

DREAMS DO COME TRUE

Government grants help equip fire departments

Spaghetti dinners, raffles, carnivals, golf outings, and fish fries just don't add up anymore. Fire departments need more than local fund-raisers to meet their skyrocketing budget needs.

Fortunately, recent increases in numbers and funding of federal, state, and local grants are increasing the buying power for new and upgraded equipment. The following examples show how receiving federal FIREAct-enabled Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) in 2003 has helped five small communities.

Fire Chief Don Nickels has been a member of Allegheny Township Volunteer Fire Company No. 1 in Westmoreland County, Pa., since 1957.

"I've been around since hip boots, rubber coats, and a towel around your face," Nickels said, laughing as he recalled the primitive personal safety equipment used in his early firefighting years.

A township-enacted 1-mill fire tax and traditional fundraisers have helped the department survive in recent years, but last year, they received a \$61,659 Assistance to Firefighters Grant through the U.S. Fire Administration. The department earmarked its much-welcomed grant to buy 13 MSA Air Masks and 13 spare air cylinders.

Also on their wish list are new facepieces and a thermal-imaging camera.

To stay afloat, Buffalo Township Volunteer Fire Company in Butler County, Pa., has relied on fund-raisers, including a \$10,000-per-year sale of 50-50 tickets during car races at a local dirt track, said Corey Comperatore, an 11-year member and chief since 2000.

But the department's AFG windfall of \$97,281 has allowed it to buy hose and pump replacement components; radios, a base station, and pagers compatible with the county's new UHF radio dispatch sys-

tem, and an MSA Evolution® 4000 thermal-imaging camera.

Comperatore noted, "We usually have to borrow money if we need to make any large purchases. With the manpower we have, and without the grant, our fire company would have been stuck with outdated hoses, and have to borrow about \$50,000 for the new radio equipment."

Hilltop Hose Company No. 3 in Harrison Township, Allegheny County, Pa., brings in about \$9,000 a year from sales of its lottery calendar, said Chief Jeff Balog, a member for 13 years. Funds for operating expenses and new equipment are also raised through 50-50 drawings and their Halloween haunted house.

"It's just a lot of elbow grease to get the funding from the public," Balog said.

In 2003, the AFG program kicked \$68,306 into Hilltop Hose's budget, facilitating the purchase of 12 new MSA SCBA and 12 spare air cylinders, 15 sets of turnout gear, attack line, and blitz line.


Eleven new SCBA from MSA – complete with Nightfighter™ Heads-Up Display and Stealth™ Cylinders – were on the 2003 dream list for North Apollo Fire Department in Armstrong County, Pa. Applying for an AFG made their dream come true, said Fire Chief Cliff Rearic, a 28-year member of North Apollo department. Besides the MSA Air Masks, their \$60,678 award also paid for new fire gear, including leather boots, and training materials, with computers.

"We couldn't have bought all that at one time without that grant," Rearic said. Their biggest fund-raiser is bingo, which brings in about \$50,000 a year.



The department received \$76,419 in 2003 through the AFG program and has a shopping list that includes something for all 40 members: 10 SCBA and 15 spare air bottles, 26 sets of turnout gear, and 40 helmets, pairs of boots and gloves, and hoods. Hose, nozzles, and lighted rescue rope complete their list.

Leechburg's first AFG might seem like a bonanza to spell an end to fund-raising for firefighters, but Foster said it isn't so.

"We will continue (with fund-raising) as long as my men hold out," he said. "Just because we got a grant now, it may never happen again." 

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program is administered by the USFA, part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and assists rural, urban, and suburban fire departments throughout the United States.

"This direct funding is essential to train and equip our first responders who protect lives and property against all hazards in our communities each day," said Michael D. Brown, under secretary of Homeland Security for emergency preparedness and response.

Your tax dollars DO make firefighters' dreams come true, helping equip First Responders all over America, so that they are ready to protect you.

Dear MSA:

We responded to a report of a townhouse fire. Upon arrival ... we thought it was upstairs.

When we got to the top of the stairs, after a couple of minutes, smoke and heat conditions became too intense, and, as we were backing out, my partner and I fell down the steps. My partner managed to get up and make it out the front door.

He thought I was behind him, but I became disoriented and proceeded up a couple of steps. When I turned to come down the steps, the basement and first floors flashed over, trapping me on the steps.

As I tried to get to the second floor, I fell back into the fire on the first floor, but somehow I escaped through the rear patio door onto a deck.

I am writing this letter to let you know that I was extremely pleased with my Sam Houston helmet and the way it held up. I believe it saved me from getting further injuries by protecting me when I fell down the 10 steps and protected me in the intense heat that I was exposed to. All my gear, including the facepiece, was condemned, due to the heat and flame damage. I suffered second-degree burns to both hands and wrists, but I believe the helmet and hood protected my head from suffering any burns.

The helmet, even though it has now been condemned, held up great and did so under very extreme conditions. That is why I purchased another one, and that is why it is the only helmet I will ever wear.

