

Fire Prevention and Safety Grant

(Grant Awarded September 4th, 2009)

Vulnerability Statement

The Fillmore Fire Department, an all-volunteer department, located approximately thirty-five (35) miles north of Milwaukee, in southeastern Wisconsin, is requesting \$ 4,470 for our Fire Prevention and Safety Project.

The Fillmore Fire Department provides fire and rescue service to a rural agricultural community experiencing a dramatic transformation due to steady growth in residential development. The total population for the town of Farmington is 3,239 with 30% of the residents under 14 and over 65 and 10% having a disability. Not included in the population numbers are a year-round youth camp and a popular family campground which bring an additional 15,000 non-residents to the area each year. The community has experienced a 28% growth in population over the past 10 years with more residential development in planning stages.

The officers of the Fillmore Fire Department performed an informal risk assessment. A manual study of fire loss over the last five years and the causative factors for the fires was closely analyzed. The target audiences we are focusing on are the children under 14 and adults over 65 in the community who are at the greatest risk for injury or loss of life during a fire.

In assessing our fire calls over the last five years, it has been determined by our officers that the greatest risk for our community is the lack of education leading to carelessness and bad judgment on the part of our citizens. Each fire call was evaluated to determine cause and possible avoidance. The types of fires we normally experience are typical for a rural area, kitchen fires, chimney fires, and grass fires. However, in the past five years we have had more serious house fires, resulting in families with young children and elderly adults left homeless. Millions of dollars in property loss has been claimed as a result of these fires. In each of these cases the fires could have easily been avoided. Our project is to raise awareness on the carelessness our community is exhibiting.

It was discovered that from 2001-2007, sixty-three percent (63%) of the fire calls could have been avoided. A proactive approach of providing education, training and resources to our citizens will help protect our high-risk population of the children and the elderly, and will enhance the safety of our community as well as our firefighters with respect to fire and fire-related hazards.

Implementation Plan

Our goal is to provide a comprehensive public safety education campaign. Our implementation plan will include the following objectives:

To reduce the percentage of avoidable fire hazards from 63% to 20% in the next two years.

To educate the school children in our district through demonstrations at the schools during the school year.

To enhance our fire prevention open house with demonstrations on the use of fire extinguishers for different types of fires.

To provide fire prevention and safety education through video presentations at our Fire Prevention Open House and throughout the year at fundraisers.

To provide educational displays on fire safety at our fundraisers held throughout the year.

The following list of materials being requested will greatly assist us with achieving our goals and objectives.

-A TV and DVD player: A 42 inch TV for a cost of \$1,200. A good quality DVD player would be purchased for a cost of \$75. This equipment would be used to show educational materials during Fire Prevention Week and several times throughout the year during fundraisers held at our station. We currently do not have a reliable HDTV and DVD player to show these materials.

-DVDs: The DVDs being requested are (1) *Go For Safety*, an interactive DVD with 60 minutes of video clips, multiple choice and true and false questions, songs, and animation, (2) *Making Good Choices*, featuring kids talking to kids about the importance of fire safety, and *How to Select and Safely Use Portable Fire Extinguishers*. **The cost of each of these DVDs is \$200, for a total of \$600. The Idea Bank offers a matching program in which they will offer a free DVD for each DVD purchased from them.**

-A Firepup Costume from the National Fire Safety Council, Inc. The costume includes boots, gloves, jacket, shirt, pants and the head. The head comes with a fan inside and also includes an ice vest which holds re-freezable ice packets. Studies have shown that a costumed character greatly increases the awareness of your message, especially to the younger audience. The cost of the costume is \$1,995.

The educational tools we are requesting will provide a variety of ways for our department to reach out to the entire community. Our plan is to educate the members of the department on how to best use the resources being requested. A system for lending the materials to the local schools, churches and other fire departments would be established.

Fire prevention programs are offered throughout the year at two local elementary schools, churches, a local youth camp and our county fair. We would greatly enhance what is currently being done through these programs with the materials this grant would provide. As statistics show, children are among those at greatest risk of a fire death. Children are a great audience and, as witnessed at our fire prevention programs in the past, will often pass on what they have learned to their parents and siblings.

Letters are sent to our citizens every year in January to update them on what is happening in our department. This is a perfect opportunity to communicate to them the hazards that we are seeing in the community and how they can be eliminated before further loss of property or loss of life occurs. In October, another letter is distributed to every household in the community along with a Fire Prevention Calendar during Fire Prevention Week. These two contacts with every individual in the community are great opportunities for education.

