Choctaw, Webster, Clay, Noxubee, Winston, Leake, Neshoba and Kemper Counties. The grant was awarded through the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA).

“These funds will be used to strengthen the ability of first responders to handle any event that threatens the safety and security of the people in these counties,” said Musgrove. “I appreciate the dedication and commitment shown by this team.”

MEMA is in the process of developing and equipping 10 statewide teams. The other current Regional Response Teams are located in DeSoto County, Tupelo/Lee County, Hinds County, Hattiesburg/Forrest County, Harrison County, and Natchez/Adams County.

“The partnership demonstrated by the cities and counties working together exhibits the type of cooperation that will be essential in meeting the challenges of a unified response to any event,” said Robert Latham, Director of MEMA and the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security.

MEMA received a total of \$5.9 million from the United States Department of Justice for enhancement of the state’s Domestic Preparedness Strategic Plan, which outlines how Mississippi will allocate federal funding to address its needs. The funds are from federal fiscal years 1999-2002, and were applied for prior to September 11, 2001. They are separate from funds to be received for homeland security.

Additional plans for the \$5.9 million include equipping a state HAZMAT Response Team to assist the Regional Response Teams if needed, establishing 24-hour warning points in every county to ensure operational information can be passed on to the counties as soon as it is received at the state level, purchasing decontamination equipment for the state, and addressing specific needs of the State Capitol Complex in Jackson.

###