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Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Grand Teton National Park

Department of Agriculture
U.S. Forest Service
Bridger-Teton National Forest

Teton Interagency Fire Management

Rural Fire Assistance Program Supports Jackson Fire/EMS

The National Park Service, in conjunction with Grand Teton National Park, provided \$4,000 to the Jackson Fire/EMS department through the Rural Fire Assistance (RFA) Program this past year. The Jackson, Wyoming-based department was one of 62 rural fire departments within the National Park Service Intermountain Region to receive funding through the program in 2004.

An important component of the National Fire Plan, the federal RFA Program assists rural fire departments with equipment, training and prevention needs on a cost-share basis. The program was initiated to increase firefighter safety and enhance wildland fire protection capabilities in rural areas that often rely heavily on volunteer firefighting resources. Specifically, it targets rural and volunteer fire departments that have a substantial cooperative role in the protection of Department of Interior lands and support interagency fire efforts. Jackson Fire/EMS, along with the Bridger-Teton National Forest and Grand Teton National Park, has helped create a strong partnership that provides mutual support and consistent objectives in the area of fire management.

Jackson Fire/EMS used the grant money to purchase six Bendex-King radios for use during wildland fire incidents. Effective communication is a fundamental component of safe wildland fire operations and a key element of the Standard Firefighting Orders and Watchout Situations. The safety of both rural and cooperating federal firefighters is enhanced when local departments are equipped with radio equipment compatible to that of interagency partners.

The RFA Program was developed following the 2000 fire season, when Congress recognized that safe and effective protection in the wildland-urban interface requires close coordination among local, state, and federal firefighting resources. Additionally, Congress acknowledged that rural and volunteer fire departments responding to wildland fires needed to improve overall firefighter safety and enhance their wildland fire protection capabilities. Congress authorized the establishment of the RFA Program and appropriated \$10 million to the Department of the Interior to initiate the program. More information about the National Fire Plan and the Rural Fire Assistance Program can be found at www.fireplan.gov.

Jackson Fire/EMS plans to utilize the RFA grant program again this year to purchase personal protective equipment. The department operates seven stations in Jackson, Wilson, Hoback, Moran, and Alta, Wyoming.