

## Press Release

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

PHILADELPHIA (June 9, 2009) – The current economic crisis is negatively impacting Pennsylvania fire departments, according to a comprehensive national survey of firefighters sponsored by Fireman's Fund Insurance Company. The study attracted nearly 9,500 fire departments or 30 percent of departments in the country, including 915 fire departments in Pennsylvania.

*"Supporting Safer Communities: A National Firefighter Survey"* found that Pennsylvania fire departments, notably volunteer and combination departments, face the following challenges:

- Sixty percent of volunteer and combination departments are losing volunteers who need to look for other jobs or sources of income.
- For 66 percent of departments, there have been delays in purchasing new equipment and 63 percent report delays in replacing equipment.
- Fifty-four percent do not have protective equipment for all personnel to respond to hazardous materials incidents and 41 percent lack adequate training for these incidents.
- Nearly one in four fire departments (24 percent) do not have adequate extrication equipment used to safely and quickly remove injured people from a vehicle crash.
- Ninety-two percent of departments find staffing/recruitment/retention at least somewhat challenging.
- More than a quarter of fire departments (27 percent) do not have and need urban search and rescue equipment.
- Sixty-eight percent of departments have had to increase fundraising efforts and/or grant writing because of budget cutbacks.

"When you consider that firefighters are first responders to nearly every fire, medical emergency, and natural or man-made disaster, it is imperative that they have adequate funding to ensure our communities stay safe," said Ed Mann, Pennsylvania State Fire Commissioner.

The firefighter 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](http://www.firemansfund.com/firesurvey).

“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 focused 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 last five years, Fireman’s Fund has directed 44 grants to Pennsylvania fire departments, totaling \$670,243.

### **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](http://www.firemansfund.com).

### **About Ipsos Public Affairs**

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

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