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Shuster Announces Essential Grants to Bedford County Fire and EMS Companies

Washington, D.C. – **Congressman Bill Shuster** is pleased to announce that he has been informed that the Department of Homeland Security has approved an Assistance to Firefighter’s Grant Program application for all of Bedford County’s 13 fire and 6 non-affiliated EMS companies.

The grant, with a federal share of \$477,185 will be used by the county’s first responders to upgrade their communications equipment. Each of the fire and EMS companies will contribute 10% in addition to the federal share to complete the communications upgrade.

“This is fantastic news for all of Bedford County,” Shuster said. “This grant ensures that every emergency response company in Bedford will be able to purchase interoperable communications equipment for their firefighters and EMS personnel.”

“I am proud of the effort the Bedford County FIRE and EMS family put into this process. We had 100% participation in all aspects of this grant. Our future looks bright,” said Tim Hinish, Fire Chief of Six Mile Run Fire Company. Six Mile Run was the sponsoring body for the Bedford County Grant.

Interoperable communications are integral to emergency response, especially in the event that fires and emergencies require a response from multiple fire companies. In the event of a large scale disaster or emergency, the new communications equipment will ensure that everyone will be able to communicate on the same channels and frequencies.

“One of the 9/11 Commission’s most important recommendations was for the immediate adoption of interoperable communications equipment to avoid communications failures like those experienced by the firefighters and police who entered the towers,” Shuster said.

“The need for this equipment isn’t limited to cities. All of our nation’s first responders need the ability to communicate on a common basis. Today’s grant announcement accomplishes this goal for Bedford County and I congratulate all of our first responders for their accomplishment,” Shuster added.

“This grant couldn’t come at a better time. Bedford County is about to replace its antiquated emergency radio system with a state of the art Public Safety Radio Network. The grant will allow the emergency services to purchase equipment that will compliment and elevate the already high level of service they are providing Bedford County and the region. I applaud their hard work and

accomplishments on receiving this grant,” stated Dave Cubbison, Director of the Bedford County Department of Emergency Services.

The new radio system is scheduled for installation in the spring of 2008.

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFGP) awards one-year grants directly to fire departments and rescue personnel to support the nation's first responders and the services they deliver. The Department of Homeland Security's Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness (SLGCP) administers the program, in cooperation with the U.S. Fire Administration.

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