

COLLEGE PARK, MD – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) today presented the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute (MFRI) with \$825,000 in federal funds to conduct research and development of interoperable firefighter accountability location and monitoring devices, and incorporate them into a system applicable to emergencies.

“The work done by MFRI with this federal grant will ultimately save the lives of firefighters, allow them to better perform their jobs, and make each and every one of us safer,” Hoyer said. “MFRI has long been in the business of protecting our firefighters, and this grant will help them address the very real issue of locating and monitoring the condition of firefighters at the scene of a blaze.”

The need for situational awareness of firefighter physiological, environmental, and real time location received top priority at the most recent National Fallen Firefighters Foundations Research Agenda Symposium held in Emmitsburg in June of 2005.

“This funding is made possible by the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program, which most people know as a tool to help fire departments buy new trucks, turnout gear, breathing apparatus, and other crucial equipment,” Hoyer said. “But this program also provides funds for firefighter safety research, and based upon the explanation of this specific program, I cannot think of a more appropriate way to improve the safety of our firefighters.”

The Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute at the University of Maryland is the State's comprehensive training and education system for emergency services. The Institute plans, researches, develops, and delivers quality programs to enhance the ability of emergency service providers to protect life, the environment, and property.

“Firefighters risk their lives every day when protecting us, our homes, and our families,” Hoyer said. “The very least we can do is provide them every resource available to ensure they go home safely to their families at the end of each day.”

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