CITY OF JOPLIN FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2/20/2014

SUBJECT: Administration Update for the Joplin Homebuyers Assistance Program (J-HAP)

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The City of Joplin would like to announce the transition of its J-HAP Program Office from the Economic Security Corporation of the Southwest Area (ESC). As of February 24, 2014, interested citizens seeking to learn more about the J-HAP program, or to obtain an application, should visit the new J-HAP Program Office located at **531 South Main Street Joplin, MO 64801**. For those that are interested in speaking to someone by phone, the new J-HAP contact number is **(417) 850-2249**. Interested parties can also e-mail J-HAP staff at JHAP@NANMCKAY.com.

It is intended for the new J-HAP Program office to become a central place where citizens can learn more about several recovery activities funded through the HUD Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery Program (CDBG-DR). To commemorate the opening of the new office and to invite citizens to learn more about the program, the City would also like to announce that an open house will be held at the new J-HAP Program Office on Tuesday, February 25, 2014 from 10:00 to 12:00 PM.

The new J-HAP Program Office is being relocated in part due to ESC's desire to pursue other opportunities with respect to the City's various recovery initiatives, necessitating an independent J-HAP Program office. "The City of Joplin is grateful for ESC's work on the program to date. The decision to change office locations is due to ESC's desire to pursue other opportunities to assist with the City's recovery. This transition is in no way a reflection on ESC's performance to date. The J-HAP program has been extremely successful with 82 approved applications, and 27 closings on homes in the tornado zone, which utilized $765,522 in HUD CDBG-DR J-HAP funding," stated [City representative]. According to John Joines, ESC's CEO, "we have reached the pinnacle we have set for our agency. It is ESC's desire to move forward now to other rebuilding opportunities, where we can once again apply our expertise; and, what a pleasure it has been to work with the City on this vital project for the City's ongoing recovery."

Over the next few weeks, current applicants may be contacted by a representative of the new J-HAP Program Office, in order to ensure all J-HAP applicant questions and concerns are answered. We would like to assure all J-HAP participants that this transition will not affect the approval process, and is not anticipated to delay the review of J-HAP submissions.

Joplin residents and others interested in moving to Joplin can learn more about the J-HAP qualifications and guidelines, including frequently asked questions, by logging onto the City's CDBG-DR website under the J-HAP information link at www.joplinmo.org/cdbg-dr. We encourage all potential applicants, agents, lenders, and builders to please refer to the FAQs, or contact the new J-HAP Program Office.