

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) today announced a \$28,854 grant for the Auburn Fire District through the Department of Homeland Security's Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program for operations and safety enhancements.

"I am pleased to announce this grant to enable the Auburn Fire Department to purchase four thermal imaging cameras so they can do their jobs with more precision and safety," **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. I will continue to work to make sure we provide local fire departments with the resources they need to 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.

This grant will allow the Auburn Fire Department to purchase four thermal imaging cameras which will enable firefighters to look through smoke to find the source of a fire more quickly and safely. These cameras will also enable the department to find a trapped victim faster.

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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