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Local emergency responders got some good news Wednesday from the office of U.S. Senator Gillibrand. It should be good news for taxpayers, too.



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Melody Burri | Messenger Post Media |

Fire safety week was observed by the Farmington and Victor Fire Departments with open houses at their respective stations.

By Melody Burri, staff writer

Updated Jan. 5, 2012 @ 5:20 am

Victor and Farmington, N.Y.

Local emergency responders got some good news yesterday from the office of U.S. Senator Gillibrand — it will be good news for taxpayers too.

On Jan. 4 Victor Fire Department personnel got a thumbs up on their application for a 2011 Federal Emergency Management Agency / Department of Homeland Security Assistance to Firefighter's Regional Radio Interoperability Communications Grant in the amount of \$382,180. Led by member:

of the Victor Fire Department, the lengthy grant application process was tackled by a six-member committee of representatives from Victor, Farmington and Fishers Fire Departments and Victor-Farmington Volunteer Ambulance.

Money received will go toward the purchase of six new radios for their stations, thirty mobile radios for all vehicles owned by these agencies, and eighty-six portable radios. The radios will function as part of a new public safety radio system being constructed by Ontario County at a cost of approximately \$17 million.

"This was a changeover that was mandated by the federal government," said Victor Fire Department Captain Sean McAdoo, "and this grant helps us to implement it without raising taxes. In the end it's a tax savings for residents."

Victor-Farmington Volunteer Ambulance president Brianna Hutton agreed.

"This grant award could not have come at a better time for our agency," she said. "This new system will eliminate communication dead spots within the operating territory and allow our personnel to communicate with dispatchers and other responders from within large commercial structures, such as Eastview Mall."

The new state of the art radio system will allow all of the county public safety agencies to directly communicate with each other during large scale emergency incidents. In addition, the new system will provide superior radio coverage for emergency responders, increasing the safety of their personnel and emergency responses to the citizens of Ontario County.

"We are thrilled," said Fishers Fire Commissioner Galen Powers. "It's a real benefit to the tax payers and it's going to be a great benefit to the firefighters because the system is very advanced. The technology is pushing 21st century.

"We literally will be able to communicate with everybody involved in a crisis situation — the police, the ambulances, the fire departments, Monroe and Ontario County sheriffs — it's similar to a cell phone and when you pick up the phone, they'll all be there. It's really nifty."

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant is a competitive, needs-based grant program administered by FEMA and DHS in which the awards are based upon a score determined by a peer review board consisting of firefighters from across the U.S. In 2011 there were nearly 16,500 grant applications for funding under the AFG program.

"It's a tremendous thing," said Farmington Fire Chief Phil Robinson. "It's going toward the radio improvements that the county is doing — it means we're not going to have to foot a huge bill. We'll all be benefiting from the same thing."

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