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For Immediate Release

## **NEW INTERACTIVE ROBOT TO TEACH CRITICAL FIRE SAFETY TO ROANOKE CHILDREN**

### *Roanoke Fire-EMS to Unveil Robot at Local Elementary School*

ROANOKE, Va. (Sept. 22, 2009) – According to the U.S. Fire Administration, an estimated 2,800 children are injured and 850 killed each year in residential fires nationwide. Now, thanks a \$12,000 donation, Roanoke Fire-EMS will be able to enhance their fire safety outreach efforts to young children.

The grant was awarded by Rutherford, a local risk management and insurance brokerage firm, and Fireman's Fund Insurance Company.

Grant funds have been used to purchase an interactive firefighting robot and fire truck that will be used to teach critical fire safety lessons to children from pre-kindergarten through first grade. The robot and truck, which take command from a remote control, can maneuver around a room. There is also automatic mouth movement through the synchronization of a designated person's voice.

"While teaching fire safety in group settings, the interactive nature of the robot really helps draw children's attention, making them more likely to absorb key fire safety messages that pass through the robot's mouth, said Roanoke Fire Chief David Hoback. "As children become educated, they often pass lessons learned on to family members in their household. Ultimately, this helps make the whole community safer."

The unveiling of the robot and truck will take place in conjunction with a fire safety presentation to students at Hurt Park Elementary School.

**Date/Time:**  
**Mon., Oct. 5**  
**9:30 a.m.**

**Location:**  
**Hurt Park Elementary School (outside theatre)**  
**1525 Salem Ave., SW**  
**Roanoke, VA**

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“Rutherford is headquartered in Roanoke, so we’re very proud to be able to support this community in a tangible way,” said John Parrott, division president of Rutherford. “In this economic climate, fire departments are dealing with very tight budgets, and fire safety programs are often cut or reduced.”

The grant package is part of a nationwide philanthropic program funded by Fireman’s Fund Insurance Company. The program is designed to provide needed equipment, training and educational tools to local fire departments. Since 2004, Fireman’s Fund has issued grants to over 1,400 different departments totaling more than \$23 million. Independent insurance brokers, like Rutherford, that sell Fireman’s Fund products are able to direct these grants, which in turn support fire departments.

### **About Rutherford**

Founded in 1916 in Roanoke, Rutherford is privately held, employee owned and one of the largest brokers in the U.S. Rutherford has nine offices from Philadelphia to Atlanta, and client operations in all 50 states and more than 110 countries. Rutherford provides clients with risk management services and insurance products in the areas of: property and casualty; surety bonding; group life and health; captives and alternative risk solutions; consultative claims and claims advocacy; third party administration; loss control; safety services; private client services; international coverage and environmental management consulting.

### **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 work. 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)

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