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Forest
Service

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ILLINOIS INTERAGENCY DISPATCH CENTER HOLDS OPEN HOUSE

Harrisburg, IL, March 31, 2009 – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the U.S. Forest Service are rightfully proud to have the new Illinois Interagency Dispatch Center up and running. An open house held on March 24, 2009, was the first opportunity for many who were instrumental in visualizing and planning the facility to see the completed remodeling of the structure to meet the dispatching needs of multiple agencies.

Nearly fifty people were on hand to tour the building, see the renovations and participate in a brief award ceremony. Present were representatives from each of the four agencies sharing space in the facility, plus Karl Maple from Congressman Jerry Costello's staff, Golconda Job Corps Center (GJCC) Director David Floyd, John A. Logan College (JALC) and Williamson County Emergency Management Agency.

During the ceremony, FWS-Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge Manager Dan Frisk, spoke briefly regarding the success of this joint venture and thanked all parties for their part in completing the project. Mr. Frisk commented that this joint project is, "An example of where we have worked together to maximize our dollars and maximize resources for the common good."

Shawnee National Forest Supervisor Allen Nicholas addressed the gathering and acknowledged how pleased he was with recent developments and the relationship building that

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has been strengthened by the hard work of the combined agencies. Mr. Nicholas specifically recognized Forest Fire Management Officer Chris Peterson for his coordination efforts with counties and local fire departments and districts in completing fifteen cooperative fire agreements. According to Nicholas, the cooperation of federal, state and local agencies has been instrumental in providing fire training opportunities and protective clothing and equipment to local departments. The interagency dispatch center not only provides efficient and effective responses to local wildland fires, but also to national fires and disasters such as hurricanes and floods.

Nicholas also presented certificates of appreciation to David Floyd for the resources GJCC staff and students provided during the renovations on the dispatch facility; to JALC renovation classes faculty Greg Walker, Mike Damattei and Tim Wilson for their hard work and for providing a training opportunity for students who worked on the interagency dispatch center; and to FWS employees Steve Fike, Bruce Whitecotton, Harlan Lucas, Fred Laska and Eric Modgun for coordinating efforts and working with multiple agencies to complete renovations for the interagency dispatch center. Forest Supervisor Nicholas also presented Regional Forester Honor Awards to IDNR Fire Supervisor Tom Wilson and FWS Zone Fire Management Officer Cliff Berger for their partnership efforts in developing a more efficient and effective fire management program for southern Illinois.

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