



News from Congressman

Tom Lantos

**12th Congressional District of California
San Mateo/San Francisco**

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FOR INFORMATION CALL
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Peninsula's Firefighters Deserve More Federal and Local Support

San Mateo — Congressman Tom Lantos (D-CA) today was pleased to announce that the Millbrae Fire Department will get the federal funds it needs for a new rescue trailer, but he noted that the larger financial picture for fire departments up and down the Peninsula is “distressing.”

“Providing for the people who respond first to emergencies in our society should be a paramount priority on the local, state and federal level,” Lantos said. “It is especially distressing that, even as special Homeland Security Department funds can be obtained for specific projects, our fire fighters and emergency technicians face an uncertain future.”

This week Lantos visited the Millbrae Fire Department to discuss the \$31,155 that he has just helped Millbrae obtain from the national Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program. Together with a matching grant, the funds will purchase a rescue trailer to be used in situations where emergency personnel need compact ventilation and communication equipment to work in tight spaces.

Lantos is joining other Congressional Democrats and the International Association of Fire Fighters to commemorate the work of emergency personnel nationwide on a national day of recognition next Monday that is intended to draw attention to fire departments’ ongoing funding needs.

“Only a few months ago, crews from the Bay Area pitched in to battle the blazes that ravaged Southern California,” Lantos noted. “Less than three years ago, firefighters and emergency technicians from across the country proved their heroism and resolve in responding to terrorist attacks of September 11. Let’s not now forget them in their own struggles to meet the ongoing challenges of their work. They are on the front lines for us every day.”

Lantos noted that in the past few months, five Peninsula fire stations have either been shut down or had their working hours cut back. He discussed with Millbrae fire personnel the pending plans to close a fire station in that community, and the effect that it is likely to have on response times when an emergency strikes.

In December Lantos met with the fire chiefs from six jurisdictions on the Peninsula. He also announced that the Daly City Fire Department would receive a \$401,794 Assistance of Firefighters grant for additional equipment and training to enhance firefighter safety.

Lantos is a member of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus, which created the grant program in 2000 and enhanced it in late 2001. The Caucus is working for changes to funding mechanisms that currently prevent financial resources from getting to fire departments that need it most.

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