

WASHINGTON - Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) announced today that the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute (MFRI) of the University of Maryland has been awarded \$355,860 in federal grant funds through the 2007 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program. The funding will support the ongoing development of the TRX Sentinel, a tracking system for first responders in GPS- denied environments.

Accurately tracking first responders during an emergency mission is critical to ensuring the safety of personnel and rescue victims and providing for efficient and timely rescue. The TRX Sentinel locator and tracking system is a groundbreaking new technology under development to advance firefighter tracking systems to the next level by taking the concept of a global positioning system (GPS) and bringing it indoors. The Assistance to Firefighters Grant will contribute to the ongoing development of the Sentinel technology.

“For more than 70 years, the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute has served the state with extensive training for emergency services,” **said Congressman Hoyer**. “Firefighters risk their lives to save others, and we must ensure they have access to the most accurate technology. I am pleased that funds from the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program will aid MFRI in the development of a firefighter location and tracking system, an exciting new technology that has the potential to save the lives of firefighters and the citizens they are tasked with protecting.”

Grant funds made available through the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program is awarded to fire departments and EMS organizations across the nation to enhance their response capabilities and to more effectively protect the health and safety of the public and emergency response personnel. Since 2001, AFG has provided more than \$50 million in assistance to first-responder organizations in Maryland for the purchase of personnel protective gear and response equipment and vehicles.

Steven Edwards, Director of the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute, stated, “This grant from the AFG Program will allow this critical project regarding firefighter safety to move forward with field tests and the use of the system by firefighters to complete the development work.”

As co-chair of the Congressional Fire Caucus, Rep. Hoyer took a lead role in helping establish

Hoyer Announces \$355,860 Federal Grant for Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute

September 14, 2008

the AFG Program and has been an annual leader in fighting against attempts to cut funding for the program in the federal budget. After the Bush Administration proposed a 55 percent cut to the AFG program for FY 2008, the House restored funding to \$570 million. The House also restored funding for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Firefighters (SAFER) Program, which helps fire departments that are currently operating short of staff to train, hire and retain career and volunteer firefighters. Once again this year, President Bush has proposed deep cuts to AFG and the elimination of the SAFER.

"It is critical that our firefighters and first responders are provided all available resources to ensure their safety and enhance their ability to protect our communities from harm. I will continue to fully support these programs in order to meet the needs of our nation's fire fighters," **concluded Hoyer.**

###