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## **CARDIN, MIKULSKI, BARTLETT ANNOUNCE NEARLY \$1 MILLION FOR MORE FIREFIGHTERS, FIRE PREVENTION IN HAGERSTOWN**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senators Benjamin L. Cardin and Barbara A. Mikulski (both D-Md.), and Congressman Roscoe Bartlett (R-Md.) today announced the Hagerstown Fire Department has been awarded two fire grants totaling \$987,975 in federal funding through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFGP). Senator Mikulski teamed up with Senator Kit Bond (R-Mo.) to create the AFGP in 2000. As a member of the Senate Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator Mikulski continues to fight to increase federal funding for the AFGP each year. Senator Cardin is a member of the Senate Budget Committee, which each year sets priorities for funding to federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security. Congressman Bartlett is a member of the House Science and Technology Committee, which today is reauthorizing the AFGP with bipartisan legislation (H.R. 4847).

“First responders have always been on the front lines, keeping our families and our neighborhoods safe from harm. I thank these brave men and women for their continuing service and sense of duty to our community,” **said Senator Cardin.** “I am proud to support federal investment through local grants like this, which are essential to ensure our community heroes have the equipment and training they need to do their jobs safely and efficiently.”

“I know how important this funding is to Maryland firefighters and residents – often it’s the difference between life and death. First responders protect our homes and communities, and the federal government has a responsibility to protect them by providing them with the tools they need to do their jobs safer and smarter,” **said Senator Mikulski.** “Every day when our first responders report for duty, they don’t know what they will face. That’s why I fight every year for the equipment, training and staffing our protectors and communities deserve.”

“Firefighters give their time and energy and put their lives in harm’s way to protect us. A man-made or natural disaster in our Nation’s Capitol might call upon First Responders from the entire region. These grant programs are highly competitive,” **said Congressman Bartlett.** “Most of the fire companies in western Maryland are staffed by volunteer firefighters. I am really proud of the Hagerstown Fire Department for demonstrating how these federal grants will contribute to improving safety and our First Responder capabilities for residents, businesses and government installations in the Baltimore-Washington region.”

The Hagerstown Fire Department has been awarded \$948,825 in a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant to hire nine additional full-time firefighters. With this award, Hagerstown will be able to increase their staffing levels to two firefighters per engine. They also received \$39,150 in a Fire Prevention and Safety Award to initiate a public fire safety education initiative and distribute free smoke detectors to landlords. For more information, call Chief Gary Hawbaker at 301-790-2476.

Earlier this year, the Hagerstown Fire Department was awarded an AFGP award of \$314,190 to install diesel exhaust systems in seven stations, and acquire 65 portable radios. In 2003, they received \$15,246 to acquire arson software and computer equipment. In 2004, they received \$282,408 for turn out gear and Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) equipment, as well a Fire Prevention and Safety Grant in the amount of \$89,100. It was awarded \$200,628 in 2005 for more SCBA units and new hoses. Since 2001, Washington County Fire Departments & EMS units have been awarded more than \$7.4 million in AFGP funding.

Since 2001, Maryland fire departments and fire service organizations have received more than \$60 million through the AFGP.

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