

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Photo Information:

Group:

Gov. Kay Ivey gave remarks and joined Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs Director Kenneth Boswell to hand out Community Development Block Grants in the State Capitol's Old House Chamber Jan. 20 in Montgomery. The CDBG grants totaled more than \$18 million to help 51 communities across Alabama complete vital infrastructure projects. Pictured from left are Enterprise Mayor William E. Cooper, Ivey, Special Projects Coordinator Kay Kirkland, State Rep. Rhett Marques and Boswell. (Governor's Office/Hal Yeager)

Photo Information:

Gov. speaking with Boswell behind her:

Former Enterprise Mayor Kenneth Boswell, at right, assists Gov. Kay Ivey in leading the CDBG Grant Awards ceremony Thursday in the State Capitol's Old House Chamber. He helped Ivey present awards to 51 Alabama cities or towns, including Enterprise. (Photo by Kay Kirkland)

Please see press release on the following page.

Governor awards CDBG grant to Enterprise for continuing nuisance property demolitions

A \$272,900 Community Development Block Grant awarded Jan. 20 will enable the City of Enterprise to continue its mission to rid the city of unsightly and unsafe vacant residential property.

The grant was presented by Gov. Kay Ivey and Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs Kenneth Boswell, former Enterprise mayor, in a ceremony at the State Capitol's Old House Chamber Thursday afternoon.

Enterprise was one of 51 communities across the state to receive CDBG grants, which totaled \$18 million. District 91 State Rep. Rhett Marques, Mayor William E. Cooper and Special Projects Coordinator Kay Kirkland attended the ceremony to accept the grant on behalf of the City.

"We are extremely grateful to Governor Ivey and Director Boswell for considering our request for the funding. This will allow us to continue our ongoing mission of eliminating nuisance residential property in our city," Cooper said.

The grant will enable the city to clear 45 houses that have been deemed unstable and/or unsafe because of animals and insects and other hazards that are often attracted to dilapidated structures.

"Block Grants are a means in which local governments can address some of their more pressing needs," the Governor said. "I am pleased to award these grants, and I commend those local officials who recognized those needs and took the time and effort to seek an answer through this grant program."

The CDBG program in Alabama is awarded annually on a competitive basis in several categories: small city (population 2,999 or less), large city (population 3,000 or more), county and community enhancement. The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs is administering the grants

from funds made available by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

“ADECA is pleased to join with Gov. Ivey in this grant program that annually helps Alabama towns, cities and counties obtain financial assistance for projects that benefit their communities,” ADECA Director Kenneth Boswell said. “We look forward to seeing the positive impacts that these projects have on the quality of life for residents of these communities.”

Nuisance properties often violate city codes, are considered eyesores and can be targets of vandalism, littering or other criminal activity.

“Because it affects quality of life, nuisance properties are a serious issue for us, so having the funding to remove 45 more abandoned, dilapidated structures will help prevent neighborhood decline and promote community revitalization,” Cooper said.

Elimination of the properties is a long and complicated process, Cooper said, noting the City Engineering Department handles nuisance property reports from citizens, conducts surveys and works with property owners regularly to mitigate problems.

The City began a more intense campaign to tackle the problem in 2015. Since then, with some previous CDBG funding, the City has demolished 150 residential nuisance properties at no cost to property owners. The current funding will allow the City to begin Phase III of project.

Marques, in Montgomery for the Alabama Legislative Session, also expressed gratitude Thursday to Ivey and Boswell for the grant funding, and commended the City for its perseverance in pursuing cleanup of abandoned, deteriorating property.

Marques was serving on the Enterprise City Council when 105 demolitions were state-funded in 2015, ramping up the demolition mission that had been discussed for years. City leaders recognized the need to put more teeth into its

abandoned property ordinance as early as 2006 in a comprehensive study, and in 2011, a stronger ordinance was adopted.

More information about the new demolition project will be announced when details are available.