FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SUBJECT: Joplin Homebuyers Assistance Program to offer housing options for potential homeowners

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As demonstrated by the success of the closing of the FEMA group sites, many of the housing needs in the community created by the May 2011 tornado are being addressed, although City officials recognize some needs still exist.

With this in mind, along with the goal of increasing population, a new program for housing, the *Joplin Homebuyers Assistance Program* (J-HAP) is being implemented that can assist homebuyers with down payments and closing costs, as well as help homeowners build equity in their house. Funding assistance for this program is being provided from the Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) grant provided by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to the City.

The J-HAP is not limited to first-time homebuyers or those affected by the tornado, although there are certain federal requirements that must be met to be eligible for the use of this J-HAP funded Forgivable Loan. Current residents and those interested in moving to Joplin can learn more about the J-HAP qualifications and guidelines by logging onto the City's CDBG-DR website under the J-HAP information link at http://www.joplinmo.org/index.aspx?nid=731. Individuals who have additional questions or who are interested in applying for the J-HAP should call Economic Security Corporation at 417-781-0352 or 417-627-2046 to schedule an appointment.

In preparing for the roll-out of the J-HAP, a series of meetings have been held with different community partners, including lenders, the Ozark Gateway Association of Realtors, the Home Builders Association of Southwest Missouri, and nonprofit organizations to seek their input in developing this opportunity to assist potential homeowners. Additional outreach meetings will be scheduled with these groups to provide more information regarding the J-HAP to assist in the successful delivery to potential applicants.

"There are various resources in the housing market that the City and its partners are reviewing to determine how these benefit our citizens," said City Manager Mark Rohr. "We encourage those interested in building or purchasing a home in Joplin to learn more about the J-HAP and other resources that community organizations are offering."

Individuals interested in learning more about the J-HAP are encouraged to visit the City's CDBG-DR website under the J-HAP information link at http://www.joplinmo.org/index.aspx?nid=731 or call Economic Security Corporation at 417-781-0352 or 417-627-2046. A J-HAP Application Packet may obtained by submitting a request to Economic Security Corporation by e-mail at joplinhomebuyer@escswa.org or it can also be picked up at their office located 302 S. Joplin Ave, Joplin, Missouri.

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