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BIRMINGHAM, AL--(Marketwire -05/14/12)- Revenue Discovery Systems (RDS), a government services company providing revenue enhancement support services to state and local government, announced today that the Cleburne County Commission, of Cleburne County, Ala., is the 2012 Smart Government Award recipient in the Small County category.

The County Commission is being recognized for developing several non-traditional partnerships that secured alternative funding sources to pay for the construction of a sustainable, multi-use facility. Known as the Talladega Mountains Natural Resource Center, the new facility will be home to the Cleburne County Emergency Management Agency, 911 Board, Cleburne County Administration, and the Jackson State University (JSU) Field Schools.

The Smart Government Awards program, sponsored by RDS since 2009, recognizes municipalities, counties, and state agencies that are taking innovative steps to enhance growth, create cost savings, and provide environmental benefits. The Small County Category includes counties with a population of 100,000 or less.

The Cleburne County Commission was in dire need of additional judicial space to alleviate overcrowding at the Cleburne County Courthouse located in Heflin, Ala. After a failed referendum to create tax revenue for building the additional space, the County Commission went back to the drawing board to establish a new plan.

The County Commission realigned its objectives and placed Cleburne County Administrator Steve Swafford as project head. Swafford was tasked with minimizing the use of county funds to construct a sustainable facility that reduced operational and maintenance costs. Another objective of the plan was to establish a university presence in the county by partnering with JSU.

In less than a year, Cleburne County acquired a 22-acre building site located within its county seat. The site was donated for the project by a local industry that owned the property. More than 90 percent of the funding for this project came from multiple state and federal agencies.

"When faced with limited local funding, one is forced to think outside our daily paradigms and examine every potential solution," states Swafford. "Without the teamwork and the partnerships between so many different agencies and stakeholders, none of this would have been possible. The Cleburne County Commission is thankful for the degree of cooperation and support shown by all of our many friends and neighbors who have joined with us to help make this unique and beneficial project a reality."

Scheduled to open around July 2012, the 12,000-square-foot Talladega Mountains Natural Resource Center incorporates numerous LEED standards to reduce energy usage. Efficiency will also be realized by sharing common-use rooms, resources, and personnel.

About the Smart Government Awards:

The Smart Government Awards were developed by RDS to recognize innovative governments and efficient programs in Alabama. The Approval Committee evaluated nominees based on efforts to enhance growth and reduce waste in spending, time and resources, particularly in regard to the environment.

The nominations for several different categories were approved and awarded by a committee comprised of educators, a policy researcher, an environmental conservationist, and a retired municipal employee. Those committee members included Dr. Don-Terry Veal, executive director of the Center for Governmental Services, Auburn University; Tommy Pow, program manager at the University of Alabama College of Continuing Studies; Jim Williams, executive director of the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama; Mike Moore, former revenue officer for the City of Opelika; and Adam Snyder, executive director for Conservation Alabama.

About RDS:

RDS is a division of PRA Government Services, LLC. Based in Birmingham, Ala., RDS provides revenue enhancement support services to state and local government in the areas of tax administration, revenue discovery and recovery, and compliance audit examination.

Each year, RDS processes billions of dollars in business taxes, licenses and fees, and has simultaneously discovered and recovered millions in unpaid revenues. For more than 30 years, RDS has been committed to delivering government solutions based on outstanding value, competitive pricing, exceptional customer service and compliance with the highest professional standards. RDS currently provides tax administration services for more than 450 state and local government clients and manages 760 professional service contracts. For more information, please visit www.revds.com.
