

Firefighting Equipment - Narrative

* **Section # 1** Project Description: In the space provided below include clear and concise details regarding your organization's project's description and budget. This includes providing local statistics to justify the needs of your department and a detailed plan for how your department will implement the proposed project. Further, please describe what you are requesting funding for including budget descriptions of the major budget items, i.e., personnel, equipment, contracts, etc.? *3000 characters

We request funding for four (4) HIGH FUNDING PRIORITY projects. Our requests represent first-time purchases and obsolete- or broken-equipment replacement. They directly affect first responder safety and will strategically advance our mission to provide fire and emergency-medical services within our boundaries using available resources. They also enhance national capabilities.

Project 1: Narrowband Repeater (\$20,800)

Our 1970's repeater needs replacing by January 1, 2013, per FCC notice, or we risk loss of license. Our existing communications system, centrally located on Ellis Mountain (Missoula Co.), fails regularly, jeopardizing seamless communications across a remote and rugged terrain with a history of frequent Type I emergencies. We've researched and selected a P25-compliant model that meets criteria laid out by the DHS and state-interoperability plans. Our best cost is \$20,800 for a GTR8000 Base Radio and all associated narrowband-frequency components and its installation. The supplier works with many of our regional partners, which offers us another layer of interoperability/compatibility.

Project 2: New Vehicle Exhaust Extractor (\$21,560)

Station #8 in Alberton (Mineral Co.) requires a vehicle-exhaust-extraction system to comply with NFPA/OSHA standards for the health and safety of resident firefighters. The effects of diesel exhaust on firefighters and equipment, and the potential for cross-contamination of the public, is well documented. We house two (2) apparatus, seven (7) firefighters, and the town's food bank in this strategic station. The cost of purchasing and installing a complete system is \$21,560, or \$10,780 per drop.

Project 3: Replacement Exhaust Extractors (\$27,180)

We need to retrofit exhaust-extraction systems at four (4) stations (both counties). Our pneumatically controlled system is obsolete. Made by a defunct German company, air plumbing/coupling parts break easily and are difficult/prohibitively costly to obtain. Fabrication is no longer working. We've researched/selected a new magnetic system made by a US company with a good track record. Retrofit cost (\$2,265 per drop) is based on re-using existing equipment, where possible. We have 12 drops in these four stations for an estimated cost of \$27,180.

Project 4: Escape Door & Supplies (\$10,000)

Station #7, at the I-90/Hwy 93 junction (Missoula Co.), has second-floor-sleeping quarters without NFPA/OSHA-approved access/egress. Built in 1999, before building codes existed, this station is key to resource-optimization plans. Installation of an emergency escape door with fabricated metal landing, stairs, and safety railings will directly affect first responder safety. Based on multiple bids, the project will cost nearly \$12,000 (\$1,500 for door/materials, \$1,000 for concrete work, and \$10,000 for fabrication/installation). We anticipate doing as much as we can with in-house donations and labor. This project does not increase the building footprint.

* **Section # 2** Cost/Benefit: In the space provided below please explain, as clearly as possible, what will be the benefits your department or your community will realize if the project described is

funded (i.e. anticipated savings and/or efficiencies)? Is there a high benefit for the cost incurred? Are the costs reasonable? Provide justification for the budget items relating to the cost of the requested items. *3000 characters

This request is the best-possible and lowest-cost solution to our urgent need for Safety and Operations equipment. Unable to fund these projects, we believe this equipment directly affects the safety of firefighters and benefits communities.

Project 1: Narrowband Repeater

First is a narrowband repeater that offers us an advanced communications tool prioritized by the DHS and the state. Without funding assistance, our publics could be penalized for our inability to finance such a large budget item. Our backcountry repeater is 30+ years old, unreliable, costly to maintain, and mandated for narrowband conversion by 2013. We've researched the best-cost P25/SCIP-compliant system. We cannot afford it without AFG funds. With them, we can contribute to national goals that improve life-and-property protection capabilities, communications, and first responder safety in our in vulnerable, strategic mountainous terrain. Without funding, we face dire consequences.

Project 2: New Vehicle Exhaust Extractor

We need more staffing in our active west end. Station #8 in Alberton offers housing for seven firefighters. Per 2010 grant goals, we've invested in new resident recruits, their equipment and training. We've spent \$160,000 remodeling this station, used by the community as a food bank storage and dispersal site. A vehicle exhaust-extraction system is justified. Best cost, including system installation for two bays (drop)s. NFPA/OSHA compliant. Without funding, we expose seven (7) on-duty firefighters to known carcinogens, violating countless health and safety codes and standards and our # 1 mission.

