



Arlington Fire District

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"Safeguarding Our Community"

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Local Fire Departments Receive NYS Grants

The NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES) has announced \$155,000 in local grants to promote the continued development of regional technical rescue teams in the Poughkeepsie area. Grants have been awarded to the City of Poughkeepsie FD and the Arlington Fire District. The competitive grant program, administered through the Office of Fire Prevention & Control, supports the efforts of local agencies to develop capabilities in the specialized field of technical rescue. In both grants, the City of Poughkeepsie FD, the Arlington Fire District and LaGrange Fire District will work jointly in the areas of Trench Rescue and Rope Rescue. In the last 3 years, these departments have received more than \$680,000 in NYS Technical Rescue grants.

According to Arlington Chief Tory Gallante, "These grants allow us to continue a program that we initiated several years ago – by pooling manpower and other resources, we are able to provide highly specialized, technical rescue capabilities. By working jointly with Poughkeepsie and LaGrange, we are able to fill a void for specialized response teams that simply don't exist anywhere else in our region. It makes much more sense to work cooperatively with our neighbors to form regional teams, than to try and do this type of work alone. This regional team approach will allow the 3 departments to offer a much higher level of service to the community."

"The grants provide 100% of the funding necessary for both equipment purchases and training in these specialized fields, including such things as social security and pension costs", according to Captain William Steenbergh, the author of the grant applications. "Through this program we have been able to establish teams in Swiftwater, Confined Space, Structural Collapse, Trench and Rope Rescue. Team development and training is on-going in all of these areas."

"Technical rescue operations present extreme and unique challenges for rescuers," Said City of Poughkeepsie Mayor John Tkazyik. "Specialized training is required for our firefighters to be able to safely and effectively operate under the most difficult of circumstances. Without this type of grant program, we would likely not be able to afford this training. We are proud to be partnering with Arlington and LaGrange to provide this important rescue service."

"The goal of this grant program is to have sufficient equipment and trained responders on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week between the 3 agencies to be able to immediately respond to these emergencies, when they occur. Without this regional team approach, rescue teams would have to be called in from other parts of the state for these situations, resulting in a delay of several hours or more. In many situations that delay could result in serious injury or death to the victims," Chief Gallante added.