

# FAYETTE COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENTS RECEIVING ONE MILLION DOLLARS IN FEMA GRANTS

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FAYETTE COUNTY, WV (WOAY) - Fayette County Fire Departments are receiving one million dollars in essential fire equipment thanks to the award of a FEMA grant.

Fayette County Fire Departments came together and applied for a FEMA regional grant to replace their Self-Contained Breathing Apparatuses (SCBAs). The following equipment has been received: Complete SCBA (also known as an air pack) which includes the harness, bottle, spare bottle, face piece and voice amplifier. There was a total of 250 air packs received and 30 total Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) packs.

This equipment was direly needed to replace the aged SCBAs throughout the county. As a matter of fact, the majority of SCBAs within Fayette County were to be taken out of service this year because of their age as directed by National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) guidelines. Most SCBAs are reaching their 15-year limit this year. Since the overwhelming majority of fire departments across the country are volunteer departments and funding is extremely limited, being the recipient of such a needed grant is truly a life saver!

The regional grant application covered 13 departments located in Fayette County. Fayette County



Firefighters cover 384 square miles, protecting a permanent population of 33,910 citizens. Due to tourism they have a seasonal population increase of 17,700 citizens. Fayette County Fire Departments have a total of 263 firefighters that respond from 14 fire stations. They provide fire suppression, EMS, hazmat, rescue and fire prevention services to their districts. On average, they respond to 885 emergency calls a year.

The goal of this project was to increase the safety of our firefighters by providing the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) for their jobs. Our Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) require that an SCBA be worn at any time there is a possibility of entering a hazardous environment. Our departments respond to an average of 163 structure fires each year. These SCBAs will be used at least once every other day for a structure fire. However, our SCBA usage is not limited just to structure fires. We utilize SCBA during hazmat incidents, odor investigations, smoke investigations, fire alarms and any incident that can be potentially hazardous.

SCBAs are an integral part of our fire departments' operations and a critical piece of personal protective equipment. We anticipate the purchased SCBAs will be used 11,000 times on incidents over their 15-year life expectancy. This breaks down to an average cost of \$85 per call to equip an entire region with SCBAs. When calculating the cost of the federal investment based on population, the cost breaks down to less than \$1.90 a year for each citizen that we serve.

The focus to apply as a region for SCBA was to maximize federal dollars and utilize the cost savings so that Assistance to Firefighters Grant awards would be available to other well deserving fire departments.

The receipt of this equipment will ensure: - Standardization of all SCBAs in the region - Greater interoperability with all neighboring departments - An increase of properly equipped personnel to support NFPA 1720 - NFPA 1981 compliance - Increased SCBAs to do live fire training - Support firefighter life safety initiatives - Ensuring a proper seal with the correct size mask - All SCBA cylinders in the region will be 4,500 psi The SCBAs will be distributed to all fire departments today and tomorrow.