

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) today announced \$217,863 for three local fire departments through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFGP) for operations and safety enhancements.

"I am pleased to announce these federal grants that will enable local fire departments to continue offering top-notch services to the communities they serve," **said Arcuri**, a member of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus. "We all know how important it is to make sure local first responders have the most up-to-date equipment needed to keep our families safe and secure. In Congress, I have joined colleagues on both sides of the aisle to request increased funding for this critical grant program."

Local fire departments awarded funding include:

\$109,250 – Village of DeRuyter Fire Department (Cortland County)

\$19,313 – Four Town First Aid Inc. (Cayuga County)

\$89,300 – Otego Volunteer Fire Department (Otsego County)

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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