

June 6, 2011

(Washington, D.C.) -- U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) announced that the Richland Township Volunteer Fire Department is going to receive more than \$64,000 in federal funds to purchase new fire retardant suits for its 40 firefighters. The department applied for this grant through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program after realizing that many of its firefighters' current suits were so worn down that they soon would not provide adequate protection. Congressman Altmire has consistently led efforts to improve resources for western Pennsylvania firefighters during his time in office.

"Fire companies like the Richard Township Volunteer Fire Department play a critically important role in keeping communities safe," Congressman Altmire said. "This federal grant will help to ensure that Richland Township firefighters have the equipment they need to protect themselves while on duty. In a time when many fire departments are struggling to make ends meet, AFG grants can make a tremendous difference."

"The AFG grant we received will enable us to purchase the fire retardant clothing our firefighters need to protect themselves and rescue others," Jim Kelly, Fire Chief for the Richland Township Volunteer Fire Department, said. "I don't know how the volunteer fire departments would survive without the assistance of these fire grants."

Last week, Congressman Altmire played a key role in restoring funding for the AFG program in the FY 2012 U.S. Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act (H.R. 2017). This legislation originally cut funding for the AFG and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant programs by more than 50 percent. After Congressman Altmire spoke on the House floor about how these programs help western Pennsylvania firefighters protect their communities, the House passed an amendment that restored a significant portion of the funding at no new cost to taxpayers.

