

Bristol and **HERSHEY**® Residents Win Big With Fire Safety

When the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) announced the first FIRE Act grant program in 2001, they received 30,000 requests from more than 19,000 U.S. fire departments asking for assistance totalling \$3 billion. With only \$100 million available to departments that year, it was clear to FEMA that departmental needs for fire-fighting equipment, training, vehicles, wellness and fitness, and fire prevention programs were immense.

The 2002 FIRE Act grant rose to \$362 million. FEMA granted 215 awards totalling \$10.9 million to departments that wanted to boost their fire prevention programs. Lt. Rodney Sonderman with the Hershey, PA Volunteer Fire Department wrote his department's grant for the purchase of a fire safety education house and found success. Hershey took delivery of a 39-foot **SCOTTY** Combination Sprinkler/Fire Safety House in May 2003.

The all-volunteer roster of 75 firefighters including 10 junior firefighters, protect 21,000 residents in a 26-square-mile area.

"We run between 700 and 800 fire calls each year," said Sonderman. "We're especially busy in the summer with events at Hershey Park and Hershey Stadium."

In addition to fire calls, the Hershey department presents fire safety education programs to about 3,000 students in kindergarten through fourth grade and at pre-school day care centers.

"We've practiced Stop, Drop, and Roll in the classrooms, and now with the Safety House, we'll be able to point out what can hurt children in the home, such as electrical outlets and things in the kitchen."

And because the town of Hershey has a



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new construction sprinkler ordinance for commercial buildings, Sonderman said the department will promote residential sprinkler systems.

"Studies from FEMA and the NFPA have shown that if you have residential sprinkler systems, you need less personnel," Sonderman added. "The burn room in our fire safety house will allow us to demonstrate how effective a sprinkler system can be. We will be teaching residents and firefighters about sprinkler systems."

The department's focus on fire safety also extends to the children from the Hershey Medical Center and members of the senior citizens' centers throughout Hershey.

Chief Richard Steinberg of the Bristol, VA Fire Department gives credit to Assistant Chief Walter Ford and Firefighter Eric Blevins for obtaining the department's 2002 FIRE Act grant.

"They not only wrote the grant, but helped two other departments in writing their FEMA grants," said Steinberg. "We all three got grants totaling more than \$300,000."

Bristol purchased a **SCOTTY** 35-foot Bleacher Flat Fire Safety House with their grant proceeds in May 2003. The department will be taking their safety house throughout a 60-mile radius from the city.

"We can reach 250,000 children in kindergarten through sixth grade with the safety lessons in the trailer," said Steinberg. "There is no other trailer like this in the area."

The Virginia public school system follows a standard of learning program within their elementary, intermediate, and high schools. The department, Steinberg said, has developed a specialized fire safe education program that covers this standard of learning.

"School administrators are looking at our program and saying, 'Wow,'" said Steinberg.

Exit drills are emphasized throughout each grade level. Other lessons include Safety from Strangers for kindergarten students, dangerous toys and tools, and electrical outlet safety in first grade, and the importance of smoke detectors and

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Second chance to buy a *SCOTTY* training vehicle

FEMA to kick off Fire Prevention Month

For departments yearning to expand their fire safety education programs with new instructional tools, now is the time to get serious on their grant narratives for FEMA's Fire Prevention and Safety Grant program through the FIRE Act Grant. With as much as \$27.5 million at stake this fiscal year, FEMA officials don't want the same old, same old. Think big, think innovative, think fire safety education programs that will dazzle the grant reviewers.

According to Kathy Patterson, program director at FEMA, the 2003 Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Program will kick off October 16 and will run through November 13, 2003.

Last year, FEMA received 480 proposals for the Fire Prevention and Safety Grant program totaling approximately \$63 million in requests and averaging over \$130,000 per proposal. The grants have been awarded to organizations, associations and fire departments which have demonstrated the ability to reach people with their fire safety campaigns and prevention efforts.

Once again, FEMA will support activities that concentrate on the prevention of fire injuries to children. They will also place an emphasis on funding innovative projects that focus on the USFA-identified high-risk populations, such as children under the age of 14, senior citizens over 65, and firefighters.

"We are looking for innovative programs, particularly those that are partnered with the community," said Patterson.


Firefighters familiar with the [Firehouse.com](http://www.firehouse.com) forums, may have read the Sept. 2 posting written by Bones42, of New Jersey, who penned this about the upcoming Fire Prevention and Safety grant:

"Since the victims of burns experience both short- and long-term physical and psychological effects, we are also placing a priority on programs that focus on reducing the immediate and long-range effects

Tip\$ for Winning Grants

When thinking big about your fire safety program, include with your fire safety house purchase an assortment of fire education "tools."

You can request smoke detectors, batteries, and stovetop fire suppression units for the elderly, posters for elementary schools, coloring books for the students, a fire truck cruiser robot, etc. The more complete your program is, the better it looks to FEMA grant reviewers.

Enlist the help of local community residents in forming a partnership. Elementary and secondary school teachers can write up educational curriculums geared to grade-specific students; local organizations such as the Lions Club and women business organizations can serve as volunteers during special educational events. Pair up with a national insurance agency in spreading the word about fire prevention. 

of fire and burn injuries, and primarily those affecting children."

