

Project Description / Budget Detail:

The Black River Falls Fire Department (BRFFD) is a combination department with a full time Fire Chief and 31 volunteer members. Black River Falls, Wisconsin is located in the west central part of the state, two hours north of Madison, Wisconsin on I-94. The Department's fire district is 300 square miles with a year round population of an estimated 10,776. This number increases greatly in the summer months to estimates of 50,000 people in the area due to tourism.

The Department membership has discussed their needs. Our risk assessment has identified self contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) fill stations as the top priority for 2008. BRFFD is requesting \$9,000 under the Operations and Firefighter Safety section of the AFG to purchase 2 SCBA class 2 containment fill stations. A single fill station would be placed on our Heavy Rescue unit (Squad 1) which has an on board cascade system. Squad 1 responds to structure fires within the fire district and also all hazmat incidents. The department is the county's Level B Hazmat Team. Squad 1 also responds to mutual aid fires to provide breathing air and man power at structure fires. The department has signed mutual aid agreements with all seven of the counties fire departments. The double fill station is for in the fire station where the department's compressor and a second cascade system / fill station is located. The department fills SCBA bottles for a number of area departments as they do not have a compressor in their department(s). We also fill SCBA cylinders for the local state prison, county jail and technical college. The department's current SCBA fill stations on Squad 1 and in the fire station are not NFPA 1901 compliant. The current fill stations consist of well casing pipe that the SCBA cylinder is placed in while filling. The cylinder is not fully enclosed during the filling process. Should we have a cylinder failure in the station or on Squad 1 there is going to be a FF seriously hurt and very likely killed in the incident! The federal share of our request would be \$8,550 and the Departments share would be \$450. All specifications will ensure that the fill stations are NFPA 1901 standard compliant.

The city of BRF serves as the county seat for Jackson County, and the BRFFD has entered into contracts with, the Townships of Brockway, Komensky, Albion, Adams, Irving, Manchester, Alma, and Millston to provide primary fire protection as well as primary rescue/recovery operations. Furthermore, the BRFFD has entered into mutual aid agreements with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and all 6 fire departments in Jackson County to provide mutual aid upon their request. It should be understood that with the exception of the WDNR, all of these fire departments are rural and all-volunteer.

The department meets or exceeds the minimum state requirement for FF training based on NFPA 1001 as set fourth in WI Administrative Code Comm. 30.08 (1) Employment standards. BRFFD as been the host department for several years for the WI mandated firefighter training which is taught by our local technical college.

Financial Need

The Department has endured major budget cuts the last 4 years due to the shared revenue cuts by the State of Wisconsin and not allowing tax's to be increased. 58% of the Department's budget is spent on the full time employee wage / benefits, FF pay per call and insurance for the building, vehicles and workers compensation. The remaining 42% of the budget is quickly used up on equipment maintenance, training and the ever rising price of gas and fuel. The SCBA fill stations have been placed in the department's budget the last 2 years and have been the first item cut from the budget by the city each year. Without this grant award there is no way the Department can purchase the NFPA compliant fill stations. The Department is also trying to work towards the 2013 Federal Communication Commission (FCC) narrow band requirement. This means replacing the Departments pagers, mobile radios, portable radios and repeaters. There just is not enough money to go around and keep the Department running, meet new requirements, and keep the FF's safe! Our share of \$450 should we be awarded this grant may seem very small to you but, to us this is a huge amount of money and is all we can afford in this difficult financial times.

41% of the land located in the BRFFD's fire district is non-taxable land (121,538 acres). The State of WDNR claims 68,850 acres as non-taxable, Jackson County claims 52,088 acres of County Forest land as non-taxable, The State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections claims the 120 acres that the Jackson Correction Institution occupies as non-taxable, and the Ho-Chunk Nation has 480 acres in trust land under

authority of the Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs. Having such a high percentage of land in our district classified as non-taxable places a heavy burden on County, City, and Township budgets. The Department also provides protection for 22 miles of interstate highway. Without the tax base needed to support the level of protection needed, the Department must rely on fundraising efforts and grant money to keep our equipment in good working order and provide optimum safety for our FF's.

Cost / Benefit

The need for the NFPA 1901 SCBA fill stations simple. The Department protects those in their time of need, but we need to first protect those answering the call! Our current fill stations consist of well casing pipe that the SCBA cylinders are placed into when being filled. The cylinders are not full contained while being filled and should there be a cylinder failure severe injury and / or death to the FF(s) filling the SCBA cylinders is very possible! The department has experienced several SCBA cylinder burst disks fail in the past which is like a rifle being shoot off. The department's current SCBA were purchased under a 2002 AFG and had their first hydrostatic test completed on the cylinders in 2003.

It is also very possible that a cylinder may be over filled which could cause it fail. Between the area departments there is a variety of different sized (pressure) cylinders. As the cylinder is filled the pressure for the cylinder may be too high, (still on a higher pressure from a previously filled cylinder) the FF could over fill a SCBA cylinder causing a catastrophic failure of the cylinder and injury or death to the FF. Our call volume continues to increase each year but our budget has remained fixed for the last several years. The departments needs these containment stations to "take care of our own" in these very financially tight times!

The NFPA 1901 compliant fill stations will protect the FF filling the SCBA cylinders. This may be at the incident scene with the single bottle station on Squad 1 while at our own incident or with one of our seven mutual aid departments. The double cylinder fill station in the department will make the SCBA cylinder filling operation safer in that it will not only protect the FF filling SCBA cylinders but all other FF's working in the area of the filling operation to get trucks and equipment back into service for the next alarm.

Statement of Effect

AFG funding is the only way at this time the Black River Falls Fire Department will be able to purchase two SCBA Class 2 containment fill stations. The containment stations will protect the departments FF's as well as those FF's with our mutual aid departments while filling SCBA cylinders both on the fire scene and in the fire station. As stated before, our funding request is being made by the Department as a whole upon evaluation of its needs and the safety of its members. The new SCBA NFPA 1901 compliant fill stations, as anytime you are able to get something new would be an excellent morale boost for the Department and may also prove to be a recruitment tool for those hard to find volunteers knowing the department is truly "Taking Care of Our Own."

Thank you for spending your valuable time in evaluating our Fire Grant Application. We truly appreciate that you have taken time from your personal life to assist fire departments all around the United States, to have a chance at improving safety for our members as well as improving our overall firefighting capabilities.