Project 3: Replacement Exhaust Extractors

With our standard die-hard approach, we've kept our station extraction systems working, but as other agencies have found locally: The problem of fragile aluminum couplings and high-cost / impossible-to-find valves for obsolete equipment must be solved. We must make our system truly 100% sole source capture to directly affect firefighter/public safety. And in a time of reduced revenue and rising fuel/maintenance costs, it makes sense to eliminate an ongoing drain on our budget. We could not accomplish this retrofit in the foreseeable future without assistance.

Project 4: Escape Door & Supplies

The I-90/Hwy 93 junction accounts for a significant percent of our emergency calls. At this writing, its commercial infrastructure is doubling. Restaurant, stores, and fuel facilities are near open. Our Station #7 is strategic, but its second floor living quarters violate standards and codes. Without funding, we must continue to compromise firefighter safety. We cannot lose the 24/7 capability of this station. We need a permanent, safe, and low-maintenance escape door. Bids exceed \$10,000 for two reasons: cost of a quality fabricated metal structure and breaching a thick concrete wall. If this grant is awarded, we will budget, solicit donations, and use in-house labor to meet any shortfall in funding.

* **Section # 3** Statement of Effect: How would this award affect the daily operations of your department (i.e., describe how frequently the equipment will be used or what the benefits will provide the personnel in your department)? How would this award affect your department's ability to protect lives and property in your community? *3000 characters

The consequences of not winning this grant are daunting. We risk the safety of our first responders and limit our security and effectiveness. We compromise interoperability and national capabilities. With funding, we advance our mission to gain parity between risks and safe operations with sufficient resources.

Project 1: Narrowband Repeater

Converting our repeater to narrowband by 2013 has many benefits: We meet our federal mandate and improve spectrum use, congestion, and channel availability for land-mobile radio systems. Without funding, our operations could suffer harmful interference, monetary forfeitures, or license revocation. Our firefighters have narrowband hand-held radios. If we purchase a new P25/SCIP-compliant, fixed-site repeater, we solve our mandated interoperability issues. We become 100% compliant with the FCC and all state agencies. We also improve first responder safety and enhance national abilities.

Project 2: New Vehicle Exhaust Extractor

Exposing firefighters, PPE, medical equipment, and stored public food supplies to engine exhaust, as we do at Station 8, is unacceptable. Exhaust contains more than 100 chemical hazardous components. When combined, they create ten times more cancer-causing compounds. NIOSH recommends that occupational exposure be limited to the lowest feasible concentration (OSHA classification 29 CFR 1910.103). We cannot afford to purchase and install a new exhaust system in this strategic station, but we have prioritized it for safety reasons.

Project 3: Replacement Exhaust Extractors

NIOSH/OSHA recommends that we treat diesel exhaust as a human carcinogen and limit occupational exposure to the lowest feasible concentration. Our District-wide system (4 stations) breaks often and has become expensive, obsolete, and potentially dangerous. Recent studies show that even short-term exposure has adverse health effects, including death. Sterilized medical equipment, once exposed, creates a pathway for cross-contamination to the public. Without a retrofitted system, we worry about the coming winter and each call where a truck idles inside an apparatus bay -- its exhaust darkening walls, settling on firefighter meals and clothing, and negatively affecting the health of those who breathe it. Our valiant volunteers deserve better.

Project 4: Escape Door & Supplies

We are not NFPA/OSHA code-compliant without an access/egress door for the second-floor living quarters at Station 7. Strategic to our commercial/industrial area (with its two hotels and three truck stops next to deadly Highway 93), the station is located near Montana Rail Link's rail line. This station provides mutual aid to tribal lands, the airport, and the Conoco Refinery. Optimum staffing conditions here reduces safety risks to first responders, enhances our resource capabilities, and serves a range of local, state and national goals.

These requests are justified and will have positive outcomes for us & DSH/FEMA.

* **Section # 4** In the space provided below include details regarding your organization's request not covered in any other section. *3000 characters

Just a bit more information about Project 3: Exhaust Extractor Replacement / Retrofit

Every one of the four stations have broken exhaust extractors drops. We worry about firefighter safety and the reality that one day soon we will have a system-wide failure. We have drops that are wholly ineffective, that do not work, and have been fabricated to the point of obsolescence. We can no longer fabricate parts for these drops. We cannot find manufactured parts. So these drops are obsolete. When one of four drops is broken, our firefighters are being exposed to 25% more exhaust. When other drops go down, they are leaking exhaust while the parts are being fabricated. This is not acceptable.

In closing, the retrofit extractors and the other Safety and Operations equipment we've requested are justified high-priority projects that will increase our first responder safety, enhance our national security capabilities, and reinforce the professionalism and importance of our firefighters in a fire district, which may be small in size (operationally speaking), but has certainly had more than its fair share of very complex, high-dollar-value emergencies. With federal assistance and AFG, we can ensure future incidents will be handled safely and successfully. On behalf of our

firefighters, board of trustees, and citizens, we thank you.