

For Immediate Release

March 26, 2001

Contact: Lisa S. Mader
(601) 359-3227

Governor Announces Partnership To Build Safe Rooms In Mississippi

Jackson, Miss. – Governor Ronnie Musgrove today commended the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) for creating a partnership to enhance the efforts to build residential and community safe rooms and storm shelters across the state.

“As separate entities, both the Mississippi Development Authority and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency are working to make a better Mississippi,” said Governor Musgrove. “But by creating this partnership and working together, they are making a stronger, more effective impact on the safety of our people’s lives.”

The Mississippi Development Authority is providing up to \$150,000 of Community Development Block Grant funds to assist with the construction of safe rooms or storm shelters for housing that is being reconstructed due to storm damage. “With this program, low and moderate income families will have the opportunity to recover quicker from natural disasters and have the ability to build back safer homes that are more disaster resistant,” said J. C. Burns, Executive Director of the Mississippi Development Authority.

A Safe Room is a reinforced room built in a new or existing structure that can provide greater protection for residents in the path of severe storms or tornadoes. Funds for this program are available only to the participating counties that are included in a Federally Declared Disaster area. The State priority is to first make funds available through the local EMA office to homeowners, businesses, government installations and private non-profit corporations that sustained documented damage to their structures. The second priority is to offer the funds to those within the declared areas that did not sustain damage. The local Emergency Management Director will establish the county priorities and administer the program locally.

“Mississippi is placing a high priority on reducing or eliminating the effects of disaster events,” said MEMA Executive Director Robert Latham. “With the Safe Room – Storm

Shelter – Community Shelter Initiative we will be able to significantly reduce or eliminate the loss of life and property from natural disaster.”

“The safety of our people is of the utmost importance, which makes this effort even more important,” said Governor Musgrove.

#