

The Crooks Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department is located in Crooks, SD just a few short miles from Sioux Falls, the largest metro area in South Dakota. As with any rural departments, our needs are great. 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 simply don't have the funds to take care of.

We are requesting four complete sets of Bunker Gear and four SCBA's. 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, and most recently Rapid Intervention tactics. Our current outfitting does not provide enough protection to have in place a RIT team on our own scenes. We can only provide a RIT team if we are called on for mutual aid. Our fire department has a contract with five area departments to provide equipment and manpower in any situation where they need it. If we have a structure fire in our territory, we would be forced to wait until more personnel from another department showed up for us to have the safety and security of a RIT team. One of the greatest things about our department is the number of our personnel that respond to our calls. Our roster lists 24 active members and of those 24 we routinely have 15 or more on a scene. As you can see we have the trained personnel to provide a RIT team, we just lack the equipment to outfit them. The four sets of SCBA and PPE would be to add enough geared up personal to provide us with a RIT team. We believe that this is an essential link to providing the exceptional service to our territory that our citizens deserve.

To enhance the service that we provide, we are requesting a complete set of hydraulic rescue tools. Our territory is very unique in that we cover two separate interstate hi-ways. In total we cover over 20 miles of the busiest interstate area in South Dakota. On average we have 38 calls a year involving injury accidents and car fires on the interstate. At this time we have a cordless rechargeable saws-all that is our primary extrication tool. We have had to cut parts of 19 cars apart in the past year. The shortcoming of our current tools is obvious. We only can extricate as long as the batteries last. When they are dead, we have to come up with another plan. While we have been able to manage thus far, it would be a significant improvement if we had the larger rescue tools. This proposal will not only help our department and the citizens that we serve, but will also be a great help to the five departments that we have an automatic aid agreement with. In all, our services would be available to over 30,000 people either directly in our territory, or within the territories that we aid.

Unfortunately, in our territory last year we experienced several severe storms. In one night we recorded 7 tornadoes. Power for most of our town was out for three days as crews worked around the clock to get us going again. For the first thirty-six hours of the ordeal, there was not a single building in town that had electricity. No one had a generator at all. While we all consider ourselves extremely lucky that we came through that night with no significant injuries, we did learn a valuable lesson. We need a place in town that can be a safe haven when things like that happen. That is why we are proposing a generator. With that simple piece of equipment, we can provide a warm place for people to come when this type of thing happens again. The unit that we are pursuing is not only big enough to run the electricity for our station, but it is also compact enough to remain portable in case we need to use it on a specific fire scene.

In the city of Crooks, we are very excited about the growth that has been going on over the last several years. In the past five years alone, our population has grown from 811 to 1006. The growth it is going to continue over the next several years as well. Our population is a diverse one, but seems to be more middle aged than anything. One of the growing concerns that we have is that with that many people in that 40 to 55 age bracket, we are seeing an increase in the occurrence of cardiac emergencies. We are requesting a new AED to replace the one that we currently have in service. The one we have is over fifteen years old, and we can not even order patches for it anymore. We have been told at our latest yearly maintenance check that if there were anything to go wrong with it, there would be no fix. While an AED is an extremely valuable piece of equipment, it is one that seems to get all too much use. We would not be able to serve our citizens to the level that they expect without the acquisition of a new AED.

Another concern our fire department has deals directly with confidentiality. It has become more and more of a priority to keep the information from our calls in the strictest of confidence. While we can attempt to control the amount of information that our firefighters and EMS personnel share, one thing that we would like to safeguard is our reporting system. Currently we do report all of our calls to NIFRS and to the state of South Dakota. We have firehouse software that allows us to easily get the information out, what we don't have is a computer of our own. The system that we use now is the current secretary takes the software home and loads it on their personal computer and files our reports. We have not had a problem in the past with this system, but that becomes a very large responsibility for the person elected as our secretary. It would be a lot safer if that information could all be stored on a computer owned by the fire department and maintained for the purpose of getting our reports done.

Lastly, the Crooks Volunteer department wants to begin a countywide training program. Our county, Minnehaha, has the largest population in the state of South Dakota. We have approximately 380 volunteers serving in fourteen different departments throughout our county, which does not include the Sioux Falls fire department, as they are a full time paid department. Our proposal is to use the facilities that we have within our community and the personnel in our department to start a county wide training program. The community of Crooks has recently built a very nice community center that can seat up to 300 people. We have the blessing of our city council to hold any type of training programs there that we wish with no fees for building rental. The Crooks fire department is also blessed to be the only department in our county with 3 state certified instructors. The goal of these instructors is to not only provide continuous training to the members of the Crooks fire department but also to the members of all departments in our county. The state of South Dakota fire marshals office offers four certified courses at this time. The three certified instructors on the Crooks department would be able to use the requested training books and instructor material to provide the certified training that is already available from our state. We would be able to fully utilize our equipment and facility, for our fire fighters, and also for those other 350 plus firefighters in our county. Our goal is to first certify all of our own members in Fire Fighter I and II and then move on to the Driver / Operator class, the Rescue Technician class and the Wild Land Fire Fighter class. We would also make that material available to the other certified instructors in the county to use within their departments. For those departments that don't have a certified instructor, we already have agreements in place so that one of our instructors will teach a class in those departments.

Overall the potential cost of our proposal when divided out among the citizens and fire fighters it will benefit is approximately \$2.24. The potential impact of our proposition is tremendous. We will positively impact the 2100 citizens in our direct coverage area, the 380 plus firefighters in our county, and also over thirty thousand of citizens in our automatic aid area.