

DEC ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSISTANCE GRANTS

Funds Help Rural Fire Departments Fight Wildfires

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Pete Grannis announced today that the agency is accepting applications for Volunteer Fire Assistance grants, which provide funding to rural fire departments to enhance their wildfire fighting capabilities.

“As we’ve seen in other states in recent years, wildfires can wreak tremendous devastation to both the natural resources and private property in an area,” Commissioner Pete Grannis said. “When wildfires occur in New York, DEC’s forest rangers work closely with rural fire departments and provide an invaluable service to communities throughout the state. These grants are one of the tools available to help prepare and improve wildfire response.”

The grant program is funded by the U.S. Forest Service and administered by DEC. Last year, the program allocated \$365,000, providing \$1,000 grants to 365 fire departments. A comparable level of federal funding is expected for 2008.

The deadline for applications is May 15, 2008. Only expenses directly related to fire suppression are eligible for funding. These include the purchase of portable pumps, portable backpack pumps, hand tools, hoses, light-weight fireproof clothing (Nomex), hard hats, turnout gear, portable radios, generators and dry hydrants. Expenditures not directly related to firefighting, such as acquisition of land, construction of buildings and facilities, major apparatus purchases, and maintenance items are not eligible for funding.

Priority will be given to applications from fire departments in towns where there is a high Insurance Services Office rating and that serve inadequately protected rural communities. Preference also will be given to fire departments that have not received funding in the past five years under the Volunteer Fire Assistance/Rural Community Fire Protection Program.

Fire departments in towns with populations of 10,000 or more may be eligible if they meet the requirements listed on the application. Fire departments must provide half the cost of the project being funded. All funded projects should be completed by October 30, 2008.

For applications or further information about the grant program, contact DEC at (518) 402-8839 or write to: NYSDEC, Division of Forest Protection and Fire Management, 625 Broadway 8th Floor, Albany, New York, 12233-2560.