

Contact: Jeffrey L. Seese, Fire Chief – Glen Moore Fire Company

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Telephone: 610-656-0842

E-Mail: [gmfcchief48@verizon.net](mailto:gmfchief48@verizon.net)

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SIX CHESTER COUNTY FIRE COMPANIES RECEIVE FEDERAL GRANT ASSISTANCE

\$430,000 grant will provide additional radios for firefighters

WALLACE – Congressmen Patrick Meehan and Jim Gerlach announced today that the Department of Homeland Security has issued grants to the Glen Moore Fire Company through its Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program to aid in the purchase of new radios and rescue equipment. The latest grant represents the largest grant awarded in Pennsylvania in Fiscal Year 2012.

The grant in the amount of \$430,000 is one of twelve grants award issued to Chester County fire stations in FY 2012 of the grant program. Glen Moore has received two of those, the first awarded last week to purchase new rescue tools.

In addition to Glen Moore, volunteer firefighters from Westwood, Modena, Cochranville, Wagontown, and Thorndale Fire Companies will share in the funding.

The new radios will go towards supplementing equipment that has been provided by the Chester County Commissioners for a new radio system. Currently, the County provides a radio for each piece of emergency apparatus and a certain allotment of portable radios to be carried by firefighters. With this award, each firefighter from the stations involved in this grant will be assigned a portable radio to ensure everyone can communicate.

“We have been very fortunate that our County Commissioners have continued to provide funding for our volunteer fire companies to purchase our communications equipment. This grant will simply expand upon what the County provides by increasing our abilities to communicate,” said Chief Jeffrey Seese of the Glen Moore Fire Company. “Over the past three years, this grant program has provided our firefighters with equipment to refill our air cylinders, new ‘Jaws of Life’ tools, hoses, and now radios. Without our elected congressional officials continuing to support the funding for this program, we would not have enough local funds to properly equip each and every firefighter with the equipment we need to do our jobs.”

“We don’t want to have to rely on our municipalities or the County for funding assistance when we can find other avenues,” said Westwood Fire Company Battalion Chief John Sly, who authored the grant application. “As volunteers, we are already faced with fundraising strains while maintaining our required training and service. We also recognize that the residents and townships are under the same financial constraints that we are, and by bringing Federal tax funding back to our local communities, we are able to take a burden off of our local officials,” said Sly, who assists many area fire departments each year with grant preparation.

The firefighters receiving the grant will have to provide a 10% match or \$43,000, in order to receive the award. “That breaks down to about \$7,000 per department on average,” said Seese. “Each radio costs approximately \$2,000, so it’s a great deal for us.” The grant will provide for 215 radios in total.

Representative Meehan, who chairs a sub-committee on the Homeland Security Committee which provides funding for this grant, issued a statement saying “Our first responders deserve the best when it comes to the equipment that helps them keep our communities safe. These radios will enhance the ability of our fire departments to communicate and coordinate during an emergency. As a member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, I’m pleased our local communities will be safer as a result of this grant program.”

“These funds will help improve the safety of Chester County communities and the emergency responders who do an outstanding job serving our residents and businesses every day,” Gerlach said. “An effective communications network and the right tools are critical during emergencies for both the people who need help and those providing help. I applaud all of the departments for working together to secure funding and enhance fire-protection services.”

Seese added, “Each year, more than 15,000 applications are submitted and more than 12,000 of them are not funded. With this grant award, it brings the total amount of Federal funding we have received in the last three years to over \$670,000, and John (Sly) has written all of our applications. We have been very fortunate.”

The Assistance to Firefighters Grants are administered by the Department of Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency in cooperation with the Department's United States Fire Administration. The grants are awarded on a competitive basis to the applicants that most closely address the program's priorities and demonstrate financial need.

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