

Washington, DC -- Today, U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) announced that the Virgil Fire District would receive \$44,375 through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFGP).

"Local first responders put their lives on the line to protect our communities, and it is an honor to announce this critical federal funding to make sure they have the tools they need to keep us safe," **said Arcuri, a member of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus**. "Since taking office, I have consistently supported increased funding for this federal program to bring new safety technology to our communities without increasing the local tax burden."

The Virgil Fire District will use funds to purchase a new VHS high-band radio communications system. The funds will enable the district to purchase mobile radios for use in trucks and portable radios for on the scene communication, as well as a repeat technology to make communications possible at greater distances.

"The importance of this is huge for us because it allows us to do a comprehensive upgrade of our communications without being a burden on local taxes," **said First Assistant Chief Michael TenKate**. "We really rely on the Assistance to Firefighters grants."

Since taking office, Arcuri has announced over \$390,863 in Assistance to Firefighter Grants for emergency first responders in Cortland County.

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFGP) awards grants to firefighters, emergency response personnel and first responders to enhance response capabilities and to more effectively protect the health and safety of first responders and the citizens in their communities. AFGP grants provide resources for training, first responder health and safety programs, and response equipment and vehicles.

Since 2004, AFGP has provided a total of almost \$2.2 billion nationwide to first-responder organizations to purchase response equipment, personal protective equipment, and vehicles. In fiscal year 2007, AFGP will award approximately \$490 million directly to fire departments and

EMS organizations to enhance their response capabilities.

Legislation cosponsored by Arcuri to provide tax assistance for volunteer emergency responders to help area fire departments retain and recruit volunteers was included in the Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax Act (H.R. 3997) which passed the House of Representatives in November.

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