

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 14, 2012

Joplin Schools to mark one-year anniversary of  
May 22, 2011 tornado with groundbreaking ceremonies

Joplin, MO - On Tuesday, May 22, 2012, Joplin Schools will mark the one-year anniversary of the May 22 tornado with groundbreaking ceremonies to celebrate the rebuilding of Joplin Schools. On May 22, 2011, an EF5 tornado cut a path of destruction through one-third of the city of Joplin. The losses were staggering: 161 people died and more than 8000 homes and businesses were wiped out. Joplin Schools lost seven students and one staff member. Half of the school district's buildings were damaged or destroyed including the only high school. Within hours of the tornado, the story changed from destruction to hope. Neighbors helped neighbors. Joplin residents united in rescue and recovery efforts. And, thousands of volunteers from across the world poured in to lend a helping hand. On Tuesday, May 22, 2012, the story of hope continues as Joplin Schools celebrates Operation Rising Eagle, the rebuilding of schools destroyed in the May 22, 2011 tornado, and honors those who helped make hope possible.

May 22, 2012 Schedule of Events:

- 10:30 am                    Groundbreaking ceremony at Irving Elementary site  
2727 McClelland, Joplin (next to former St. John's Hospital)  
Refreshments and celebration to follow.
- 12:00 pm                    Groundbreaking ceremonies at East Middle School and Elementary  
at East  
4594 East 20th Street, Joplin  
Light Lunch and celebration to follow.
- 3:30 pm                    Groundbreaking ceremony at Joplin High School / Franklin Technology  
Center  
2401 Indiana, Joplin  
The groundbreaking will take place at approximately 3:50 pm as walkers  
arrive during the City of Joplin's Walk of Unity.

"There is no doubt that this has been a challenging year for Joplin Schools and our community," notes Dr. CJ Huff, superintendent for Joplin Schools. "But, we have been richly blessed with the love and support of people from all around the world. We are healing and we are moving forward. We owe so much to so many for their support. We also have an obligation to rebuild stronger as we honor the legacy of those we lost. May 22nd is the day we have set aside to honor our past, say thank you to those who have helped us get to where we are today, and to begin looking to the future. Breaking ground on new schools, schools that reflect the strength and resiliency of our school family, provides us the opportunity to say thank you and to take one more giant step on our path to a brighter future for the children of Joplin."

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For more information, contact:  
Kelli Price, Joplin Schools  
417.625.5202 ext. 2224 / 417.850.6953  
[kprice@joplin.k12.mo.us](mailto:kprice@joplin.k12.mo.us)  
[www.joplinschools.org](http://www.joplinschools.org)