

## Fourteen Outside Emergency Warning Sirens Being Bid Out

Written by Debbie Gregory  
Tuesday, March 25, 2014

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I met with 911 Director Steve Jones and EMA Director (Fire Chief) Keith Scruggs at the Lafayette Fire Hall one day last week to discuss the installation of 14 outside emergency warning sirens that is a part of the \$3,058,970 disaster recovery grant Macon County received following the 2008 tornado and 2010 flood. The sirens are in the process of being bid out and the project is estimated to run around \$350,000.

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“As part of the disaster recovery grant money we received in 2013, fourteen emergency warning sirens will be installed in our community, because many citizens in the county expressed the need or desire for these warning devices,” said 911 Director Steve Jones.

The locations include Rocky Mound, Siloam, Green Grove, Hillsdale, Maple Grove, Green Valley, Willette, RBS, Bethany, Galen, Gap of the Ridge, Drapers Cross Roads, Eulia and Beech Grove.

“Chief Keith Scruggs and I have tried to pick areas that are heavily populated or had a previous history of tornadoes in that area,” Jones said. “For example, Green Grove, which is not as heavily populated, appears to be the path way that tornadoes are coming through to Macon County.”

Jones said that an example of a populated area where one of the primary sirens will be installed is the one at Maple Grove, which will also cover Wind Curve Circle, Springs Creek Road, Gammons Lane, the trailer park on Highway 10 North, and Wolf Hill. He says that the siren in Siloam will cover a lot of the mobile homes in that area of the county.

“We have scattered these sirens all over Macon County to try and give as many of the citizens

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as we can a warning signal,” he continued. “Unfortunately there is no way that we can put these sirens at every location.”

Scruggs said the sirens will be tested once a month and they are going to try and implement them so they are on one system, where they will all be activated together, under the National Weather Service. “One of the things that Director Jones and I want the community to understand is that these are outside warning sirens only. They are not intended for people inside.”

“These sirens will be tested monthly,” said Chief Scruggs, “and they will be activated under any severe thunderstorm warning or tornado. They are regulated through the State Emergency Management and the control system will activate them under the National Weather Service.”

“The Tennessee Emergency Management Agency works closely with the National Weather Service,” Scruggs continued. “Five or six years ago we were in a dead spot as far as our weather radios went and the National Weather Service put a tower out at Russell Hill and that made a weather radio available for just about everybody in Macon County and they will work these new sirens thru signals from the tower.”

Jones says that these new warning sirens are just another way for emergency managers to be sure the community is alerted of impending bad weather conditions.

“I know \$350,000 for these sirens sounds like a lot of money,” said Scruggs, “but it is a small price to pay for someone’s life.”

Scruggs, who was instrumental in the seven sirens installed in the City of Lafayette, says that the whole county, along with RBS and the most populated areas will soon have these emergency signals.

“Like Director Jones said, it seems that we have a little alley through Macon County that starts down at Green Grove and comes out up through old Highway 52 and across,” said Scruggs. “We have had three tornado events in the last 20 years that took that path. So we are trying to

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warn these people.”

“We are in the process of bidding the sirens out and they should be installed within the next six months at least and be up and operating,” said Director Jones.

Jones and Scruggs would like to thank North Central Telephone and Tri County Electric for their co-operation.