



## *NEWS RELEASE*

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### Wakulla County Ranked Number One to Receive Funding for Smith Creek Communications Project

Crawfordville, Florida – On February 19, 2010, Commissioner Artz and County staff represented Wakulla County during Congressman Boyd’s Health Care Task Force Roundtable Meeting in Leon County where it was announced that Wakulla County ranked number one in the district to receive funding for the Smith Creek Communications Project. “I knew we had a strong proposal with a competitive price and realized I had to make a very persuasive and compelling case during the presentation.” said Commissioner Lynn Artz.

Smith Creek is a small community in western Wakulla County that has no two-way radio communication or cell phone coverage which results in the inability of the Emergency Medical Service, Fire, and the Sheriff’s Department to effectively communicate. Effective communication is the foundation upon which a capable emergency response organization must be built in order to serve the citizens of Smith Creek. Currently, initial emergency medical care is provided by local first responders coordinated by the Smith Creek Volunteer Fire Department and the County EMS System based in Crawfordville. Establishing radio communications will dramatically reduce the amount of time between first responder assessment and activation of acute care resources.

On February 14, 2010 staff submitted an earmark request to Congressman Boyd in the amount of \$165,000 for the Smith Creek Communications Project. The project includes the purchase and construction of a 150 foot communication tower and shed behind the Smith Creek Volunteer Fire Station to transmit a microwave signal to the base tower in Crawfordville. “Several County Divisions and Departments rallied together on behalf of the Smith Creek residents by submitting letters of support which resulted in a successful endeavor for this project,” said Scott McDermid, Public Safety Director.

This project will greatly improve access to emergency services by providing reliable communications for all Deputies, Fire Crews, and EMS Crews responding in the area by permitting the use of handheld radios. It seems this project has become Congressman Boyd’s top healthcare priority for earmark funding and is anticipated to receive funding within a year.

For additional information related to this story, please contact Jessica Welch, Policy & Public Information Coordinator at (850) 926-0919.