
GOOD NEWS FOR LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS

Chatham, Ghent, and Niverville Win Joint FEMA Grant

(excerpts from article in the Columbia Paper)

Ghent, Chatham And Niverville Volunteer Fire Departments Receive \$495,000 FEMA AFG Regional Grant To Replace Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)

“GHENT—Three Columbia County fire departments will share in a half-million-dollar grant to help them purchase essential breathing equipment.

U.S. Senators Kirsten Gillibrand and Charles “Chuck” Schumer, announced in a September 3 press release that more than \$5 million in federal funding has been awarded to 36 fire departments, municipalities and ambulance corps across the state “to bolster New York’s firefighter force and to provide essential PPE [Personal Protective Equipment] for firefighters responding to the Covid-19 outbreak.”

Ghent Volunteer Fire Company #1 has made attempts at applying for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) before, but had “just no luck,” Ghent Fire Chief Anthony Brahm told The Columbia Paper this week.

So, when his fire company applied for the 2020 AFG Covid-19 Supplemental Program, it was decided to take a regional approach for shared services, enlisting both the Chatham and Niverville Fire Departments to join in as co-applicants.

The strategy paid off.

The Ghent Fire Company and its co-applicants will receive \$495,714.29 (*Ghent’s share is about \$130,000*) in funding through this Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant, around since 2001, which helps firefighters and other first responders obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training and other resources necessary for protecting the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards.

“We need air packs desperately,” Chief Brahm said by phone Tuesday. Both Chatham and Niverville will need them by next year. Since the three fire companies routinely respond with mutual aid to each other’s emergency calls under the county dispatch task force system, it is beneficial for each company to have new, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) at the same time.

SCBA “is a key component of [first responders] PPE when entering hazardous environments. This funding will allow our first responders to have the PPE they need to be able to do their job safely and allow everyone to go home to their families after the emergency incident,” Chief Brahm said in a press release.

Ghent Fire Chief for the past five years, Mr. Brahm said the grant money is strictly for new air packs. He noted that in a recent fire company budget, \$7,000 apiece was allocated for just one air pack, two spare bottles and a mask.”

For the complete report go to:

<https://www.columbiapaper.com/2020/09/they-breathe-easier-with-500k-grant/>