

(Aliquippa, PA) — On Saturday, March 8, U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) will host a grant workshop with the Department of Homeland Security to help local fire and emergency departments apply for funding from the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program. The AFG program supplies first responders with grants to help them purchase equipment and upgrade their facilities. Last year, 26 fire and emergency responder departments in Congressman Altmire's district received more than \$1.5 million in AFG funding.

“Western Pennsylvania’s fire departments are filled with brave men and women who dedicate their time and their talent to keeping our families safe,” Altmire said. **“Because of many of these fire departments are operated by volunteers, it can be hard for them to obtain funding to upgrade equipment or improve their facilities. I hope that by holding this grant workshop, we can help our local fire departments secure the tools they need to protect our communities.”**

At the grant workshop, Congressman Altmire and officials from the Department of Homeland Security will help first responders formulate competitive applications for AFG funding. Congressman Altmire held two similar workshops in his district last year to help fire and EMS departments secure AFG funding.

In addition to holding this grant workshop, Congressman Altmire is also working to restore \$450 million in funding to the AFG program, because President Bush proposed to cut the program's funding by 60 percent in his FY 2009 budget. If the proposed cuts become law, Pennsylvania alone would lose over \$39 million in AFG funding – which would translate into an estimated 434 fewer grants being distributed statewide.