

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

To: News Media, Community Leaders, and Bamberg County Citizens

From: Bamberg County Administration

Date: August 22, 2023

Re: Bamberg County Awarded Federal Grant for Fire Department

Bamberg, South Carolina (August 2023) -- Last month, Bamberg County was approved for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for \$660,714.76. The funding will be used to purchase updated Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for eight of Bamberg County's fire departments; the city of Bamberg was awarded a separate grant for its fire department.

According to FEMA, "The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program's objective is to provide funding directly to fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations to protect the health and safety of the public and firefighting personnel against fire and fire-related hazards." To qualify for this grant, the federal government requires a contribution "of non-Federal funds equal to or greater than 5.00% of the Federal funds awarded or \$33,035.74 for a total approved budget of "693,750.50."

Grant funds will be used to purchase the following PPE items for Bamberg County fire departments:

- 25 Self-contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) individual face pieces (\$7,770.50)
- 74 SCBA units that include a harness/backpack, face piece, and two 45-minute capacity cylinders (\$685,980.00)

Bamberg County Fire Coordinator Paul Eubanks explained, "Bamberg County currently has eight fire departments and 109 active firefighters, the majority of whom are volunteers, who, due to the rural nature of the county and communities, routinely work together and support one another in responding to calls across the county." Eubanks stressed the necessity of having "uniformly compatible equipment across the eight departments to ensure their cooperative efforts are as safe and efficient as possible." As a result of this grant, Bamberg County fire departments "will have the same make and age of equipment going forward." Mr. Eubanks acknowledged and thanked expert grant writer Phyllis Overstreet for securing the funds.

Bamberg County Council Chairman Dr. Jonathan Goodman described the grant as a "long overdue Godsend for Bamberg County firefighters that will make their jobs much safer." Goodman also acknowledged how fortunate the County is to have "heroes who willingly put their own lives at risk to serve the community at large."

County Councilman Spencer Donaldson, who is a firefighter for the city of Denmark, applauded the entire Bamberg County Council and Fire Coordinator Paul Eubanks for "working together to secure this much-needed funding to help all Bamberg County firefighters do what they love doing, which is to protect the community to the best of their ability."

County Administrator Joey Preston said, "Bamberg County has been working on the Assistance to Firefighters Grant for years," it was "finally secured primarily because of Bamberg County's persistence." Preston thanked the United States Department of Homeland Security for "understanding the

importance of rural fire departments and helping Bamberg County firefighters protect our citizens with the safest, most efficient equipment possible.”

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For more information on this press release, email info@bambergcounty.sc.gov.