MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

NEWS

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

SUBJECT: Bio-Terrorism Exercise in Hattiesburg **Date: January 7, 2003**

(Jackson) – The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) along with officials and first responders from Forrest, Lamar, Marion, Jefferson Davis, Covington, Jones, Wayne, Perry, and Greene counties **will be meeting on January 8th, 2003, at the Hattiesburg/Forrest County MSU Extension Center off Hwy 49 South.** The exercise will begin at 10:00 a.m. and continue until 2:00 p.m. Media will be able to attend the exercise from 10:00 to 10:30 a.m.

The purpose of these exercises is to assess the current capabilities and support requirements of the local response to a terrorism incident. This assessment process is the first step in local and statewide preparedness. The exercise will serve to promote inter-agency communications, preparedness and an overall team effort. After completing all the exercises, Mississippi should be better able to prepare for and respond to any type of incident with enhanced capabilities.

Each county and its county seat will respond to a set of circumstances provided by MEMA and the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) training coordinators. The exercise will be conducted using a series of five (5) "turns," with each turn lasting approximately 40-minutes. At the end of each turn there will be a brief discussion of issues and problems that have occurred during exercise play.

###