



WHITE BLUFF - RYE HILL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENT RECEIVES GRANT FROM FEMA

Fort Smith, AR ** The White Bluff – Rye Hill Volunteer Fire Department has received a grant of \$125,000 from the 2003 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The grant is a 90/10 matching grant with FEMA supplying \$112,500 and the department matching 10%, equaling \$12,500 for the total grant of \$125,000.

The award, part of \$750 million being distributed to over 7,000 fire departments in 2003, will be used by the White Bluff – Rye Hill Volunteer Fire department to purchase a new Initial Attack/Wildland Mini-Pumper, according to Dale Seiter, President of the White Bluff – Rye Hill Fire Department. This new pumper will be equipped with a C.A.F.S. (Compressed Air Foam System), allowing the department to more effectively maintain and suppress large fires with limited personnel. The addition of this type of mini-pumper will dramatically increase the firefighting capability and capacity of the fire department. “Dale Seiter and Brian O’Hare put a tremendous amount of work into the writing of the grant and the research of the truck that would best fit the needs of the community,” according to Fire Chief, Charles Mitchael.

“Firefighters play a key role in safeguarding America, and these fire grant funds provide first responders with the resources necessary to protect our communities from all hazards,” said Michael D. Brown, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response. “I join President Bush and Secretary Ridge in applauding our nation's firefighters and share their commitment to ensuring that first responders have the proper equipment, resources, training and support to fulfill their responsibilities.”

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program is administered by the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), a division of FEMA, and assists rural, urban and suburban fire departments throughout the United States. These funds increase the effectiveness of firefighting operations, firefighter health and safety programs, new fire apparatus, emergency medical service programs, and fire prevention and safety programs in local departments.

“In this nation, far too many individuals lose their lives or are injured by fire. Among these victims are firefighters, who provide emergency response services to their fellow residents,” said U.S. Fire Administrator R. David Paulison. “The nation’s firefighters and American homes are safer today through this important grant program.”

On March 1, 2003, FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. FEMA's continuing mission within the new department is to lead the effort to prepare the nation for all hazards and effectively manage federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates proactive mitigation activities, trains first responders, and manages Citizen Corps, the National Flood Insurance Program and the USFA.

For more information on the grant program or the USFA, contact Tom Olshanski, at (301) 447-1853 or Thomas.Olshanski@dhs.gov



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**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PRESS RELEASE,
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