

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Navajo Nation Department of Fire & Rescue Services is requesting assistance from the Department of Homeland Security Assistance to Firefighter's Act grant in the amount of \$261,434.00 to purchase and outfit all of our firefighters with structural firefighting protective clothing.

As shown in our narrative, current members are wearing gear that have rips in them, are missing reflective trimming, have scorching to them, have a build up of oil products on them, don't fit members, have leaks and/or rips in the moisture barrier, or our mixing different types of gear together. The narrative will also show that we do not have the funding to purchase firefighter protective clothing because most of our funding is being directed toward the repair and maintenance of our fire truck fleet.

The need for firefighter protective clothing is based on our goal to:

- 1) Improve firefighter safety by providing all of our members (100%) with NFPA 1971: Standard on Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting (2007 Edition) compliant protective clothing; replacing and discarding older and damaged gear.
- 2) Ensure that all (100%) of our firefighters have proper fitting firefighter protective clothing, and to eliminate the sharing of gear.
- 3) Standardize firefighter protective clothing, discarding old and damaged gear.
- 4) To prevent a firefighter from jumping from any level of structure if caught and trapped.

We feel that with this grant, we can improve the overall safety of our members.

## **ABOUT THE NAVAJO NATION & FIRE DEPARTMENT**

The Navajo Nation is the largest federally recognized Indian tribe in the United States, spanning over 27,000 square miles into the States of Arizona, Utah and New Mexico. Larger than 10 of the 50 states, the Navajo Nation, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, has over 180,000 residents.

Despite the large population, the Navajo Nation Department of Fire & Rescue Services does not provide coverage to the entire Navajo Nation, because the Department of Fire & Rescue Services is only located within the State of Arizona and within the six (6) major growth communities where we have fire stations, one to two paid firefighters and 5-15 volunteer firefighters. Other volunteer fire departments, such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Township Fire Departments, and County Fire Departments (Ganado Fire District) cover other areas of the Navajo Nation. For this reason, the population we serve is much less than the population provided by the 2000 Census.

Yearly, our department from the six (6) fire stations responds to 1,000 calls annually (non-EMS system). Below is a breakdown of our call volume for 2006 from the NFIRS system that we report to yearly.

Fires	111	15.83%
Rescues (No EMS)	369	52.64%
Haz-Mat	12	1.71%
Service Calls	37	5.26%
Good Intent	125	17.83%
Natural Disaster	2	0.29%
False Calls	38	5.42%

**Note:** In 2006 our call volume went down. In 2005 we responded to 1,240 calls, and in 2004 1,703 calls.

### **FACT AND PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The Navajo Nation Department of Fire & Rescue Services is in need of firefighter protective clothing for its firefighters. Currently, the organization has 37 volunteer members and 11 sworn positions. Of the 48 firefighters, 34 are wearing gear that is older than 5 years of age or wearing a mix of different brands. For example, one firefighter may wear Morning Pride pants with a Janesville Jacket. Of these members, many are missing reflective trimming, have scorching burns on them, have leaks and/or rips in the moisture barrier, or don't fit them properly. The remaining firefighters, or our senior members, have the newest gear but are in need of it being replaced due to their excessive use and damage to them, such as scorching, roof tar, rips, heavy oil build up, etc.

Additionally, we have some members who are sharing gear because we do not have the sizes available for them. Some firefighters are tall, short and have large frames, and we don't have the protective clothing for them, as such are either sharing or wearing gear that does not fit them.

Our organization throughout the years, because of different management during a rough few years, has acquired gear from Morning Pride, Janesville, Fire Dex and Globe. As such, our organization are running different brands, mix sets and old gear. Although this may seem insignificant, firefighter coats and pants are designed and engineered to be worn with their own brand. It is like a bulletproof vest. Although all vests on the market will stop a 9mm bullet, safety is comprised when one wears a Point Blank vest in the front and a Second Chance vest in the back. The liability is just too great for our organization to mix and match gear, and wear worn and damaged gear.

The last time our organization bought firefighter protective clothing was in 2003, which consisted of ten (10) sets. With the cost of firefighter protective clothing, each set consisting of pants, coats, boots, helmet, gloves and hood, today cost on the average of \$3,000.00 each. This is something our organization cannot

afford because of the cost and our reducing "Supplies" budget as a result of most of our budget going to the Repair and Maintenance (R&M) of our aging fire truck fleet.

On the average, our organization has had a yearly operating budget of \$685,156.08. Our funding is derived from the Navajo Nation's "General Fund" budget. Below is a breakdown of our budget over the past five years.

FY2007 - \$738,703.00  
FY2006 - \$714,483.43  
FY2005 - \$740,865.00  
FY2004 - \$673,650.00  
FY2003 - \$558,079.00

For this fiscal year our budget breakdown is as follows:

Personnel Expenses (Wages/Salaries)	\$499,211.00
Travel Expenses (Fuel and Vehicle Rental)	\$ 93,080.00
Supplies	\$ 44,314.00
Lease & Rental	\$ 740.00
Communication/Utilities	\$ 16,500.00
Repairs/Maintenance	\$ 40,000.00
Contractual Services	\$ 20,000.00
Special Transaction (Insurance)	\$ 24,858.00

Since 2003, our "Supplies" budget has been declining, from \$95,672.00 in FY2004 to \$44,314.00 in FY2007. Please note that our "Supplies" is the line item in which we would buy janitorial items, lubrication fluids for vehicles and tools, office supplies, and fire & rescue equipment, including firefighter protective clothing.

