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Minnesota State Fire Department Association

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**Minnesota's State Fire Department Association receives \$1.4 Million from FEMA to improve statewide firefighter recruitment efforts**

**Isanti, Minnesota** – The Minnesota State Fire Department Association (MSFDA) has been awarded funding through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program to improve the recruitment of volunteer firefighters by creating a statewide marketing program. MSFDA President Mark Rosenblum stated, "We are honored to have received this award."

The funds will be used to enhance the ability for fire departments across the state to recruit and on-board new candidates. Plans for use of this grant include:

- Implementing a website that will connect those interested in serving their community to the local fire department
- Provide a liaison to fire departments on how to better use current social media platforms to attract new prospects
- Assist departments with the purchase of gear and health screenings for new recruits

Executive Director DeeDee Jankovich indicated, "The MSFDA Board of Directors has been discussing this idea for several years but have not been successful with securing funding from FEMA. After several attempts, the grant was awarded."

Minnesota has the second highest percentage of volunteer firefighters in the nation, with approximately 20,000 active members serving 775 fire departments. The Minnesota Center for Fiscal Excellence ranks Minnesota 48<sup>th</sup> in the nation when it comes to per household spending on fire departments, yet Minnesota is ranked 21<sup>st</sup> for population. Across the state and nation, fire departments are scrambling to find people to serve their communities, leaving lockers empty and fewer firefighters responding to calls. "We are hopeful this new program will assist fire chiefs across the state to fill the vacancies in their departments", said Jankovich.

The Minnesota State Fire Department Association is a non-profit organization serving fire departments since 1873.