

Endicott, NY - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today announced that the Union Center Fire Company has been awarded an \$68,296 federal grant to purchase a wide array of new equipment to keep the public safe and to protect firefighters.

"These federal funds will enable the Union Center Fire Company to purchase a variety of new equipment that will help ensure firefighters' safety and enable them to respond and manage fires and other emergencies even more effectively than they do now," Hinchey said. "Fire companies often need new equipment, but lack the funding to acquire them, which is why these federal resources are so important. In addition to enabling the Union Center Fire Company to purchase this new equipment, these federal dollars will spare local taxpayers the full cost of these needed items."

The Union Center Fire Company will use the federal funds to pay for an emergency generator for the fire station; a Thermal Imaging Camera that allows firefighters to find unconscious victims in smoke-filled rooms, pinpoint the sources of fires, and detect structural dangers before they cause injury and death; 12 sets of fire-protective turnout gear; and portable radios.

"This funding is great," said Tony Silvestri, Department Chief of the Union Center Fire Company. "It allows us to upgrade to National Fire Protection Association standards and the challenges we face today protecting the community and our own personnel."

The funds come from the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program, which is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the United States Fire Administration (USFA). As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, Hinchey has worked to secure full funding for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program, since its inception in 2001. Since the fire grant program started, more than \$12 million in grants have been awarded to fire and emergency departments in Hinchey's congressional district.

The congressman has sponsored a number of workshops across his congressional district to help fire departments successfully navigate the grant application process. Hinchey is also the author of the SERVE (Supporting Emergency Responders' Volunteer Efforts) Act, which would provide a \$1,000 federal tax credit to individuals who are active members of volunteer firefighting and EMS organizations. The congressman plans to reintroduce that bill in the near future.