

Project Description & Budget

The Crooks Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department is seeking funds for the purchase of twenty four complete sets of Bunker Gear and 1 washer / extractor.

The sets of PPE will include:

- Helmet
- Coat
- Pant
- Boot
- Gloves
- Hood

We are requesting \$40,277 to cover the above items. The federal share of our request would total \$38,264 with the departments share being \$2,013. We have carefully studied the needs of our community and fire department and found that this is our number one need at the current time. We have written a detailed set of specifications for the PPE to insure that it will meet our needs and NFPA standards.

Financial Need

Our annual budget of \$42,000 has to cover all of our expenses like heating the building and putting gas in the truck. Currently we budget \$5,000 per year for protective clothing. That money is chewed up very quickly repairing the gear we already have. We need to replace 24 of our 32 sets of PPE. These 24 sets that would be replaced are not suitable to wear in a structure fire. The money that we budget each year then could be applied toward maintaining that new gear. That would put us in very good shape for years to come.

Cost/Benefit

The Crooks Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department is located in Crooks, SD just five short miles from Sioux Falls, the largest metro area in South Dakota. Our department has set many budgetary goals and programs over the last ten years to keep us up on most of our needs. There are some areas that we simply don't have the funds to take care of.

The need for these items is simple. Our department has gone to great lengths to train all of our firefighters for all fire ground activities. We have an active roster of 28 firefighters and an additional 5 volunteers that are only EMT's. We live in a town that is one of the fastest growing communities in our state. In 2001 our population was 821. Now our population is over 1100. That is almost a 30% increase in population in only 4 years. With the increase of people moving in to our town, there has also been an upswing in new member recruiting. In the past 18 months we have added 9 new firefighters. All of these new members have completed or are in Certified Firefighter training. We are proud to say that all of our members are accredited firefighters, EMT's or both. The problem with the growth that our area has experienced is that our budget has not grown with it. The budget we have for 2006 is the same as it was for 2001. Our state has passed a tax freeze so we are not able to increase our funding. We are asking

for \$40,277 to replace our existing PPE so that we are able to outfit our 32 qualified firefighters with gear that will allow them to do all of the things that they are trained to do.

Right now we have 8 sets of PPE that are suitable for all things that a firefighter would need to do. The remaining firefighters are outfitted with PPE that is old, torn and tattered or none at all. We had more sets but several were ruined in a chemical spill call late last year. That event alone cost us parts of 10 sets of PPE. What we have done to deal with the problem is that the 8 good sets have been given to our most reliable firefighters that may have the assignment of entering a burning structure. The remaining crew members are outfitted with the best that we have left. There are several problems with this way of doing things. Crew safety is always number 1 and therefore, we have many members that can't do all of the things that they are trained to do because they do not have reliable gear. While our request for money may seem small, this is the only way that we would be able to get all of our firefighters properly equipped in short order. The washer / extractor that we are requesting would help us maintain that PPE in its best possible condition for years to come.

Statement of Effect

Our fire department has become very adapt at making due with what we have. We have 3 mechanics that are on the department that handle all of our vehicle maintenance. We do not use any of our annual income for benefits or salaries of any kind. We are not seeking to update to the most expensive gear on the market or the fanciest washer. We are responsible people and we have gotten bids on the most reasonable equipment that we could find.

This opportunity for funding could be a great benefit to the Crooks Volunteer Fire Department and the citizens we protect. Not only will this project help the 2,500 people in our first response district, it will also allow us to do more with our mutual aid departments. We have automatic aid agreements with the other 13 volunteer and 1 career fire departments in our county. In all, we provide automatic aid approximately 18 times per year. We would be able to have more participation with those departments if we had fully functioning gear. We thank you for the opportunity to apply for this vital and needed equipment that we would not be able to purchase otherwise. We have looked carefully and evaluated all of the needs within our department and have placed the requested PPE as the one purchase that would make the most important difference in our ability to provide highly effective emergency services, maintain safety of our personnel and would be the most beneficial to the most people.