

Rep. Bilirakis Announces First Responder Grant for Tarpon Springs Fire Rescue

PALM HARBOR, Fla. (Nov. 26) — U.S. Rep. Gus M. Bilirakis, member of the House Committee on Homeland Security and the Congressional Fire Services Caucus, announced today that Tarpon Springs Fire Rescue in Tarpon Springs, Fla., has been awarded \$114,000 for operations and safety from the Department of Homeland Security's FY 2007 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program.

The AFG Program awards one-year grants directly to fire departments to support the nation's firefighters in their service to their communities. The FY 2007 program provides approximately \$490 million in competitive grants to fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations.

"These awards are critical to enhancing our first responders' ability to improve the health and safety of our community, while bolstering our nation's overall preparedness," said Bilirakis, who signed a letter earlier this year opposing proposed cuts to first responder program. "I congratulate Tarpon Springs Fire Rescue for this achievement, and thank them for their hard work and service to our community."

Since 2004, with the Fiscal Year 2007 awards, AFG has provided a total of almost \$2.2 billion to first-responder organizations to purchase response equipment, personal protective equipment, and vehicles.

National Fire Facts in 2006

- There were 3,245 civilians that lost their lives as the result of fire.
- There were 16,400 civilian injuries that occurred as the result of fire.
- There were 106 firefighters killed while on duty.
- Fire killed more Americans than all natural disasters combined.
- 81 percent of all civilian fire deaths occurred in residences.
- 1.6 million fires were reported. Many others went unreported, causing additional injuries and property loss.
- Direct property loss due to fires was estimated at \$11.3 billion.
- An estimated 31,000 intentionally set structure fires resulted in 305 civilian deaths.
- Intentionally set structure fires resulted in an estimated \$755 million in property damage.

Source: National Fire Protection Association Fire Loss in the U.S. During 2006 and USFA's Firefighter Fatalities in the United States in 2006.