To take this prevention a step further, our department offers free in-home inspections to all the households in the community. During these inspections we determine if smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, fire escape ladders or any other life safety tools are needed. If needed, assistance with installing these important fire safety features is given to the homeowner by our fire department personnel.

Partnerships with other organizations

Our department already partners with the local elementary schools, churches and fire departments to share educational materials. We would continue to build a library of educational materials that could be checked out by our partners thus enhancing education for everyone. The materials being requested would not duplicate but would build on materials that our other partners have.

Evaluation Plan

This plan would be evaluated based on a reduction in the number of careless fires. Our individual fire reports will be used to measure the progress of our educational program. When applicable, follow up assistance and education is provided to the owner. Our officers will continue to document any further community hazards.

The objectives we listed will be evaluated individually to ensure that they have all been addressed. A report will be created at the end of each year to monitor the objectives and measure how many have been met. Any objectives that have not been fully met, will be the focus for improvement for the next year.

Description of cost benefit

The cost benefit of the grant investment will be realized upon successful completion of the first year of the education program. The fire risk, loss of life and property and human impact reductions will have immediate, as well as long-term benefits to the Farmington community. Time spent educating the public versus time spent fighting to save lives and property is well worth the cost.

We have had to lease or borrow training materials over the years and often times run into problems with availability - especially during Fire Prevention Week. The items we are proposing to purchase will not duplicate, but will enhance what our partner organizations are using, and will be available for their use as well.

DVDs ordered through The Idea Bank are matched one on one. The DVDs we have chosen are geared toward our target audiences. We will continue to budget for new materials on a yearly basis.

With a total population of 3239, the investment of \$4,470 for the materials being requested equals \$1.38 per person. With property losses this year alone totaling over a half million dollars, the cost of these materials is nominal. All of the equipment being requested will provide long term value to our department and the citizens of our community.

Sustainability

Our department would be able to sustain this program for many years to come with the use of equipment received. Items for the video library would be budgeted for and increased yearly with new and updated videos.

Since new students enter the school system each year, it is imperative to continue to improve and upgrade the initial program. Ongoing outreach needs to be a priority with the elderly and disabled citizens as well.

Financial Need

The current median income of the town residents is \$61,667. Our department funds come from the Town of Farmington through local tax funding. In 2008, we received \$70,000 from the Town of Farmington. Our operating budget for the year was \$105,685. A construction loan for an addition to our station and the purchase of a new pumper leaves us with over \$283,767 in debt. Our reserve account includes \$22,490, which is allocated toward replacement of a 1994 rescue squad as well as any major repairs that our operating budget will not cover.

The Town of Farmington is served by two fire departments, thereby making it extremely difficult to increase funding allocations for both departments. It is also unlikely that taxes can be increased. According to the 2000 Census, there has been a twenty-eight percent (28%) population increase in the township over the last decade. This is a significantly higher growth rate than experienced by neighboring towns. Not included in the population numbers are a year-round youth camp and a popular family campground that bring an additional 15,000 non-residents to the area throughout the year.

The distress of the agricultural community has forced several farm families to sell out to developers causing the population increases in our area. Our township had been under a two-year moratorium for development of subdivisions so that a more defined land use plan could be developed. Now that the moratorium is lifted, there are several developers who have proposals for subdivisions that would increase housing units in our fire district by another twenty-one percent (21%). This can only mean a continued increase in call volume and a continued need for fire prevention education.

In 2008 our department raised a little over \$10,340 through six fundraisers. A portion of this fundraising money is needed just to maintain the operating budget.

Track record of performance

Our department received an AFG in 2005. With the grant we were able to purchase much needed SCBA's, a RIT air supply system and a compressor to fill the tanks. Our department was able to complete the project within the first 6 months of the grant period. We have committed to keeping our equipment updated and have a fund set up for regular replacement of air packs.

Our department received a second AFG in 2007. With these funds we purchased a Thermal Imaging Camera, an Emergency Response Simulator, rescue manikins, and a laptop and projector.

In 2008 we received another AFG for the purchase of EMS equipment, a four gas monitor, and an industrial washer. All of these grants were completed and reports submitted in the timeframe required.

Our department is also in compliance with the Department of Homeland Security National Incident Management System requirements for 2006.
