

PROJECT “RIVER RESCUE”

COMMUNITY NEED

Water activities in the area continue to increase each year. Most of this increase is due to the popular Tow Path Trail and a canoe livery, located upstream of the low head dam. The fire departments in our community are responsible for covering more than 20 miles of the Tuscarawas, approximately 13 named lakes and countless ponds and streams. In Sugarcreek Township alone there are more than 35 ponds and creeks according to The Brewster Fire Department. In the City of Massillon the greatest hazard is the low head dam (commonly know as a “Drowning Machine”), between Lake Ave and Cherry Road. This dam is the biggest danger in the entire area. In addition there are numerous strainers and other obstructions that can put people on the river in danger.

The current equipment and procedures for water and ice rescue and recovery in the local communities is antiquated at best. The only real rescue boat in the area is located at the Canal Fulton Fire Department, too far away for immediate use to us, not to mention other communities in the area.

All of the other departments that have boats, including ours, use fishing boats and some do not even have engines. None, except Canal Fulton’s, are suited for water rescue and cannot be used for ice rescue at all. I can illustrate the problems with these boats by explaining our current boat’s limitations, which is the best of the lot. The boat is a 14 foot aluminum fishing boat with a 25 horsepower engine. First, the boat is fairly heavy which entails launching it off the trailer. Since there are no real launch ramps on the Tuscarawas River, it makes launching very difficult and time consuming. Secondly it has a high freeboard, the distance between the water and the top rails of the boat, this makes it almost impossible to retrieve a victim over the sides of the boat. Compare this to the boat used by The Brewster Fire Department. It has no engine and has to be rowed to any location, which can take up valuable time. Unlike our boat, it has a very low freeboard. This low freeboard makes victim recovery easier, but since it is a 12 foot aluminum boat, swamping or possibly sinking is the big hazard. These boats were not made for rescue they were made for fishing on relatively calm waters.

PROJECT GOAL

The goal of our project is to provide the Citizens of Massillon and surrounding communities a professional approach to water and ice rescue and recovery. We feel that when we are called for an incident we should be able to provide the best service possible.

Our intention is to purchase a rescue boat to meet these needs. We have already started the training and obtaining the necessary equipment. Our only need is the boat, trailer, and engine. In addition we plan to offer training to the surrounding fire departments.

Since we are centrally located in Western Stark County and our stations are manned 24 hours a day 365 days a year, we can respond to our neighbors at a moments notice for assistance with their water and ice rescue needs. So the purchase of a rescue boat would not only benefit our residents but residents of the surrounding communities.

PROJECT COSTS

The total cost of our project is \$ 5, 475.00. We have obtained donations totaling \$ 2, 084.21 to go towards this project but need the remaining \$ 3,390.79.

We are requesting a grant for the remaining \$ 3,390.79.

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| Mercury Model 430 Heavy Duty Hypalon Fabric Inflatable Boat | \$ 2,666.00 |
| Mercury Model 25M, 25 horsepower 4 stroke EFI engine | \$ 2,119.00 |
| Shoreland'r Model SLB12TS boat trailer | \$ 690.00 |

Suppliers:

BOAT & ENGINE

Mercury Government Sales
W6250 Pioneer Road
P.O. Box 1939
Fond du Lac, WI 54936
1-866-408-6372

TRAILER

Maston's Marine Service
1855 Kenyon Avenue, N.W.
Massillon, Ohio 44646
330-833-6811

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

At the delivery of the boat, trailer, and engine, the rescue boat would be rigged and ready for service within a few days. We would notify surrounding departments of the availability of our service.

As soon as could be arranged we would jointly train the surrounding fire departments on the rescue boat, rescue equipment and rescue techniques.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS

This project will assist all of the surrounding departments. Our advantage is that we are full-time staffed and centrally located. This would save the surrounding departments the costs of upgrading their water and ice rescue equipment in these times of shrinking budgets.

PROJECT CONTINUATION

This project will be ongoing. The boat builder's warranty on the boat is 10 years with an expected life of at least 20 years, normal for this type of boat. After the warranty period all repairs needed would be performed by our mechanic.

Training would be conducted on a yearly basis, with the surrounding fire departments encouraged to attend.

PROJECT EVALUATION

The project would be evaluated at least yearly. We will critique every incident in which the rescue boat and/or equipment is employed. All suggestions and comments from the department members and from the surrounding fire departments will be encouraged and reviewed. As new techniques and methods for water and ice rescue are discovered, they will be evaluated for future implementation. The results of the evaluations and critiques will be shared with all of the surrounding fire departments.