

Press Release

Economic Crisis Impacts New York Fire Departments, According to a New National Survey Sponsored by Fireman's Fund Insurance Company

NEW YORK (June 9, 2009) – The current economic crisis is negatively impacting fire departments in the state of New York, according to a comprehensive national survey of firefighters from nearly 9,500 fire departments or 30 percent of departments in the country, including 828 fire departments in New York.

"Supporting Safer Communities: A National Fire Service Survey" found that, specifically in New York, the top challenges facing fire departments today are:

- More than three-quarters (76 percent) do not have adequate training for events involving terrorism or weapons of mass destruction.
- Sixty-nine percent agree that there have been delays in replacing equipment.
- Fifty-eight percent agree that there have been delays in purchasing new equipment.
- Fifty-seven percent do not have adequate training for hazardous materials incidences.
- More than half (51 percent) have had to increase fundraising efforts and/or grant writing because of budget cutbacks.

"When you consider that firefighters are the first responders to nearly every fire, medical emergency, and natural or man-made disaster in our local communities, it is imperative that we have adequate funding to ensure we keep our communities safe," said Fire Chief Robert Farstad of the Schenectady Fire Department.

The study was conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs based in New York, and was available online for six weeks from mid-February to March 31, 2009 to any career and volunteer firefighters, regardless of geography, rank or size of their community. Nearly 17,500 firefighters from nearly 9,500 departments participated, 61 percent of which hold the rank of fire official (chief, captain or lieutenant). These findings are based on data at the department level rather than on all respondents. When multiple firefighters from the same fire service organization responded to the survey, the first individual to respond was selected on behalf of that department. Full results can be found at www.firemansfund.com/firesurvey. An executive summary by Ipsos is available at <http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/pressrelease.cfm?id=4392>.

Not all New York-area findings were grim:

- Ninety percent of fire departments have a thermal imaging camera, considered a critical tool to identify hot spots and locate injured or sleeping persons in a burning building.

“As a company, Fireman’s Fund believes it is extremely important to raise awareness of the needs of local fire departments,” said Chuck Kavitsky, chairman of Fireman’s Fund. “Supporting the fire service means safer communities. That is why we have dedicated our philanthropic giving to directing grants to fire departments throughout the country.”

Fireman’s Fund Insurance Company’s nationwide philanthropic program is designed to provide needed equipment, training and educational tools to local fire departments. Since 2004, Fireman’s Fund has issued grants to more than 1,100 different departments totaling more than \$21 million. Independent insurance agencies that sell Fireman’s Fund products are able to direct these grants to support fire stations in their communities.

In the state of New York, Fireman’s Fund has directed 92 grants to fire departments, totaling \$1,285,533.

About Fireman’s Fund

Fireman’s Fund Insurance Company is a premier property and casualty insurance company providing personal and commercial insurance products nationwide. It is rated 'AA-' by Standard & Poor’s Rating Services. Founded in 1863 with a mission to support firefighters, Fireman’s Fund continues this effort today through its national philanthropic efforts. Fireman’s Fund is a member of the Allianz Group (NYSE: AZ), one of the world’s largest providers of insurance and other financial services. For more information, visit www.firemansfund.com.

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