

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) today announced \$229,615 for three local fire departments to enhance preparedness as first responders through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFGP).

"I am glad to see federal funding coming back to local communities to help fire departments, many of which are fully volunteer, upgrade equipment and training," **said Arcuri, a member of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus**

. "The Assistance to Firefighters Grant program helps local fire departments provide the highest quality services to keep our cities and towns safe. These grants allow local first responders to improve their already heroic efforts. I will continue to fight for increased federal funding for this critical grant program."

The grants include:

- \$ 48, 165 for the Fly Creek Volunteer Fire Department for Fire Prevention (Otsego County)
- \$9,500 for the Cincinnatus Fire Department for Operations and Safety (Cortland County)
- \$171,950 for the Edmeston Fire Department for Vehicle Acquisition (Otsego County)

The Edmeston Fire Department will use the grant to purchase a new tanker to replace their current 1972 truck. The new truck will be an upgraded truck with a pump - not only replacing the current truck, but upgrading the department's capabilities. The new tanker will carry approximately 2500 gallons of water.

"Because of time requirements, trainings, and time for members responding to emergencies, the time we have to spend on fundraisers is limited," said Arthur Klingler, Edmeston Fire Department Fire Chief. "Without this grant, we are looking at five years at the least before we could get the current truck replaced. Being able to replace and upgrade our truck will enable us to better benefit the six neighboring departments we run mutual aid with. This is a very big plus and a moral boost for the firefighters."

The Cincinnatus Fire Department will use the money to purchase a thermal imaging camera. The current one is 10 years old and needs to be replaced.

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFGP) awards grants to firefighters, emergency response personnel and first responders throughout the nation 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. The grant for Fly Creek is part of FY 2006 grant rounds – during which AFGP will award approximately \$485 million.

In March, Arcuri joined 100 Members of Congress in writing to the House Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee requesting additional funding for the AFG Program as well as Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grants that provide assistance to fire departments to increase the number of firefighters and first responders.

The House recently passed the fiscal year 2008 Homeland Security Appropriations bill, which included a substantial increase in funding for AFGP and SAFER. The bill includes \$800 million for AFGP in fiscal year 2008.

Earlier this year, Arcuri also cosponsored the Volunteer Responder Incentive Protection Act (H.R. 943) which would provide tax assistance for volunteer emergency responders to help area fire departments retain and recruit volunteers. The 24th Congressional District is home to a number of firehouses that rely exclusively on volunteer firefighters.

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