

L.S. Fire awarded grants for a safer community

Grants keep taxpayers costs to a minimum

BY PAM STEVENS | EDITOR

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) awarded over \$4 million from the Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant programs to local fire departments and organizations in the state of Washington including Lake Stevens Fire District, who was awarded over \$165,000 this month.

"Since 2001, the fire departments of this nation have been using these much needed funds to better serve their communities," said Dr. Denis Onical, Acting Assistant Administrator of the U. S. Fire Administration. "Today's firefighters face numerous challenges as they work to prevent and respond to fires in their communities. These AFG funds have a direct impact on the safety of both residents and firefighters throughout the nation."

This grant will help Lake Stevens Fire install a new state-of-the-art smokeless exhaust system

on all their emergency vehicles. The current exhaust system is obsolete and cannot be repaired

"Currently exhaust is emitted into the truck bay as our units move in and out of the fire station. A big exhaust fan then removes smoke emitted from the fire units." Lake Stevens Fire Chief Gary Faucett said. "The grant provides for a new state-of-the-art system that is now attached directly to the exhaust system on the fire unit and filters out all the bad emissions before they enter the fire station, thus making a much safer environment for the firefighters and our community as they go in and out of the station. Firefighters can also turn on the filtering system while on accident scenes thus removing diesel fumes while working on patients," said Faucett.

The smokeless exhaust system will cost \$10,000 for each emergency unit and will require a new filter annually at \$150 per vehicle.

This grant also provides fund-

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ing to help Lake Stevens Fire purchase Mobile Data Terminals (MDT), which are laptop computers mounted inside their emergency vehicle units making it easier and more time efficient in getting updated information and details from other units and 911 dispatch center. Using MDTs will also enable Lake Stevens units to network with other fire departments within the county.

"These terminals make things very accurate," Faucett said.

With this grant Lake Stevens Fire has been successful at acquiring over \$800,000 in grants over the past four years

Another grant received last year enabled by Lake Stevens Fire to replace all their firefighter air packs.

"Again that was a safety issue for our firefighters" Faucett said. "We were able to replace all our air packs at once rather than firefighters operating multiple types of air packs over what would have been a four year replacement period."

They have also received grant money for Risk Watch programs in local elementary schools both in Lake Stevens and in cooperation with Granite Falls.

Risk Watch teaches fire safety to students along with many other subjects including

poison control and gun safety.

Currently, Lake Stevens Fire has address signs and smoke detectors available for families in need. All through the availability of grant money.

"Address signs and smoke detectors are highly important to us," Deputy Chief Dave Lingenfelter said. "Address signs help us identify homes in a timely manner. There are many who don't have home smoke detectors and this grant allows us to go out and provide smoke alarms."

Lake Stevens Fire services over 41 square miles and 40,000 residents.

"Safety to the community and our firefighters is our top priority" Faucett said.

Keeping costs down for citizens also tops their list of concerns and grants help make that possible.

"The great thing about grants is they are not a direct burden on the taxpayers," Lingenfelter said.

"While grants are just one of the many ways we are saving our taxpayers money in this tough economy, we can't overlook the fact that our grant writing efforts have saved our community over \$800,000 in past four years and most important," Faucett said, "our community and firefighters are safer today because of them."