

LARSON ANNOUNCES \$193,724 GRANT FOR UPDATED FIRE EQUIPMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 19, 2005

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EAST GRANBY – Congressman John B. Larson visited East Granby Monday to announce the volunteer fire department's receipt of a \$193,724 grant for improved safety equipment from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The funding was provided by the department's 2005 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program through the department's Office of Domestic Preparedness. For 2005, the program directed \$650 million to fire departments throughout the country.

Larson contacted the department's Office of Domestic Preparedness on the volunteer fire department's behalf.

“Our communities depend upon our police and firefighters who place themselves in danger to keep us safe,”

Larson said. “For their safety, as well as the residents who rely on them in an emergency, they need the best protection available. This grant will allow the dedicated volunteers of East Granby Fire Department to obtain reliable, up-to-date equipment that would otherwise be difficult for an all-volunteer service to afford.”

The department, which is seeing a resurgence in membership, will use the funds to purchase new and better protective equipment such as its first-ever rapid intervention pack designed for extricating a trapped firefighter or victim. Other gear that the grant will furnish includes lighter air bottles (made of fiberglass which is half the 30 pounds of the old steel ones, self-contained breathing apparatus, helmets and visors, face masks, extrication gloves, automatic alarms worn by firefighters at the scene and rescue gear.

“The real reason for this grant is pure safety,” said firefighter Ted Eisch, who wrote the funding request.

After a decline in membership, which had dipped to around 20 individuals about six years ago, the department has been rebuilding. It now has between 40 and 45 volunteers. Many of the new members are second-and-third generation firefighters. Fire Chief Donald Zessin also credits the growth to its new cadet program.

The increase has left the department, in some cases, with a shortage of equipment while much of that on hand is old and outdated, said firefighter Troy Wolf. Some of the gear that will be replaced is more than 10 years old, firefighters said.

For more information, contact firefighter Ted Eisch at (860) 913-9800; Fire Chief Donald Zessin at

FireDept@egtownhall.com or (860) 653-2576; or First Selectman David Kilbon, who can also be reached at (860) 653-2576.

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