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Funds Will Boost Homeland Security, Spare Local Taxpayers From Most Of The Cost

Washington, DC - Continuing his efforts to ensure that first responders have all of the state-of-the-art equipment they need to stay safe and protect the public, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-Fair Lawn) today announced that the Englewood Fire Department has been awarded a \$126,155 federal grant to pay for new Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) units and other equipment. The grant comes from the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program, which was established under legislation Rothman cosponsored.

"I am very proud to announce that the Englewood Fire Department has received this important federal grant, which will pay for the most modern, cutting edge firefighting equipment that will save residents' lives and property, and protect our brave firefighters," Rothman said. "When it comes to protecting our first responders and ensuring they have the best equipment needed to safeguard residents, we must provide every single dollar needed. From fighting fires to protecting against potential acts of terror, the Englewood Fire Department will now have the important gear it needs to get the job done."

The Englewood Fire Department plans to purchase 28 new SCBA units to replace the ones currently used, which are 15 years old. The new SBCA units come with several new safety features, including an indicator on each firefighter's mask that shows whether the SCBA unit is close to running out of oxygen. Additionally, the department will purchase a washing unit so that it can clean and decontaminate gear - a move that will put an end to the costly step of having to send out the gear to be cleaned.

"The members of the Englewood Fire Department are extremely pleased to accept this Federal Firefighter Assistance Grant," said Englewood Fire Chief Robert Moran. "We also fully support the continued efforts of our Federal officials in maintaining and enhancing this vital program of providing direct aid to our nations firefighters. As stipulated, our award is earmarked to purchase equipment that will drastically improve our operational capabilities and, most importantly, allow us to provide a safe and healthy working environment for our fire suppression personnel."

Englewood's push to secure this funding came after a 2003 fire in which one of the city's firefighters nearly lost his life when he ran out of air and got lost in a burning building. Fortunately, other firefighters were able to locate him in just enough time to save his life, but the incident underscored the importance of having modernized SCBA units that indicate when oxygen is low. After a lengthy stay in the Intensive Care Unit, the firefighter returned home to his family and will hopefully be rejoining the Englewood Fire Department.

"In addition to providing Englewood's firefighters with the equipment they need to effectively and safely fight fires and respond to emergencies, this federal grant will save Englewood taxpayers \$126,155, which is 90 percent of the total cost of this new equipment," Rothman said.

The funds are administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the United States Fire Administration (USFA), which are both part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Local fire departments interested in applying for future Assistance to Firefighters Grant program grants are encouraged to call Brendan Gill in Rothman's Hackensack office at 201-646-0808 for more information.

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