The reason our "Supplies" budget has been declining, as previously noted, is because we have been putting more of our budget into vehicle R&M and cost of living adjustment (COLA). For the last three years, the amount we have put into R&M has increased (see below).

FY2007 - \$40,000.00  
FY2006 - \$22,000.00  
FY2005 - \$27,000.00

As of April 1, 2007 we have spent \$25,521.00 in vehicle R&M, and continue to make R&M.

The replacing of our firefighter protective clothing is critical to the firefighter safety and performing our services effectively. We have been fortunate to not have a significant firefighter injury or fatality, and would like to ensure that this trend

continues. Our firefighters are at great risk because of the old, damaged, and mismatched gear.

### **GOAL AND OBJECTIVES**

Our goal in the acquisition of firefighter protective clothing is to:

- 1) Improve firefighter safety by providing all of our members (100%) with NFPA 1971: Standard on Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting (2007 Edition) compliant protective clothing, replacing and discarding older and damaged gear.
- 2) Ensure that all (100%) of our firefighters have proper fitting firefighter protective clothing and to eliminate the sharing of gear.
- 3) Standardize firefighter protective clothing, discarding old and damaged gear.

We know that through the AFG, we can meet all three objectives. With the AFG we can standardize and outfit all of our members with the latest and safest protective clothing to improve their safety.

With the recent event of FDNY Firefighters having to jump from a window to escape a flashover (January 23, 2005 a.k.a. "Black Sunday"), Firefighter Jeff Cool is now advocating that all members be equipped with bail-out or escape bags. He reiterated in the February 2007 issue of Firehouse Magazine, that we equip firefighter with \$6,000-\$7,000 worth of equipment to send them into a fire, but there is no safety system to allow them to bail out in a safe and efficient manner if they [firefighter] get into trouble. That would cost \$300 to \$600 he said (p. 18).

With more and more multi-story buildings being constructed within the Navajo Nation, and to enhance the safety of our firefighters even more, we would like to add a fourth objective:

- 4) To prevent a firefighter from jumping from any level of structure if caught and trapped.

Not only can these bags be used for last option escapes, but to conduct safer searches in structures.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Our implementation steps to meet the goals of improving firefighter safety include:

- Navajo Nation President's approval of DHS AFG Grant and Processing of the Grant
  - Estimated Time Frame – Six (6) Months
- Research and select the best and appropriate firefighter protective clothing for our organization.
  - Estimated Time Frame – Seven (7) Months (conducted within same time period as above).

- Research and select the best and appropriate bail-out system for our organization.
  - Estimated Time Frame – Seven (7) Months (conducted within same time period as above).
- Measure firefighters to ensure the best fit of Firefighter protective clothing.
  - Estimated Time Frame – Two (2) Weeks (conducted within same time period as above).
- Train all firefighters in the care and use of their PPE. The purpose of this training is to ensure that the maximum use time of their protective clothing is achieved.
  - Estimated Time Frame – Two Weeks, six (6) different classes.
- Train all firefighters in MAYDAY procedures, utilizing the recently released hand-off course developed by the National Fire Academy.
  - Two (2) Months – Four (4) separate classes.
- Train all firefighters in Firefighter Survival (i.e. “Get Out Alive”), utilizing the newly acquired bail-out system.
  - Incorporate this training with MAYDAY procedures.

Total project time to meet organization goals is 9 months. After the ninth month, we anticipate to close out the grant and make our final report.

### **EQUIPMENT BUDGET**

We are again requesting the AFG to help purchase firefighter protective clothing for all of our members – 55 sets in all. We are not asking for the most expensive gear or “knick-knacks”, such as turnout add-ons and options, but just compliant gear, and gear that will allow us to protect ourselves and perform our job safely and effectively.

We have added seven (7) additional sets to ensure that we have a few additional sets on hand for emergency purposes and to outfit new volunteer members.

The protective clothing we are requesting is in the form of the NFPA 1971: Standard on Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting (2007 Edition) compliant firefighter pants, coat, helmet, gloves, hood and boots. Below is a budget breakdown from a quote from LN Curtis & Son’s of Salt Lake City, Utah.

Structural Firefighting Pants w/ Suspenders  
 55 Pairs of Pants x \$1,250.00 = \$68,750.00  
 Structural Firefighting Coat  
 55 Coats x \$1,740.00 = \$95,700.00  
 Structural Firefighting Rubber Boots  
 55 Pairs of Boots x \$312.00 = \$17,160.00  
 2 Ply Pbi Hood

55 Hoods x \$26.00 = \$1,430.00  
Structural Firefighting Gloves  
55 Pairs of Gloves x \$86.00 = \$4,730.00  
Structural Firefighting Helmet w/ 4" Face shields  
55 Helmets x \$245.00 = \$13,475.00  
Escape/Bail-Out Bags  
55 Bags x \$250.00 = \$13,750.00

PPE Objective Total = \$214,995.00

The Navajo Nation also has an indirect negotiation agreement with the US Department of the Interior, National Business Center, in the amount of 21.6%. As such, we will need to add \$46,439.00 ( $\$214,995.00 \times 21.6\% = \$46,438.92$ ) to the total, bringing our AFG request budget total to **\$261,434.00**.

### **CLOSING**

The Navajo Nation Department of Fire & Rescue Services is in need of firefighter protective clothing. Because of our funding issue and an aging vehicle fleet we are unable to take care of our own. Firefighter protective clothing is essential to the services provided. It not only protects us from the products of combustion, but from other hazards, including many chemicals, biological agents, animals (i.e. dog and snake bites, bees, etc), cuts and scraps, and from the weather. The safety of our members is critical and also the largest liability factor facing our organization, and we need the AFG's help.