

## **FireNet**

### **Administration puts unprecedented resources into preparing and protecting US firefighters**

Federal Emergency Management Agency/U.S. Fire Administration.

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BUSH ADMINISTRATION PUTS UNPRECEDENTED RESOURCES INTO PREPARING AND PROTECTING THE NATION'S FIREFIGHTERS Training and Equipment Will Help Keep Communities Safe

WASHINGTON - The Bush Administration - through the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Fire Administration - provided more resources in 2002 to state and local communities to help prepare and protect firefighters than have ever been provided in a single year in the history of the United States.

"President Bush made a solid commitment to help prepare and protect our firefighters and other first responders and he has backed it up with an historic level of resources," said Joe M. Allbaugh, Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). "The President knows how important firefighters are to our nation's preparedness and response capabilities and he is making sure that they are provided with the most up to date training and equipment."

At the end of fiscal year 2002, FEMA and USFA had awarded more than \$170 million to 2,756 fire departments throughout the United States under the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program. An additional \$190 million will be awarded before the end of calendar year 2002, with at least 5,500 fire stations having received funds for training or equipment upgrades and purchases. In 2001, 1,886 grants for a total of \$96,586,668 were awarded to local fire departments and fire service organizations.

"State and local governments have to determine their own needs for firefighting personnel," continued Allbaugh. "But the Federal government has a significant role to play in keeping communities safe by preparing and protecting those firefighters through money for

training and equipment. Whether it is for professional firefighters or volunteer firefighters, who make up 88% of our nation's firefighting force, the Bush administration is making that money available at unmatched levels."

President Bush requested an unprecedented \$3.5 billion for grants for first responders, including firefighters, for FY2003. Congress is still considering the president's request.

"As a former fire chief, I know how important the balance of local control and federal resources is in keeping firefighters prepared and protected and communities safe," said R. David Paulison, Administrator of FEMA's U.S. Fire Administration. "By channeling record levels of funds directly to local fire departments for equipment and training, the Bush Administration is doing everything it can and should to prepare and protect our firefighters and keep our communities safe."

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International Association of Wildland Fire

[wildfire@iawfonline.org](mailto:wildfire@iawfonline.org)

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