

NEWS RELEASE

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Date: August 17, 2009
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

"Teddy Makes it 'Bear'able" - A Squeezably Soft Project

The Vicksburg Convention Center and Auditorium are collecting bears to be distributed September 10, 2009 during the *Chamber of Commerce Business after Hours* event at the Convention Center. This is part of the Vicksburg Convention Center and Auditorium's "Make a Difference in Your Community" project, "Teddy Makes it Bear'able."

The staff of VenuWorks, the firm that manages the convention center and auditorium, normally collects bears during the annual Breakfast with Santa but desires to expand the program to a year-round effort. "The bears are given to local police and fire departments to be used when they respond to incidents involving children. This will be the third time in as many years to give bears to our first responders," said Erin Powell, Marketing and Events Manager for the Vicksburg Convention Center and Auditorium.

It has been proven that the bears help console children that are victims of car wrecks, fires and other traumatic events. "We decided the project

would be a perfect fit for Vicksburg, especially with the history of President Teddy Roosevelt and the Bear Hunt in 1902," said Powell, "This is the only organized effort in Vicksburg/Warren County to keep the first responders stocked with bears." There are a total of 120 emergency response vehicles in Warren County not including the trucks and vehicles of volunteer fire stations. VenuWorks is hoping to equip each vehicle with 3 to 5 with this collection/donation. The goal is to collect and distribute 500 bears by September 10.

There is no size minimum for the bears. They need to be just large enough for a child to hold and comfort. Most of the bears collected in the past have ranged from 10 inches on the small side to approximately 25 inches. This size range ensures adequate staging room on board the first responder's vehicle.

For more information, to donate bears or for monetary donations to purchase bears, contact Erin Powell at the Vicksburg Convention Center, 601.636.3620.

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