When considering your department's overall fire education program, the more complete the program, the better. Consider partnering with local organizations, including hospitals, the Lions Club, the Red Cross, the Junior League, local attorneys, area day-care centers, sprinkler contractors, and insurance representatives from nationwide insurance agencies. Ask the mayor, city council, state representatives and senators to collaborate with the department in fire safety education. How can these people contribute to your program? How can you make your program stand out in the grant review process?

In "America at Risk," published by FEMA and USFA in June 2002, it is recommended that a public awareness

campaign of fire safety education include these components:

Target high-risk areas with concentrated efforts and appropriate messages;

Use existing community resources (schools, community groups and activities, churches, and social, medical and other education services) to deliver the message to audiences;

Develop and utilize private sector partnerships with enterprises that have investments in the reduction of fire losses, such as insurance companies;

Train fire officers to deal with the media – for public information, education, and relations.

Approach your local zoning and code enforcement officers to work on strategic fire safety plans for the community and county.

Utilize these factors when developing or strengthening your fire safety education programs. Write your grant narratives clearly and with a passion and you will score big with FEMA grant reviewers.

Apply online for your fire prevention and safety grant at: www.usfa.fema.gov. 

Apply online between
October 16 and
November 13 on the
FEMA web site:

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Takin' it to the streets with a *SCOTTY* Command Post

When the first sniper shooting occurred in Spotsylvania County, VA on Oct. 4, 2002, wounding a 43-year-old woman, the Sheriff's Office Patrol Operations Division was immediately at the crime scene. Their Command Post served as the center of communications for 40 law enforcement officers, including sheriff's deputies, local and state police, and FBI agents.

According to Captain Michael S. Timm of the Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office, the Division purchased their *SCOTTY* Command Post in 2001 for use as a command center, for sobriety enforcement, and educational purposes.

"The day of the second sniper shooting in the county [Oct. 11], we had our Command Post set up at the Spotsylvania Mall, the site of the first shooting," said Timm. "It served as our headquarters for radio and television communications. The heads of the various law enforcement agencies met in the conference room and kicked the investigation off."

The 42-foot-long trailer was wired with the radio frequencies of all police entities within the state and federal government.

"It is 100 percent serviceable for any law enforcement agency in our area, including local, state, and federal agents," said Timm. "We put a lot of thought into how we wanted to set up this Command Post. Now, we can set up the communications system of the Secret Service and the agents that protect the governor. We even have the game commission radio frequencies programmed into our system."

The Division allows other emergency personnel and law enforcement to utilize their Command Post. The local fire and rescue department has called it out several times during Hazmat spills.

"We can make IDs for scene security purposes right here in the Command Post," said Washoe County Sheriff Dennis Balaam. "It's been a real godsend to us."



The Spotsylvania County, VA Command Post saw action during the 2002 sniper hunt.



Washoe County, NV, Search and Rescue

"We've used it as a Command Post when we've searched for missing children. We also had an Alzheimer's patient wander away from a facility and we used it during that mission," said Timm. "It gives the HASTY team a place to come back to and rest a bit before they go back out on a search. When you need it, there's nothing like having it."

Nearly 2,700 miles west in Nevada, Washoe County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue, Inc. added a 36-foot-long *SCOTTY* Command Post Fifth Wheel to its arsenal of vehicles in late 2001.

"Our Command Post goes out to any major event, including search and rescues and SWAT calls," said SAR Deputy Tim Graham. "It can also be used as a back-up for our dispatch center. We can run 25 9-1-1 phone lines out of it."

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office has about 400 specially trained volunteers working within Air Squadron, Communications Unit, HASTY Team, SAR, Special Vehicle Unit, Wilderness Finders, Contractor's Auxiliary Unit, and the Animal Rescue Team. WCSO is the second largest agency in the state with the largest volunteer group in Nevada. In 2002, SAR

completed between 400-500 missions, which includes training.

The county is 6,608 square miles that includes Black Rock Desert, Pyramid Lake and the northern part of Lake Tahoe. The Sierra Mountains tower up 10,000 feet with valleys as deep as 4,500 feet. It is a popular region for tourists and outdoor enthusiasts.

"In addition to using our Command Post for search and rescue missions, we also use it for special events such as the National Air Races, the annual rodeo, and the Lake Tahoe Gold Classic," said Washoe County Sheriff Dennis Balaam. "During our Fourth of July festivities at one of our state parks, we use it to dispatch our people. We've also utilized it during hunting season." 🐾

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Bristol, VA's SCOTTY Fire Safety House

Bristol and Hershey Residents Win Big With Fire Safety


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kitchen safety in grades three and four. The department also took their Weather Smart™ package and added a little local flair.

“Our NBC affiliate redid the news segment so the children would see a familiar news person on the video,” added Steinberg.

“A local map of Bristol also comes on the video to show where the [pretend] storm is located.” The city of Bristol has approxi-

mately 17,300 residents in a 12.5-square-mile area. The full-time paid firefighting staff numbers 45 including a fire marshall. Located in southwest Virginia, Bristol is separated from Tennessee by a double yellow line running down State Street. The famed Bristol Motor Speedway in Tennessee is approximately five miles from downtown Bristol.

“We will be doing our pilot program tests in September, and in October we’ll bring our fire safety house back to the city for Fire Prevention Week,” said Steinberg. 

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