MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
MISSISSIPPI OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY

NEWS

CONTACT: **AMY CARRUTH, PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR** **(601) 352-9100**
MEMA Newsline **1-800-441-6362**

************************MEDIA ADVISORY************************

WHO: MEMA, Forrest County Emergency Management District, first responders and local elected officials from Forrest County, Hattiesburg, and the surrounding counties.

WHAT: Press Conference announcing the Department of Justice FY'99 Federal Grant of $99,482.00 for Regional Response Team (RRT) in Forrest County

WHEN: Monday, December 16, 2002 at 2:00 p.m.

WHERE: Harvel R. Smith Emergency Operations Center
The Emergency Management District of Forrest County
4080 Hwy 11, Hattiesburg

WHY: The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency received a total of $5.9 million from the Department of Justice for enhancement of the State's Domestic Preparedness Strategic Plan, which outlines how MS will allocate Federal funding to address the needs identified through this process. This money is from Federal Fiscal Year 1999 - 2002 and **was applied for prior to September 11, 2001.** This money is separate from the money that will be received for Homeland Security.

The money will be used for the purchase of specialized first responder equipment for the Regional Response Team in Forrest County. MEMA is in the process of developing and equipping 10 statewide teams. The money will also be used in costs related to planning, conducting, and evaluating weapons of mass destruction (WMD) exercises.

Additional plans for the $5.9 million include equipping a State HAZMAT Response Team to assist the Regional Response Teams if additional assistance is needed in an event; establish 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; and to purchase decontamination equipment for the State.

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