



Congressman Tim Bishop

FIRST DISTRICT -- NEW YORK

NEWS RELEASE

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**CONTACT: JON SCHNEIDER
PHONE: (631) 696-6500**

SUFFOLK GETS \$1.16 MILLION GRANT FOR RECRUITING AND RETAINING FIREFIGHTERS

PHOTO AVAILABLE: A high resolution photo of the press conference to announce the grant with LI politicians and members of the country fire department can be downloaded here:

http://www.flickr.com/photo_zoom.gne?id=663321010&size=o

Hauppauge, NY – Today Congressman Tim Bishop (D-Southampton) was joined by Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy and other Long Island politicians to announce that Suffolk County is the recipient of a \$1.16 million federal grant to be used for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.

“I congratulate the Suffolk County Department of Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Service for receiving this significant grant,” said Congressman Bishop. “The Department truly deserves it for the hard work they put in for our community. It is very important to strengthen the recruitment and retention rates of fire and emergency personnel for the safety of our community.”

The grant award under the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program and administered by the Office of Homeland Security covers a two-year period and will be used to expand educational initiatives aimed at recruiting volunteers to service and to offer incentives to keep volunteers in active duty.

“This Homeland Security grant for more than one million dollars is a recognition of Suffolk County’s preeminent leadership role among our nation’s first responders,” said Congressman Peter King (R-Seaford), Ranking Member of the Homeland Security Committee.

“Long Island firefighters are a vital component of our region’s first response team and contribute greatly to our homeland security,” said Congressman Israel (D-Huntington), a member of the House Appropriations Committee which passed a \$673 million increase in funds for state and local homeland security grant programs. “I’m pleased to work with Congressman Bishop and County Executive Levy to ensure that our firehouses are fully staffed and supported. We can’t shortchange our brave volunteers who give up so much to protect us.”

Levy, who as a county legislator sponsored the county’s first ever recruitment effort, praised the work of our federal representatives in helping to deliver this grant.

Grant funds will be used, in part, to enhance the county’s marketing/recruitment efforts and to

expand the county's existing SERVES initiative (Suffolk Educational program for Recruitment in the Volunteer Services), to offer all volunteer firefighters an opportunity to earn an Associates Degree at Suffolk County Community College at no cost.

“This is a much-needed boost to our efforts to expand our base of volunteers and to offer some more incentives to the men and women already in service,” said County Executive Levy. “The costs associated with conversion to a paid fire service in this county would be astronomical and too much for our already beleaguered taxpayers to bear. We must do everything in our power to bolster our volunteer ranks, and this grant will go a long way in helping us do just that.

“I want to congratulate the good work of our FRES Commissioner and his staff in putting together a winning application for these funds, and for the help of our federal representatives in delivering these monies to Suffolk County,” Levy said.

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