Thanks.
Randy Parrish
Baltimore County Fire Dept.



tower workers

Because it's dangerous and because it's the law

In the first criminal case prosecuted in the state of Iowa for willful violation of OSHA workplace safety laws that caused a death, a tower company and its president were found guilty in the death of a worker who fell from a 300-foot communication tower.

The two counts of willful violations were for causing death for failure to provide appropriate safety training and appropriate protective equipment. It was the worker's first day on the job, and he did not have the appropriate fall protection equipment.

New carrier harness & rescue belt make MSA's new FireHawk™ Air Mask a standout

PASSION LINKS US TO YOU.

Passion erupts at MSA factories, where work teams find superior ways to make and assemble products while minimizing waste and maximizing quality. And—so many products are custom-built to individual customers' specifications.



Product managers anxiously anticipate NIOSH certification of new respirators, gas masks, and breathing apparatus—not because they fear our products won't pass the rigorous testing, but because our customers are waiting to use them. Once the green light flashes, extra production lines and shifts of committed MSA factory associates satisfy those waiting customers who believe in our products, too.

Well-trained customer service reps and knowledgeable field sales personnel feed on MSA passion as they work around the clock to take care of customers with emergencies. They are fueled by new demands to protect entire cities of law enforcement and municipal personnel, customers who want "total safety solutions" to unfamiliar threats.

We are impassioned about serving beyond the sale—with training, technical advice, respirator fit-testing, information about government standards, and resolutions for your problems. Our fine distributors, as true partners in serving you, carry and share MSA's passion.

Because more people are injured at home than at work, MSA Safety Works reaches out to consumers in retail stores all over the country.

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ANOTHER YEAR, ANOTHER INNOVATION—make that two innovations—that characterize MSA's top-performing FireHawk™ Air Mask for firefighters.

It's based on last year's winning combination of features that defined MSA's MMR Xtreme® Air Mask, including optional CBRN protection. However, recent improvements and additions make this SCBA an even more valuable part of the firefighter's personal protective equipment.


New SCBA components for 2004 are the Airframe™ Carrier and Harness and the optional Rescue Belt, which provide

impressive new means of increased safety, simplicity, and reliability, plus comfort and versatility.

The all-new Airframe Carrier and Harness comes standard, with large side handles and a central carabiner attachment point for pulling firefighters to safety in rescue scenarios. An optional 6-way swiveling lumbar pad gives the firefighter maximum freedom

of movement and comfort during crawling or climbing, thanks to a rubber triangular grommet. It is not stationary, so it accommodates different body movements while keeping the lumbar pad in position.

The new optional Rescue Belt provides an NFPA-compliant emergency egress system as an integral part of the SCBA waist belt. This MSA-exclusive capability consists of 50 or 75 feet of Kevlar line and rappelling hardware, which are stored inside the lumbar pad. When needed, the Rescue Belt is immediately accessible.

For more details, ask for Bulletin 0105-126, contact your MSA distributor, or call 1-877-MSA-FIRE. 




SafeSite™ Detection System helps law enforcement secure public arenas

Law enforcement agencies are deploying more personnel and new resources to provide added measures of security at many public, high-profile events. MSA's new SafeSite Hazardous Gas Detection System is a new tool for Homeland Security.

Using wireless technology, the SafeSite Hazardous Gas Detection System detects and communicates the presence of chemical warfare agents, volatile organic compounds, and numerous toxic industrial chemicals. By communicating live readings to the SafeSite's SafeCOM Command Center, the SafeSite System provides superior preventative- and counter-measure solutions.



The system can be transported and operated in a temporary location or integrated permanently into buildings or mass transportation systems, and thus help first responders, law enforcement, and government agents reduce the risk of chemical exposure and facilitate consequence management.

For more information about this system, contact MSA's Instrument Division at 1-800-MSA-INST. 

Service before sales?

It was a close call for an aluminum products factory in rural Virginia.

Situation: They needed training on their fall protection products, and quickly, before an impending corporate audit. They asked their fall protection distributor, Hagemeyer, for help.

Hagemeyer rep Mark Connorley had originally asked MSA field rep Fritz Christ to assist him, but Christ had to back out at the last minute, so MSA's field rep Rick Graham filled in. (Graham had worked with Connorley at this customer's other plants.)

Fly in the ointment: That plant did not use MSA fall protection. So why was MSA involved?

Graham explained, "This is one of those situations where MSA's service to customers and support for our distributor keep us in the loop. Mark's plant was in a

bind, because their fall protection rep would not travel to that somewhat isolated plant location to educate his products' end users. That's just not the way MSA treats customers."

Still, it did not make sense for MSA to train employees who were not MSA customers. But Mark Connorley got the plant to agree that if Hagemeyer and MSA trained 50 employees in the 2-hour

fall protection awareness class, they would consider MSA the next time they buy fall protection.

"So, we trained the people, and they were very happy. Hagemeyer and MSA worked together to satisfy a customer and get everyone out of a tight spot," reported Graham.

Result: The needs of the customer, the distributor, and MSA are satisfied. 