MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **February 15, 2001** **6:00 P.M.**
SUBJECT: WAYNESBORO WELL FIRE

(Waynesboro) - Gov. Ronnie Musgrove declared a state of emergency today for Wayne County, MS in connection with the gas well fire that occurred at the Beard 29-7 #1 well site operated by Bean Resources, Inc. The incident occurred at 5:00pm on February 13, 2001 as a result of high pressure gas blowout and subsequent fire. Boots & Coots, well control specialist, continue to remove oilrig debris from the wellhead and bring the fire under control. There have been no injuries reported.

In order to ensure public health and safety, local officials have established a mandatory 2 1/2 - mile evacuation radius around the well site. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has issued a no fly zone for a 3- mile radius around the well site. Boots & Coots continue to monitor air samples from the site. MDEQ and the Coast Guard Strike Team are using roaming monitors to sample the air throughout the evacuated area. Air monitoring equipment indicates no toxic levels are present.

Traffic control points will be strongly enforced by local officials. Anyone requiring entry into the evacuated area should make contact with the Boots & Coots representative in front of the Family Store on Reservoir Road in Waynesboro.

Boots & Coots still estimate that the operation to bring the well fire under control will take from 10 to 14 days. Bean Resources representative, Bryant Miller continues to be the contact for families needing information that were evacuated.

As an effort to provide a coordinated State response to the well fire, MEMA, MDEQ, MS Department of Health, Department of Agriculture and Commerce, Department of Education, Oil & Gas Board, Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, and the MS Board of Animal Health are lending support to Wayne County officials and residents to ensure a safe environment and a speedy recovery for local affected citizens.

Persons residing in the affected area can call MEMA at 1-800-441-6362 or Bryant Miller at 601-479-1330 to obtain the latest advisories and recommendations of state, local, and company officials.

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