



P R E S S R E L E A S E

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VERNON FIRE DEPARTMENT RECEIVES GRANT FROM U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Vernon, CT - The Town of Vernon Volunteer Fire Department, through its Office of Emergency Management, has received a grant award for \$203,575.00 from the 2005 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program administered cooperatively by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office for Domestic Preparedness and the Department's United States Fire Administration.

According to Robert Kelley, Fire Chief for the Town of Vernon, "The equipment that will be purchased through this award will strengthen our Town's emergency response capabilities and enhance firefighter safety." Michael J. Purcaro, Director of Emergency Management for the Town of Vernon added, "This award will advance our Department's mission to save lives and protect property for the communities that we serve."

"We recognize the importance of these grants to our nation's fire departments and we will continue to work closely with the fire service community to meet their needs," said Matt Mayer, Acting Executive Director of the Office for Domestic Preparedness for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

"The Assistance to Firefighters Grants ensures that the nation's firefighters continue to have the basic capability they require to do their jobs, improve safety and save lives", said David Paulison Administrator of Department of Homeland Security's United States Fire Administration.

The Town of Vernon, Office of Emergency Management gratefully acknowledges Vernon Mayor Dr. Ellen Marmer, Town Administrator Laurence Shaffer and the entire Town Council, Connecticut Congressman Rob Simmons, and Connecticut Senator Chris Dodd for their support of the Vernon Fire Department's grant application and this award.

According to Connecticut Senator Chris Dodd, "One of the many lessons that we can learn from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina is that our firefighters and first responders need to be fully equipped for anything that comes their way including natural disasters. While only a start, these grants are a step in the right direction, but we can and must do more to ensure that our first responders are given the tools they need to keep us safe at home."

"Connecticut's firefighters and emergency personnel should always be equipped with the training and resources they need to do their job, improve safety and ultimately save lives. Today's grant announcements will allow our firefighters to do their job more safely and effectively", stated Connecticut Congressman Rob Simmons of the Second Congressional District.

For more information on the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program, please visit the program's website at <http://www.firegrantsupport.com/>. For more information on U.S. Fire Administration, please visit their website at <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/>.

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