

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) today announced \$71,250 for the Oriskany Fire Department through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFGP) for operations and safety enhancements.

"I am thrilled to announce this federal grant to provide the Oriskany Fire Department with the resources it needs to keep our community safe and secure," **said Arcuri, a member of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus**

. "Firefighters and first responders, many of them volunteers, work tirelessly to protect our families and property and it is vital that they have the most up-to-date equipment. In Congress, I have joined colleagues on both sides of the aisle to request increased funding for this critical grant program and will continue working in Washington to help local first-responders protect our community."

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.

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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