

Press Release

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

BOSTON (June 9, 2009) – The current economic crisis is negatively impacting fire departments in the state of Massachusetts, according to a comprehensive national survey of firefighters from nearly 9,500 fire departments or 30 percent of departments in the country, including 195 fire departments in Massachusetts.

"Supporting Safer Communities: A National Fire Service Survey," sponsored by Fireman's Fund Insurance Company, found that the top challenges facing Massachusetts fire departments today are significant:

- Eighty-two percent agree/strongly agree that if the economic situation continues for another 12 months it will negatively impact their ability to serve their community.
- Seventy-seven percent have had delays in purchasing new equipment, and 74 percent have had delays in replacing equipment.
- More than half (50 percent) have had cuts or reductions in services.
- Nearly half (48 percent) have had to or plan on cutting staffing.
- More than half (53 percent) have had to increase fundraising and/or grant writing efforts.
- Forty-six percent of volunteer and combination departments are losing volunteers.
- Nearly one-quarter (23 percent) of all departments are not confident that they have adequate extrication equipment to extract accident victims in a timely manner.
- Sixty-four percent do not have urban search and rescue equipment and 50 percent of these departments say they need it.
- Sixty-three percent do not have personal protective equipment for all personnel to respond to hazardous materials incidents and 62 percent of these departments state a need for it.

"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 Chief Tom Coulombe, president, Fire Chief Association of Massachusetts.

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>.

"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 Massachusetts, Fireman's Fund has directed 11 grants to fire departments, totaling \$127,587.

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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Media Relations contact: Susan Murdy, Fireman's Fund, (415) 899-3749

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